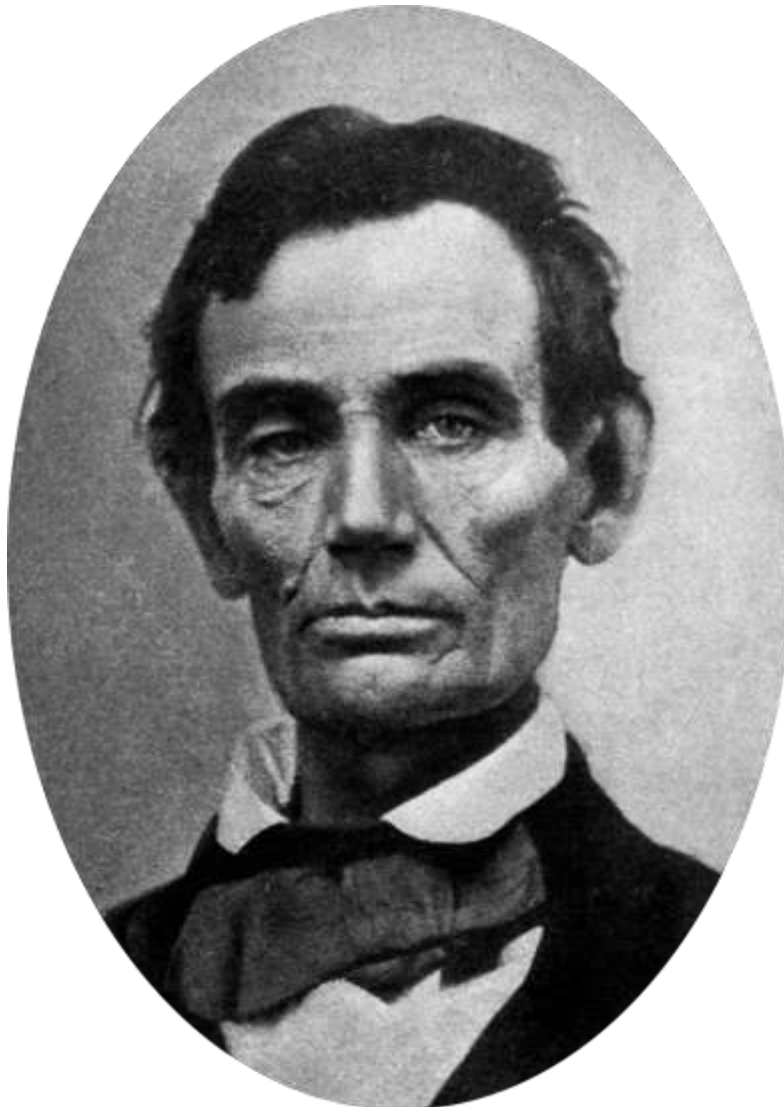


Why Everything You Think You Know About the Lincoln Assassination is Wrong

David McGowan



In just a little over a year – in what will be an historic 150-year anniversary – the American people, and likely people all around the world, will come together in remembrance of the man who was once rather preposterously described by a biographer as “the most gentle, most magnanimous, most Christ-like ruler of all time.” That man, of course, was Abraham Lincoln, allegedly the 16th and most beloved President of these United States.

I say “allegedly” here because it is hard to see how someone could be the president of an entity that didn’t actually exist. And the reality is that during Lincoln’s tenure, there was no such thing as the “United” States. There were Northern states presided over by Washington, and there were Confederate states presided over by a parallel government in Richmond, but there certainly weren’t any “united” states. Wouldn’t it then be just as accurate to describe Jefferson Davis as the 16th president of the United States? Just checking.

I also say “allegedly” here because Lincoln was most certainly not, during his lifetime, a beloved man. He was thoroughly despised throughout half the country, and wasn’t even all that popular in the north. He received merely 40% of the popular vote in 1860 and could have, as more honest historians have noted, been very easily defeated had the Democratic Party bothered to field a viable candidate. But Lincoln was clearly the anointed one.

As we all know, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by famed actor and Southern sympathizer John Wilkes Booth on the evening of April 14, 1865 (which happened to be Good Friday) while attending a play at Ford’s Theater in Washington, DC. Just five days earlier, General Robert E. Lee had surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, effectively signaling an end to the unfathomably bloody US Civil War. What is less widely known is that the assassination of Lincoln was allegedly part of a larger plot that was to have included the simultaneous assassinations of General Grant, Vice President Andrew Johnson, Secretary of State William Seward and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton.



John Wilkes Booth, in a Masonic pose

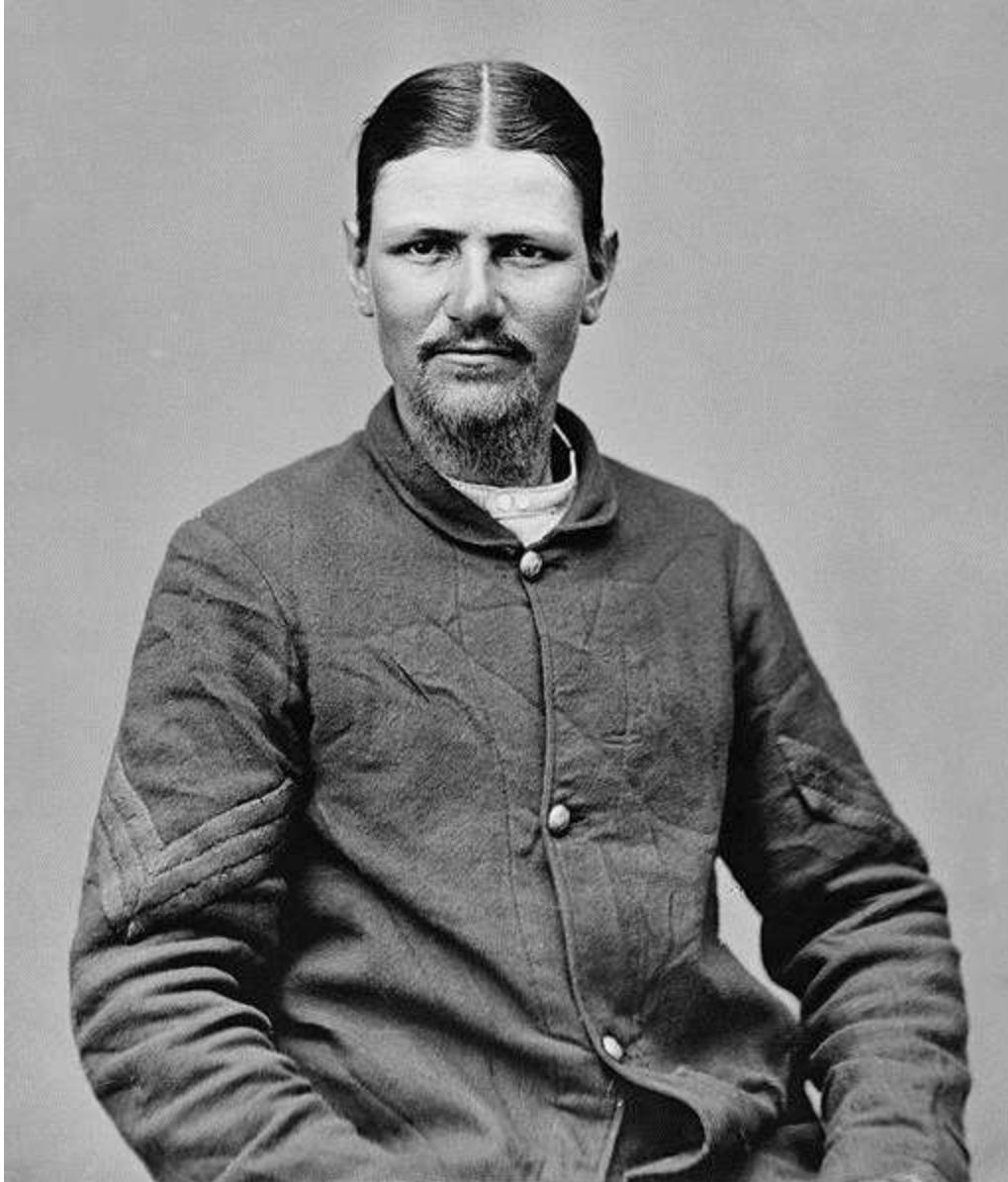
This alleged plot, which is part of the official history of the Lincoln assassination, obviously involved people other than John Wilkes Booth. Nine of those people faced trial as co-conspirators, eight by military tribunal (Mary Surrat, David Herold, George Atzerodt, Dr.

Samuel Mudd, Samuel Arnold, Michael O’Laughlen, Edward Spangler, and Lewis Paine [or Lewis Payne, or Lewis Powell, depending upon who is telling the tale]), and one who later stood trial alone (John Surrat). Four were executed, three received life sentences, one was given a six-year prison term, and one was acquitted. As for Booth, he was captured and gunned down at Garrett’s barn on April 26, 1865 and so never made it to trial.

And that, in a nutshell, is the official narrative of the Lincoln assassination. It is an unusual narrative, to be sure, because it explicitly acknowledges a ‘conspiracy’ surrounding the death of a president. Of course, many of the details are usually left out when the story is told, leading many to think of John Wilkes Booth as just another ‘lone nut’ assassin. But Booth was hardly a lone nut and there was in fact a conspiracy at the heart of the Lincoln assassination, though the people targeted by the government weren’t the real conspirators; the real conspirators were the very people who orchestrated the witch hunt against the scapegoats.

But before we get to that, let’s first skip ahead and look at some of the forgotten aftermath of the assassination, because there is always much to be learned by examining the fates that befall those involved to varying degrees in political conspiracies, especially those unfortunate souls whose names are largely consigned to the dustbins of history.

Let’s begin with Sergeant Thomas “Boston” Corbett, the Jack Ruby of the Lincoln assassination. Corbett was a strange character if ever there was one. How strange, you ask? Strange enough to have reportedly castrated himself circa 1858, and to have then opted not to seek medical attention until he had tended to other, apparently more important, business. He was widely considered to be mentally unbalanced, shockingly enough, and he often spoke of hearing disembodied voices. He was mockingly referred to by his fellow soldiers as “the Glory to God man” due to his rather unorthodox religious beliefs, which he wasn’t shy about sharing.



Thomas "Boston" Corbett

Due to his bizarre behavior and his unwillingness, or inability, to follow orders, Corbett had been court-martialed and discharged from the service. For some unexplained reason though, he was allowed to re-enlist in 1863 and he quickly thereafter rose to the rank of sergeant. In April 1865, he was assigned to the elite team that captured Booth and, in defiance of direct orders, he personally shot and killed the man who was said to be Booth. Corbett was never reprimanded or disciplined for his actions and in fact profited handsomely by touring the country for years as "The Man Who Killed Booth."

In 1887, Corbett was appointed as the clerk/doorman of the Kansas state legislature. Things didn't go so well for him after that. According to some reports, one day he just decided to shoot the place up, though other accounts hold that he didn't fire his weapon but merely brandished it and issued threats. Whatever the case, he quickly found himself committed to a mental asylum.

He managed to escape soon enough though and may have briefly surfaced in Texas before never being seen or heard from again.

Let's next turn our attention to Major Henry Rathbone and Clara Harris, the couple who were sharing the presidential box at Ford's Theater with Abe and Mary Lincoln. At the time, Rathbone was dating Harris, who was both Rathbone's stepsister and the daughter of US Senator Ira Harris. Rathbone was reportedly deeply cut when he attempted to disarm and detain Booth, who escaped by leaping over the railing and onto the stage.



Clara Harris



Major Henry Rathbone

Rathbone later married Harris and the two started a family and moved to Germany, where Rathbone served as the US Consul to Hanover. Things didn't work out so well though for the Rathbones; in December 1883, Henry tried to kill his children and, when thwarted in that effort, instead shot and brutally carved up wife Clara, before turning the knife on himself. Like Corbett, he was sent off to an asylum, but unlike Corbett, Henry Rathbone spent the rest of his life there. Since I mentioned Mary Todd Lincoln just a couple paragraphs ago, I should probably mention that she also ended up in an insane asylum. Always a bit on the crazy side, Mary became considerably crazier after the assassination, exhibiting increasingly erratic behavior and suffering from vivid hallucinations. She was ultimately committed by her own son, Robert Todd Lincoln.

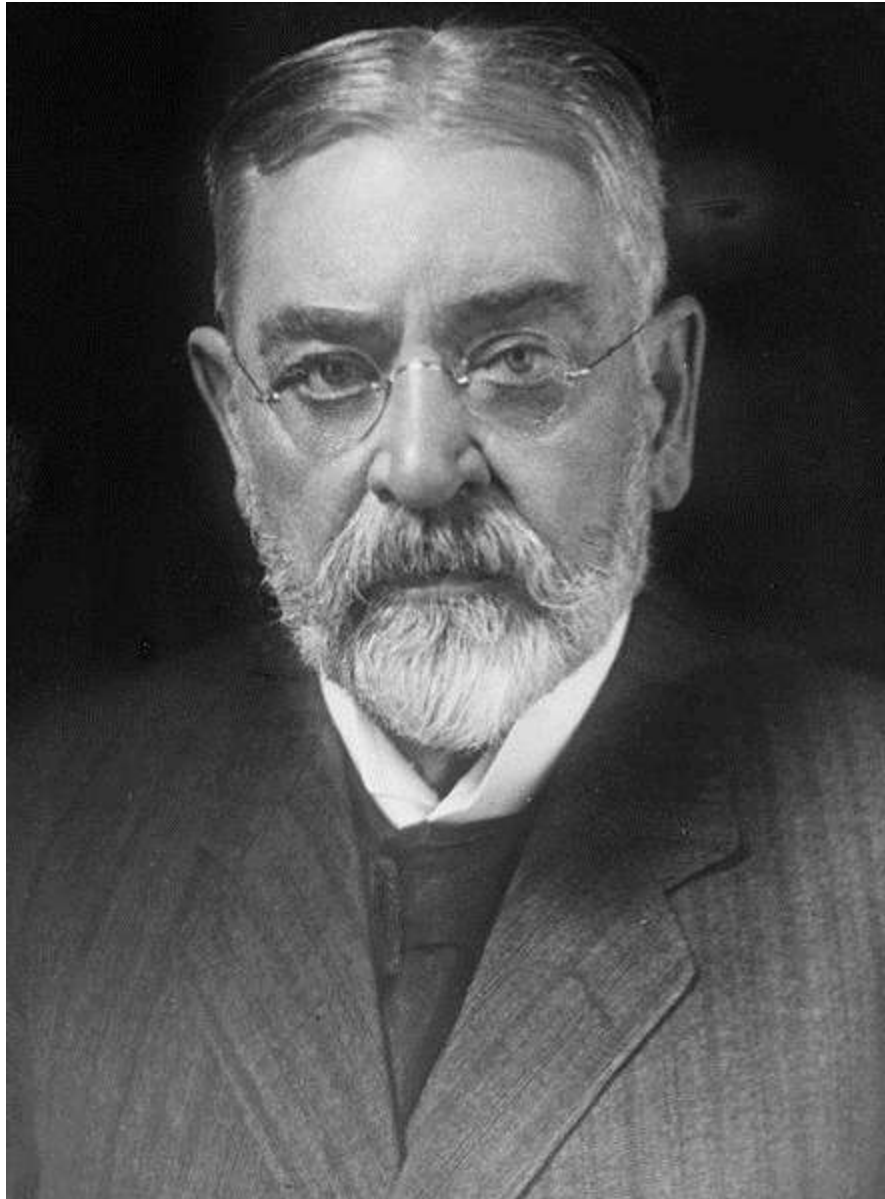


Mary Todd Lincoln

To say that Robert Lincoln had some rather unusual aspects to his life story would be quite an understatement. To begin with, we could note that he had the distinction of being the only man in history with direct links to three presidential assassinations. Just twenty-one when his father was gunned down, he subsequently was present at the assassinations of James Garfield in 1881 and William McKinley in 1901. He was also the only Lincoln son to survive his childhood; brother Eddie died at age 3 in 1850, brother Willie at age 11 in 1862, and brother Tad barely made it to age 18 before dying in 1871.

According to Robert Lincoln's own account, he was involved in a truly bizarre incident in late 1864/early 1865, not long before the death of his father. The younger Lincoln was saved from serious injury and possible death when he was pulled to safety by a stranger during a mishap on a train platform. That stranger just happened to be Edwin Booth, an older brother of John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln later maintained a long-term friendship and possible romance with Lucy Hale,

the daughter of US Senator John Hale and a former paramour and fiancé of John Wilkes Booth. Small world, I guess.



Robert Todd Lincoln

Speaking of Edwin Booth, on June 9, 1893, just as his casket was being carried for burial (he had died two days earlier), Ford's Theater mysteriously collapsed, killing 22 people and injuring another 68. The building had been converted into a government record storage facility and some of the records of the assassination were lost in the wreckage. Shit happens.

Edwin and John's sister, Rosalie Booth, died under mysterious circumstances in January 1880; rumors at the time spoke of a "mysterious assailant." Edwin Booth Clark, a son of sister Asia Booth and therefore a nephew of John Wilkes Booth, attended Annapolis and became a US Naval officer, but he thereafter disappeared at sea. Officially, he committed suicide by jumping overboard. And Junius Brutus Booth, the patriarch of the Booth clan, is said to have gone insane.

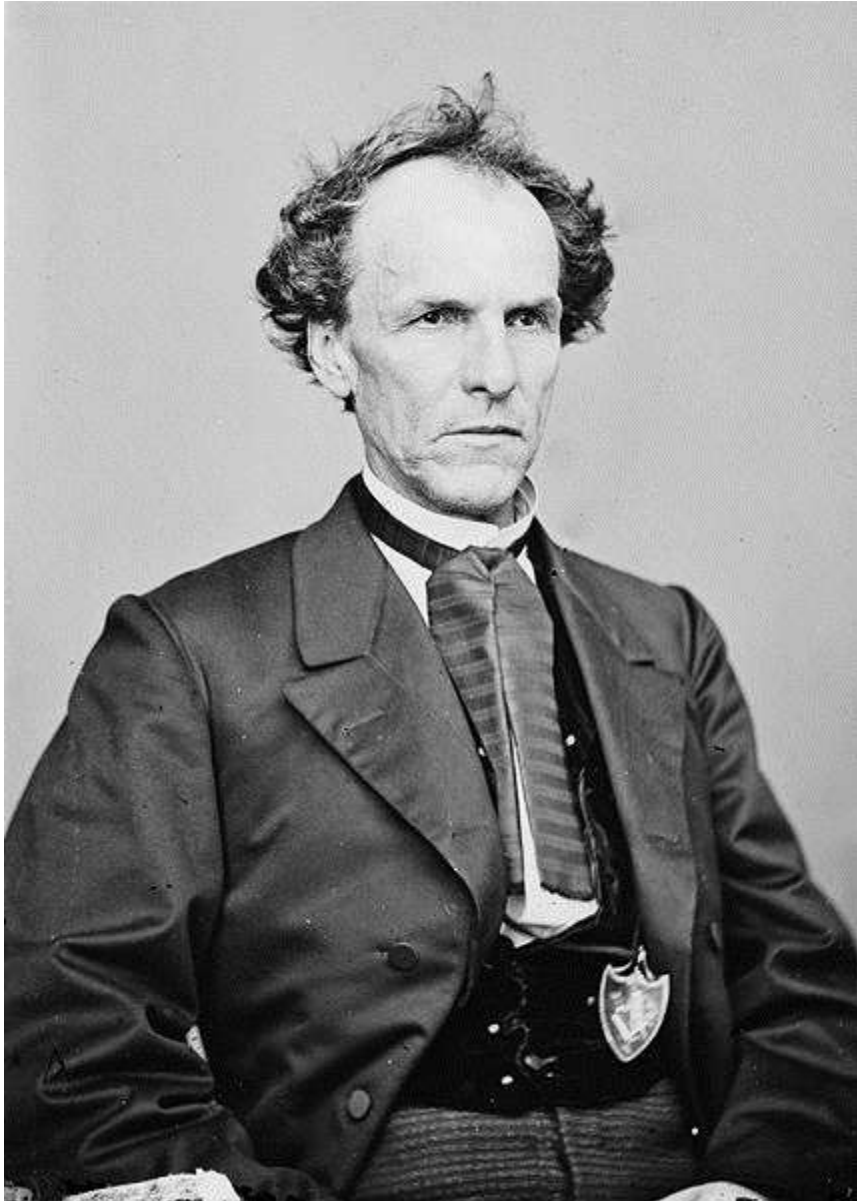


The Booth siblings – John Wilkes, Edwin and Junius, Jr.

US Senator Preston King, credited with being one of the guys who supposedly prevented a mercy petition on behalf of Mary Surrat from reaching President Andrew Johnson, decided on November 12, 1865 to go swimming in New York with a bag of bullets tied around his neck. Officially, his death was a very innovative suicide. US Senator James Lane, the other guy credited with supposedly preventing the mercy petition on behalf of Surrat from reaching Johnson, shot himself in the head while jumping from a carriage in Leavenworth, Kansas on July 1, 1866. Or else he slit his own throat. Whichever sounds better to you.

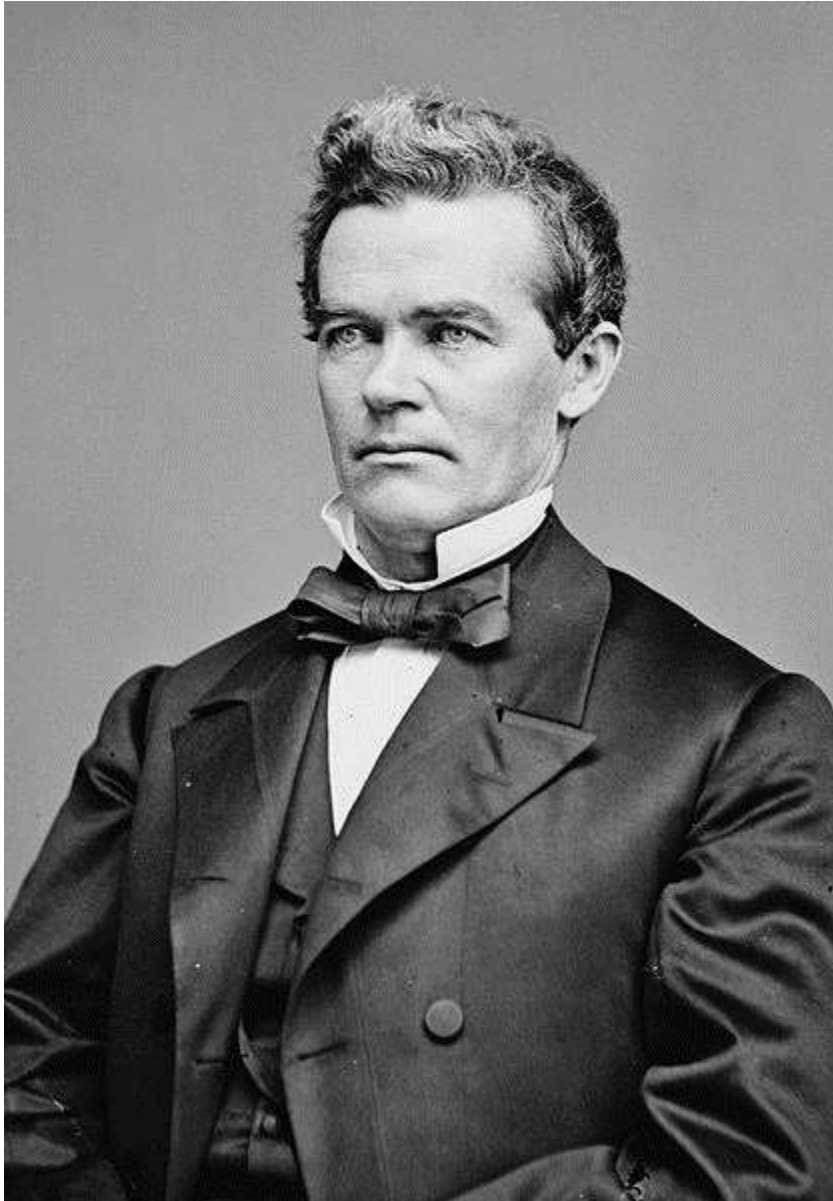


Senator Preston King



Senator James Lane

US Senator John Conness, a likely conspirator and a pallbearer at Lincoln's funeral, was committed to an insane asylum, where he later died. There was a lot of that sort of thing going around in those days. The body of William Peterson – the owner of the boardinghouse where Lincoln was taken immediately after being shot, and where he died the next morning – was found on the grounds of the Smithsonian loaded with the drug laudanum. His death, needless to say, was ruled a suicide.



Senator John Conness

Colonel William Browning, who was Vice President Andrew Johnson's personal secretary as well as being a personal friend to John Wilkes Booth (Browning claimed that Johnson was close to Booth as well), is believed to have been murdered, though details are sketchy. Less sketchy were the murders of Frank Boyle and William Watson, both of whom had the misfortune of physically resembling John Wilkes Booth. Both of their bodies were turned over to the War Department by overzealous vigilantes for the reward that was being offered. Stanton's department covered up the murders by unceremoniously disposing of the bodies, one of which was dumped into the Potomac River.

Frances Adeline Seward and Frances Adeline "Fanny" Seward had the misfortune of bearing witness to the staged attack on William Seward, sitting Secretary of State and the husband of Frances and the father of Fanny. Frances died of a reported heart attack on June 21, 1865, the summer solstice, just two months after the assassination of Lincoln and the alleged attempt on

her husband's life. Fanny died the next year, on October 29, 1866, just before Halloween. She was just twenty-one; the cause of her death remains unknown. A few years later, in 1870, William Seward legally 'adopted' his young 'companion,' Olive Risley, as his 'daughter.' Risley was 26 at the time and Seward was 69.



William Seward, in a Masonic pose, with daughter Fanny
Lafayette Baker was undoubtedly one of the central conspirators involved in the Lincoln assassination. As 'Honest' Abe's spymaster and head of the NDP, forerunner of the US Secret Service, Baker had instituted a reign of terror, just as he had previously done as a member of San Francisco's Vigilance Committee, running roughshod over the US Constitution. Under Baker's (and Stanton's) tyrannical watch, there were 260,000 dubious arrests made and some 38,000 people held without trial as political prisoners. Baker also introduced such

innovations as midnight raids, forced entry without warrants, imprisonment without bail, and summary arrests.

Circa 1867, Baker published a book revealing the existence of what was said to be Booth's suppressed diary. He subsequently barricaded himself in his home and told friends that a secret cabal was intent on killing him. Press reports from December 1867 through February 1868 tell of repeated attempts made on his life; he was shot at twice, stabbed on his own front porch, and beaten by three or four men who attempted to abduct him. Nevertheless, when he turned up dead on July 3, 1868, the cause of death was said to be meningitis, necessitating an immediate, sealed burial. A later exhumation though indicated that the cause of death was actually arsenic poisoning. Baker left behind cryptic notes alluding to a conspiracy behind the Lincoln assassination involving eleven members of Congress, twelve US Army officers, three US Navy officers, one governor, five bankers, three nationally known newspapermen, and eleven wealthy industrialists.

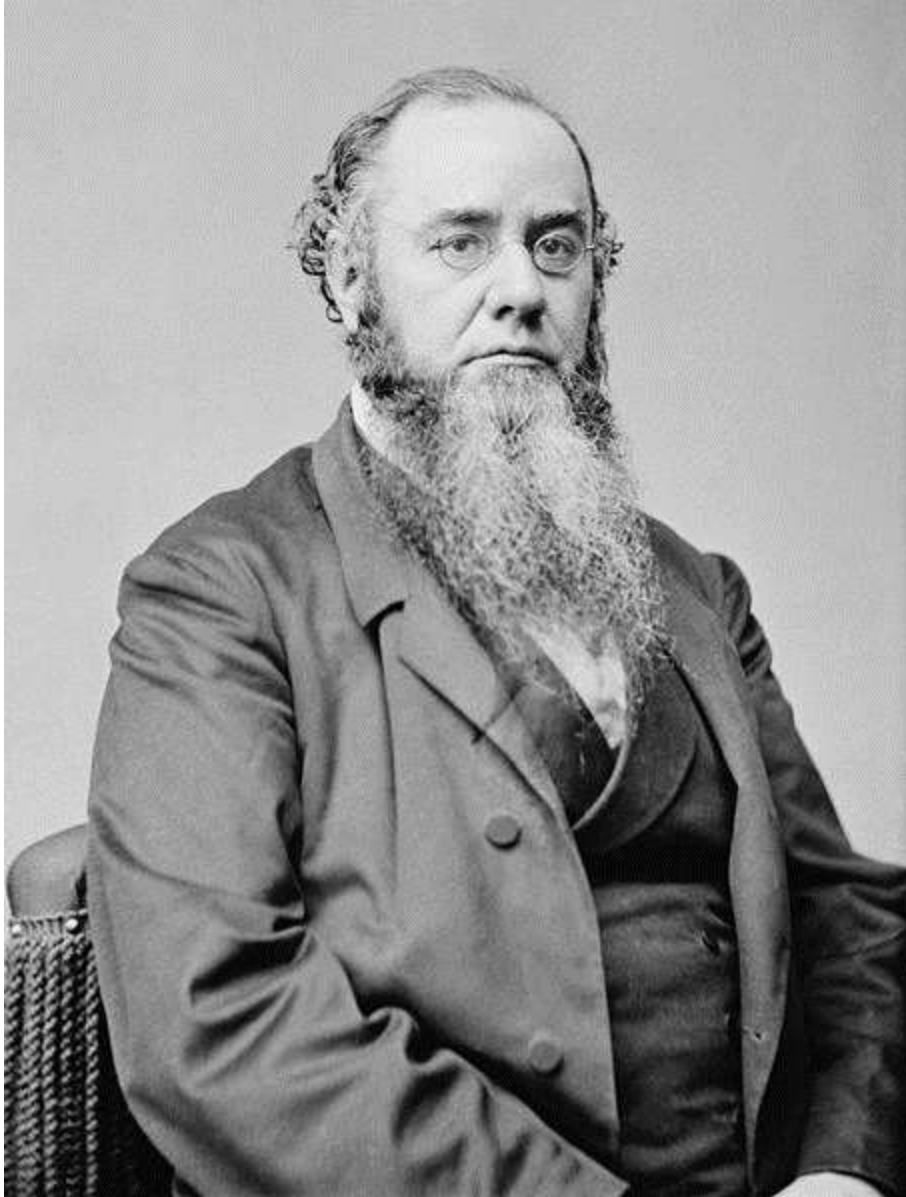


Lafayette Baker

Police officer John F. Parker had the dubious distinction of being the guy who was supposed to be guarding Lincoln at the time of the assassination, except that he instead opted to wander over next door to get good and drunk. Parker had a seriously checkered history with the department, having been written up on multiple occasions for conduct unbecoming an officer, the use of insolent language, visiting a house of prostitution, inappropriately discharging his weapon, sleeping on duty, and being drunk on duty. He was nevertheless assigned the task of guarding the president, a development that historians have been unable to explain. And he was assigned that task just in time to be neglecting his duties when Lincoln was shot.

Parker was never reprimanded in any way for abandoning his post and leaving the president vulnerable. In fact, he was returned to duty at the White House, an honor usually reserved for senior officers with unblemished records. He was released from duty though in 1868, just after Stanton relinquished his post as Secretary of War. Parker was never seen or heard from again, and it is believed that he was either killed or went into hiding to avoid being killed.

Next up is Edwin Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War and a seriously deranged individual. Prior to his emergence on the national scene, Stanton's greatest claim-to-fame was securing an acquittal for US Representative Daniel Sickles on murder charges. On February 27, 1859, Sickles had gunned down the unarmed Philip Barton Key II, US Attorney for the District of Columbia and the son of famed composer Francis Scott Key. Stanton argued a temporary insanity defense for the first time in US history.

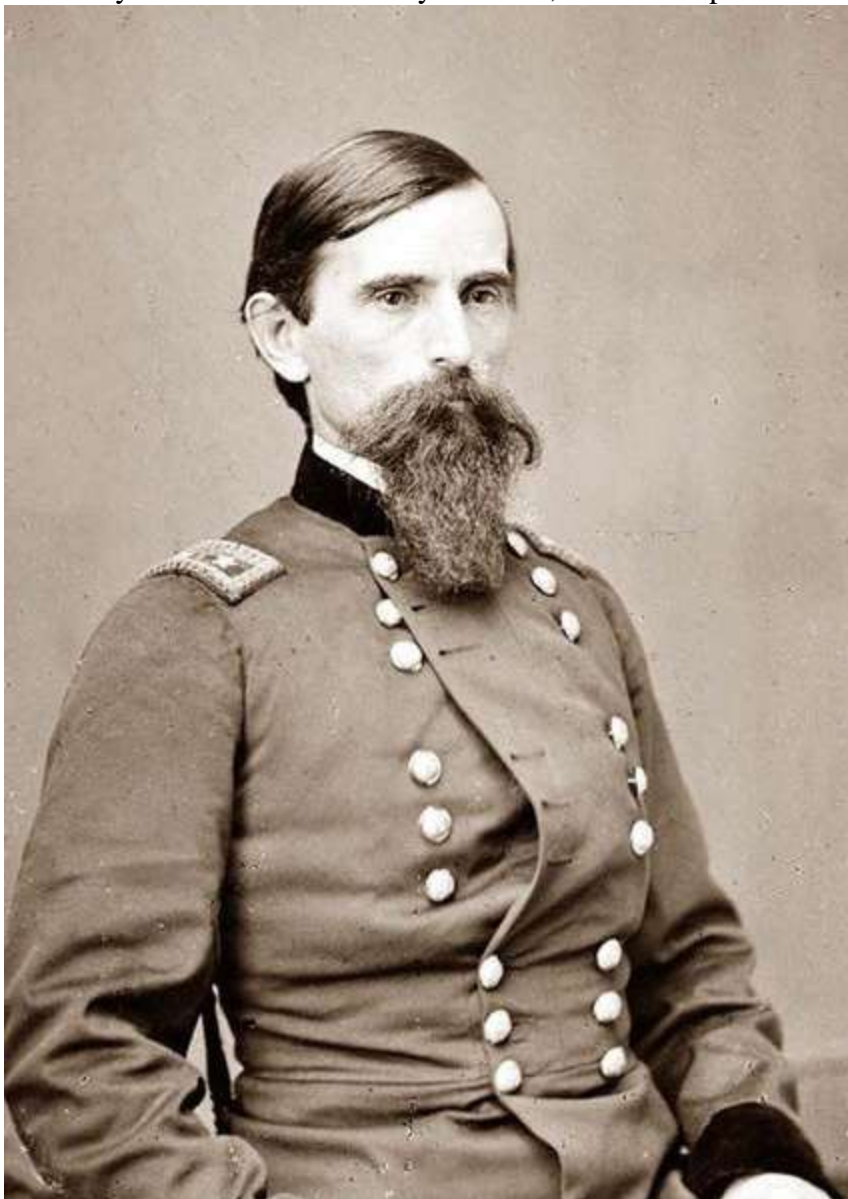


Edwin Stanton

The media, apparently every bit as corrupt in those days as it is today, overwhelmingly supported Sickles while vilifying both Key and Sickles' wife, who had reportedly been having an affair. Though standing trial for a capital offense, Sickles was allowed to stay in his jailer's apartment, have unlimited visitors, and, most amazingly, retain his weapon. As already stated, Sickles was acquitted and was subsequently allowed to retain his seat in the House of Representatives. He later became a Civil War general and the US Minister to Spain. Elsewhere in Stanton's biography, we find that at various times in his life he personally ordered the exhumation of at least two bodies, one of them being his daughter Lucy, who was dug up circa 1842. According to reports, Stanton kept his daughter's decomposing corpse in a special container in his home for at least a year. Nothing there that would cause anyone to question his fitness to serve as Secretary of War.

Stanton became a national figure when he was appointed by President Buchanan to serve as Attorney General on December 20, 1860, just weeks before Lincoln took office. He went on to wield considerable power in both the Lincoln and Johnson Administrations. Indeed, Johnson's attempted dismissal of Stanton led directly to the impeachment proceedings begun against him. Stanton's reign came to an end though on December 24, 1869, when he turned up dead of unstated causes (though some reports allude to suicide, just as his brother had reportedly done in 1846). He had been nominated for a seat on the US Supreme Court by President Grant and confirmed by the US Senate, but he died before he could take that seat.

That is a whole lot of tragedy to befall a lot of people who were in a position to know more about the Lincoln assassination than they should have. There was though at least one guy who saw his fortunes rise. Major General Lew Wallace was a member of the hopelessly corrupt military tribunal that sat in judgment of Mary Surrat and others. In 1880, he became far better known as a writer of historical fiction when he wrote and published *Ben Hur*, the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century. Well over a hundred years later, it is still in print.



Lew Wallace

I know what you must be thinking here: “How the hell could you leave Francis Tumblety out of the previous post? Compared to him, guys like Boston Corbett, Henry Rathbone and Edwin Stanton seem perfectly sane. And whose name was in the news in a weirder way in the years following the assassination than the esteemed Dr. Francis Tumblety? And in addition, doesn’t he deserve honorable mention for the ridiculous facial hair alone?”

I can’t really argue much with any of that. I think it was probably a subconscious omission so that I would have something really good to start this post with. Because as stories go, the Francis Tumblety story is pretty damn good. And seriously strange. But before getting to that, I must also quickly add Father Wiget to the list. Not much can be dug up on him other than that he was assigned as Mary Surrat’s spiritual adviser during the brief period that she sat in her cell waiting to be executed, and he died shortly thereafter.

Moving on now to the man of the hour, Francis Tumblety was arrested on May 5, 1865, on suspicion of being complicit in the plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln. Tumblety was an associate of – and by some reports a sometime employer of – executed conspirator David Herold. His arrest was ordered by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. To be fair to Tumblety though, it should be noted that he was only one of some 2,000 people who were arrested as possible conspirators. That’s how things work in a democracy, you see – falsely imprison first, ask questions later.



The esteemed Dr. Francis Tumblety

In any event, Tumblety was held for nearly a month before being released on May 30, 1865. Prior to his arrest, he had lived a very colorful life. Born circa 1833 and raised in New York, Tumblety was widely viewed as a charlatan and a kook. While still a minor, he reportedly peddled pornographic materials. He soon transformed into a quack “Indian herb doctor” who was run out of various parts of the country for running cons. In one reported case, he was directly involved in the death of a ‘patient,’ though he suffered no repercussions for his actions. According to one account, he kept a collection of human uteruses on display in his Washington, DC home.

Some twenty-three years after his arrest in Washington, Tumblety took up lodging in, of all places, a boardinghouse in London’s Whitechapel district. He was identified at that time, and has been identified by various researchers since that time, as being a prime suspect in the still

unsolved Jack the Ripper murders. Following an arrest on November 7, 1888 for “gross indecency,” Tumblety fled the country on November 20 under an assumed name and quickly made his way back to the US, where he died some five years later.

What are the odds, one wonders, that the very same guy would be suspected of involvement in two such completely different and seemingly unconnected crimes? Two crimes separated by a vast ocean and the passage of nearly two-and-a-half decades? Probably about the same odds that a guy like [John Phillips would have connections to both the Black Dahlia murder and the Manson bloodbath.](#)

Pictured below is the single-shot derringer that, according to the legend we all know so well, John Wilkes Booth used to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln. One of the most iconic pieces of historical memorabilia that this country has to offer, it has been displayed for decades, viewed by millions, and written about by thousands. But after the passage of 149 years, it doesn't appear that anyone has ever thought to question why Booth, an intelligent and educated man by all accounts, would choose such a ridiculous weapon to take with him on his mission.



Let's imagine that it is the evening of April 14, 1865, and you are John Wilkes Booth. Your mission is to assassinate the president. In a crowded theater. In the middle of Washington, which, at the time, is heavily fortified and militarized. Because there is, you know, a war going on. And the enemy's base of operations – in Richmond, Virginia – is only 100 miles away. So the nation's capital is crawling with armed military personnel, armed police patrols, and armed thugs in the employ of Baker and Stanton.

Your mission then is not going to be an easy one. The president is under armed guard, or at least he's supposed to be. He's also supposed to be in the company of General Ulysses S. Grant, who is known to always be armed. Of course, Grant has fortuitously opted to get the hell out of Dodge just hours before he was to have accompanied the Lincolns to the theater, but you shouldn't have any way of knowing that, just as you shouldn't have any way of knowing that Parker will desert his post. And there will be no shortage of other armed personnel in Ford's Theater, including Army Captain Theodore McGowan (no relation), who is seated very near the door to Lincoln's box seats.

So you have to assume that you're going to have to get past at least two armed attendants, and probably more, to get to the president. And you're going to have to do that without firing a shot, since you only have one and you will need to save that for Abe. And since the only realistic chance you have of actually killing Lincoln with your wildly inaccurate weapon is by sneaking up behind him and delivering a contact wound to his head, you're going to have to get past any guards without making any noise. And since Grant is supposedly also on the hit list, you're going to have to kill him as well, which I guess you'll have to do by bludgeoning him with your empty gun. That should work out pretty well.



Ford's Theater, circa 1865

You're not on a suicide mission, by the way, so even if you somehow manage to successfully assassinate the president, and presumably General Grant as well, you're still going to have some major problems on your hands. First of all, you're going to have to make your escape from a theater full of people, many of them armed. Because in April 1865, the beginning of the era that will be mythologized as the 'Wild West' days, there are guns everywhere and everyone is packing heat. And you, of course, will have blown your wad and will be unarmed.

If you somehow manage to make your way out of the theater, then you will face the daunting prospect of making your way out of the city and across the Potomac. And as I may have mentioned, DC is swarming with armed soldiers, armed spies and armed police, as well as armed

citizens. And your only means of defending yourself will be with a dagger, which probably isn't going to be very effective.

Your goal is to reach the Navy Yard Bridge, which will get you across the Potomac and to relative safety. But even if you reach it, you've still got a big hurdle to overcome: the bridge has a strict curfew and the armed guard is under standing orders not to allow anyone to cross without explicit authorization. If you attempt to cross without anyway, you will be shot. A gun might come in handy, but you won't have one.



The Navy Yard Bridge, John Wilkes Booth's passage out of town

To recap then, you have set a very ambitious goal for yourself. You must first get to the president, who is sitting in a private box in a crowded theater with at least two armed attendants. You must then kill the president with a single shot, because your weapon doesn't allow for second chances, and also somehow kill General Grant. You must then, in an unarmed state, make an escape first from the theater and then from the city, and you must get past an armed guard at the bridge. And you have to do all of that with just one bullet. It's hard to see how anything could go wrong with such a brilliant plan.

Of course, it doesn't have to be this way. There are other weapons available. Weapons better suited to your mission. And as an alleged Southern operative, you should surely know that. It was, after all, Confederate guerilla groups that pioneered the shock-and-awe tactic of using overwhelming force in the form of multiple revolvers. We've all seen images of Wild West gunslingers riding hard with their reins in their teeth, six-shooters blazing in both hands. It's only natural to dismiss such images as a hackneyed Hollywood creation. But strangely enough, it's actually not. Rebel groups like Mosby's Rangers and Quantrill's Raiders really did train to do exactly that. And they wore custom-made holsters that could hold as many as six revolvers, three

on each side. That allowed them to get off as many as 36 shots before their overwhelmed Union adversaries, armed with muskets, could reload and get off so much as a second shot. Those semi-mythical figures in American history that we know as Frank and Jesse James, and Jim, Bob, John and Cole Younger, and Bill, Grat, Bob and Emmett Dalton, learned the skills they later employed as Wild West ‘outlaws’ while riding with the likes of William Quantrill and “Bloody Bill” Anderson. But that’s not really the point here – the point here is that revolvers are easy to come by and might serve you better than a nearly-worthless single-shot derringer. And according to the official story, you definitely have access to at least two of them (pictured below).



There are other things you might want to consider as well, such as not committing the crime as John Wilkes Booth. You are, after all, a famous stage actor, which means that you are also a wardrobe and makeup guy. Because in your era, you and your contemporaries have to handle

those duties yourselves, so you travel with a couple large trunks full of stuff like wigs and fake beards. You could easily don a convincing disguise so as not to be easily recognized. Then you don't have to worry about getting out of the city alive; all you have to do is make it out of the theater, quickly ditch the disguise, and then you can circle around and rejoin the crowd at Ford's without arousing any suspicion at all.

And you do, after all, have a lot at stake. Even if you manage to make an escape from DC, your lifestyle and career will be distant memories. All the fame, all the female adoration, all the success, all the wealth ... it will all be gone if you commit the crime as John Wilkes Booth. So you might want to put on a disguise. And replace that derringer with a revolver or two. And maybe bring an accomplice or two along for additional firepower. You have quite a few co-conspirators to choose from.

You also might want to reconsider whether Ford's Theater is the best place to do this. According to numerous historians, Lincoln has a bad habit of ignoring advice from aides and strolling around Washington unescorted at times, leaving him seriously vulnerable. That might make it a bit easier to successfully pull this off.



FANNY BROWN
(‘Pretty Fay Brown’)

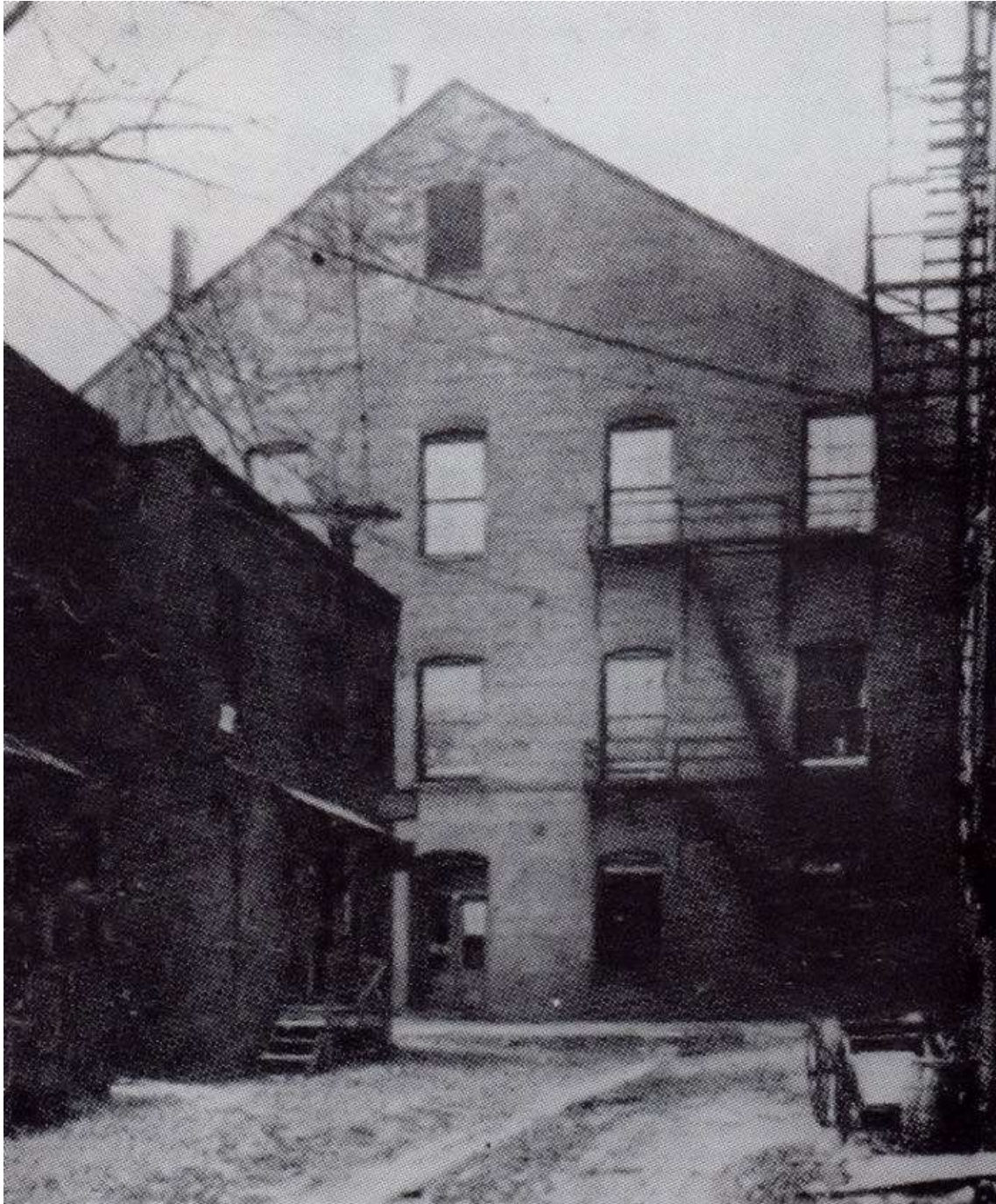
Fanny Brown, one of Booth’s many paramours

In summary then, your best bet is probably to make the attempt on Lincoln’s life when he is alone and unprotected. And you should probably bring along some more impressive firepower, just in case. If you are determined to do it in the theater, you should don a disguise and bring along a couple other gunmen in case one or more of you are killed or physically prevented from

reaching the president. The dumbest thing you could probably do would be to go it alone, as John Wilkes Booth, and arm yourself only with a derringer. But I guess you can't argue with success ... right?

Meanwhile, one of your comrades-in-arms, Lewis Paine/Payne/Powell, has a difficult task ahead of him as well. His goal is to kill Lincoln's Secretary of State, William Seward, who is recuperating at his stately manor in the heart of DC after being severely injured in a fall from a horse-drawn carriage just nine days earlier. Seward had suffered a broken lower jaw, a fractured right arm, torn ligaments in his foot, and heavy bruising over much of his body.

The 63-year-old secretary is therefore physically vulnerable, but assassinating him is still not going to be easy. For starters, Paine is going to have to gain access to the estate. Then he's going to have to find Seward without knowing the layout of the home or which floor or which of the many rooms the secretary is in. And he's going to have to get past a lot of people, because there are no less than eight other able-bodied adults in the home, five of them men, two of whom are military personnel. And there are readily accessible weapons in the home. And, as I may have mentioned, there are armed patrols all over the city, and they are quite capable of quickly responding to any signs of a disturbance at the Secretary of State's residence.



The rear view of Ford's Theater and 'Baptist Alley'

The attack on Seward has been all but written out of our history books, but in 1865 it was portrayed as an integral component of the plot against Lincoln, particularly during the show trial of the alleged conspirators. It is now mentioned only in passing, if at all. Which is probably because the story doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

In the home are: William Seward, the injured Secretary of State; William Bell, Seward's black servant; Frederick Seward, William's son as well as his Assistant Secretary of State; Major Augustus Seward, another son and a career Army officer (who will be promoted in a few weeks to lieutenant colonel); Private George Robinson, Seward's personal attendant (who will be

promoted to sergeant in a few weeks); Emerick Hansell, a US State Department courier; Frances Seward, the secretary's wife (who will be dead very soon); Fanny Seward, his daughter (who will be dead fairly soon); and, finally, the wife of one of the Seward sons.

Payne of course is going it alone, just like Booth, for reasons that have apparently never required an explanation. The five able-bodied men in the house, at least a couple of whom are likely armed, will pose a physical challenge. The three women will pose less of a physical threat, but one or more of them are very likely to run out into the street to summon any nearby patrols. And just the fact that there are so many people in the way will make it extremely difficult for Powell to control the situation.



Another of

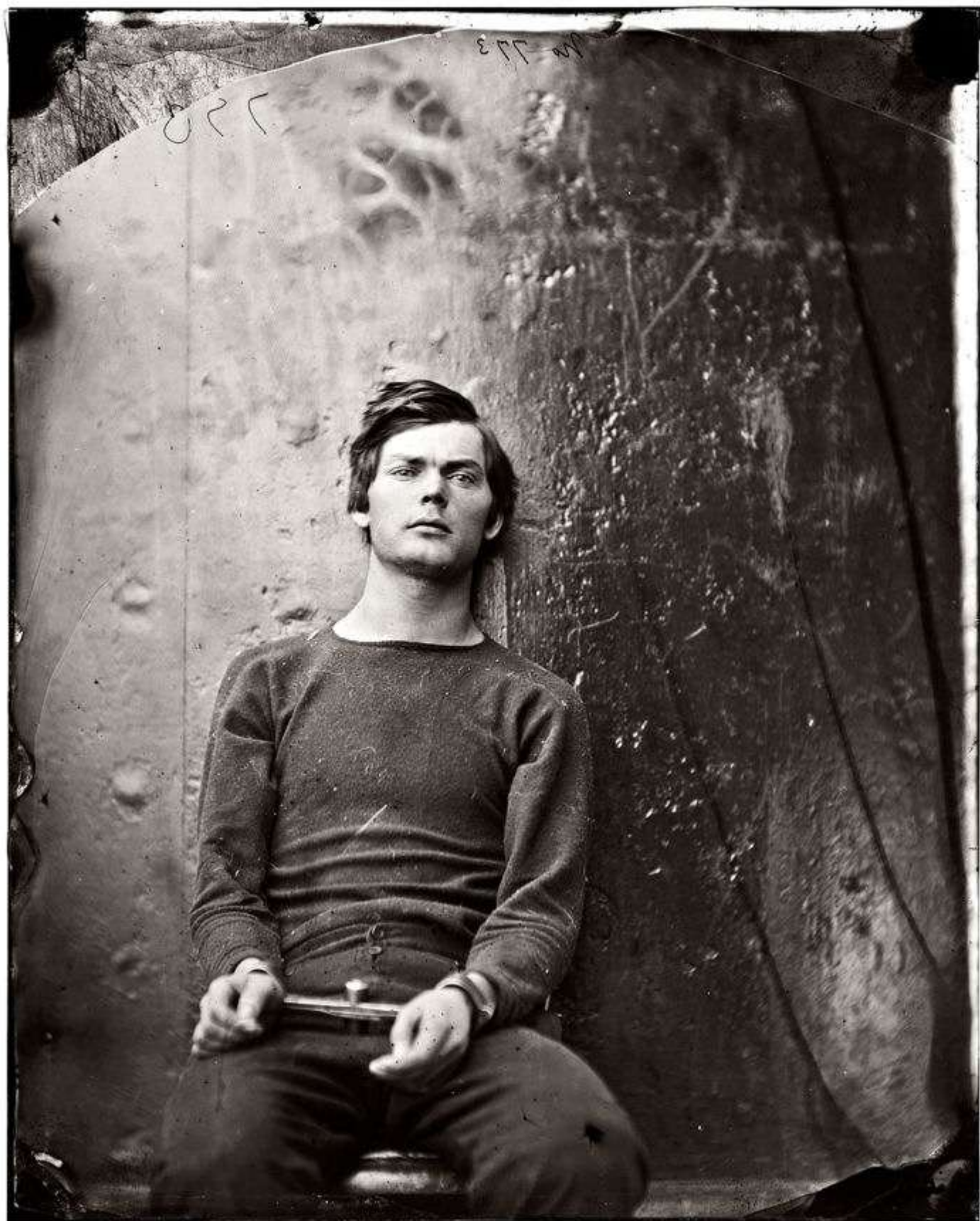
Booth's paramours, this one unidentified

Paine's mission is not unlike Booth's; he must enter the building, work his way past any resistance to get to his target, take out his target, work his way back out of the building past any resistance, and then somehow find his way out of Washington. But unlike Booth, Payne won't have even a single bullet to work with. Instead, he is going in armed only with a bludgeon and a knife. And he'll be coming out with nothing but the clothes on his back.

Technically speaking, he will be carrying a gun, but it doesn't work and so is only useful as a bludgeon. In a city overflowing with guns, Paine has chosen to bring one that doesn't work. Which means that, luckily for the Swards, no one is going to die.

Paine though is going to leave quite a trail of destruction once he enters the estate, which sits just a half-dozen blocks from Ford's Theater. Frederick Seward will be left gravely injured, with his head reportedly split open and his skull fractured in two places. Major Augustus Seward will also receive severe head injuries, with one report claiming that he was half scalped. Private Robinson will also be seriously wounded, with deep stab wounds to his chest. Emerick Hansell will receive at least one deep, very serious chest wound as well. Fanny Seward will be wounded as well, in some unspecified manner. And William Seward – who is lying in bed on his back, unable to defend himself – will be brutally stabbed about the head and neck, but will, despite his already weakened condition, miraculously survive.

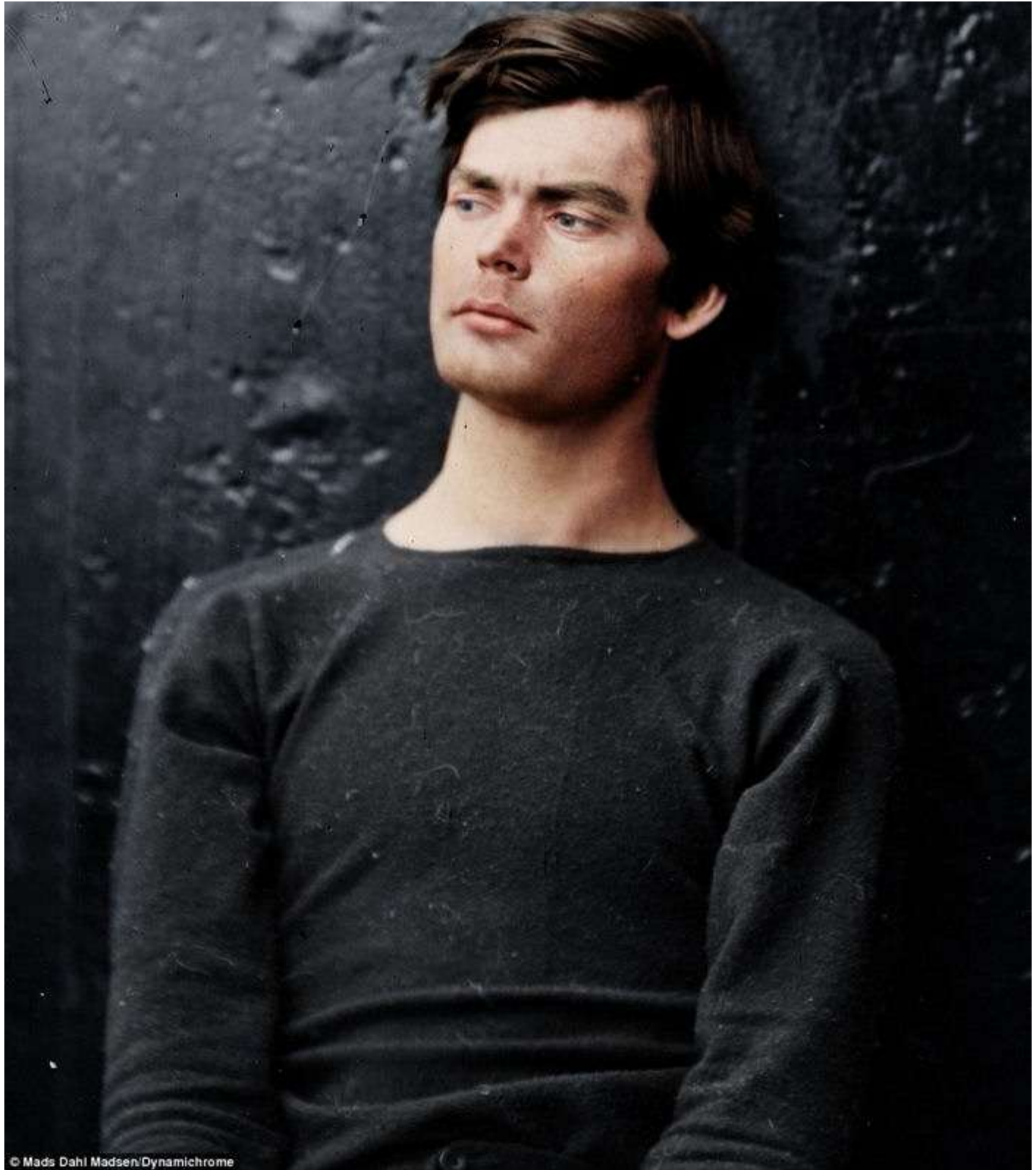
It is difficult to believe that the attack on Secretary of State Seward ever took place at all. Lewis Paine supposedly gravely wounded six people in hand-to-hand combat, four of them able-bodied men, and yet, as photos taken soon after his arrest just days later reveal, he didn't have so much as a scratch on him. He supposedly left his hat, gun and knife behind, creating a handy evidence trail, but why would he leave his only weapons behind? He also allegedly left a bloodstained coat with gloves and a fake moustache in the pocket in the woods just outside of DC. Lewis Paine was apparently a very considerate attempted assassin.



Lewis Paine, April 1865

The descriptions of the conditions of the victims came from the first three people to conveniently arrive at the crime scene: Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, and Surgeon General Joseph Barnes. You know, just your typical first responders. None of them reported seeing Augustus there. Stanton initially claimed that only William Seward, Fred Seward and George Robinson were injured; Augustus Seward, Emerick Hansell and Fanny Seward were later added to the victim list, apparently so that the prosecution would have suitable witnesses. It was an entire month before Fanny Seward came forward with her account of the attack.

Augustus was later presented at trial as both a victim of and an eyewitness to the attack – the attack that very likely didn't take place, in the home he wasn't actually in at the time. His testimony was wildly at odds with that of Robinson, with both men claiming that they had been in the room and personally witnessed the attack on William Seward. Not only did their accounts significantly differ, but neither really explained why it was that with the two of them in the room, and with Frederick and Hansell in the home as well, they were unable to defend the secretary.



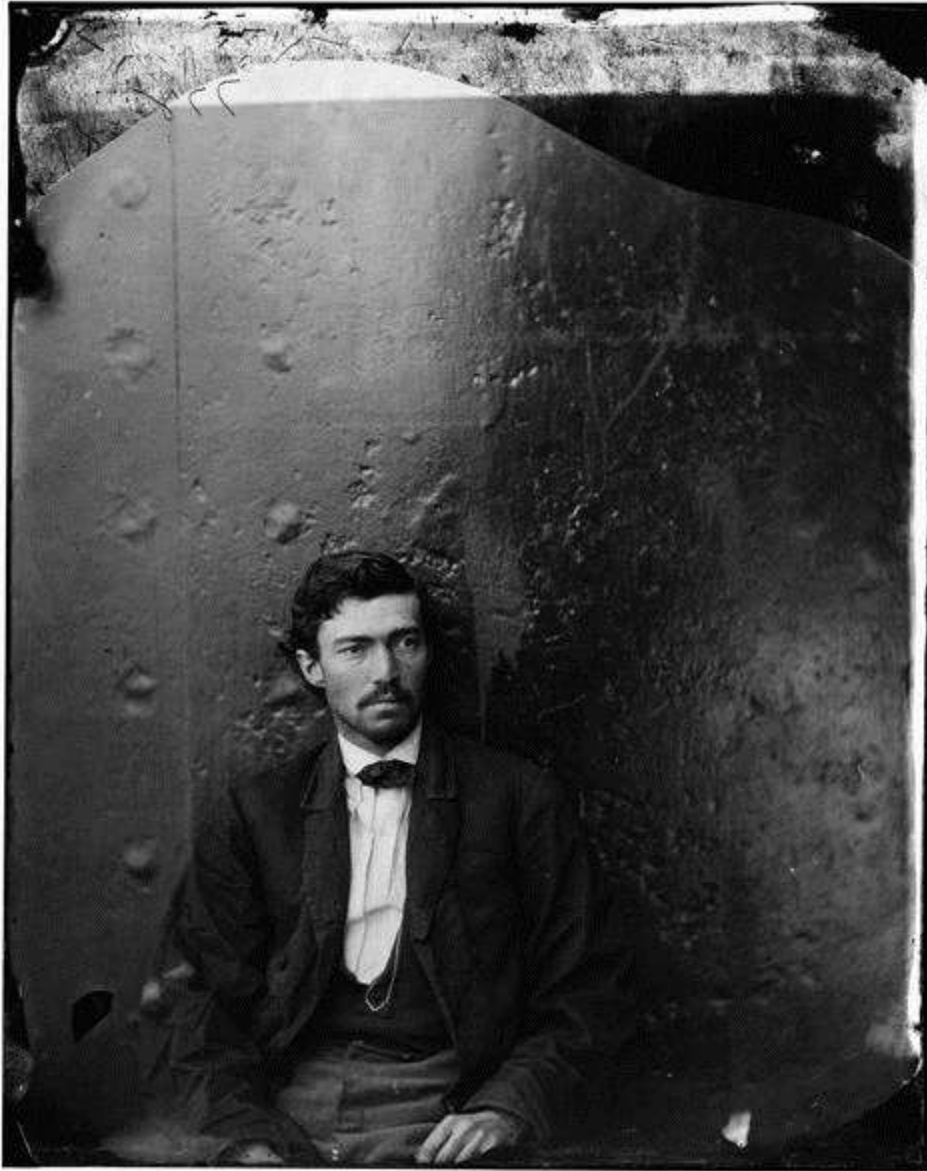
© Mads Dahl Madsen/Dynamichrome

This remarkable image of Paine, captured in April 1865, has been lovingly colorized
It is impossible to determine whether the alleged attack ever took place, but it appears extremely unlikely. It does not seem logistically possible for one barely armed man to have done what

Paine is supposed to have done. And it doesn't seem physically possible for him to have done so without sustaining a single visible injury. There is no tangible evidence that Paine ever entered the home. The only 'evidence' that has ever existed is the dubious (and conflicting) accounts told by the alleged victims and by the high-ranking cabinet officials who just happened to be first on the scene.

Let's now briefly review the key elements of this story: two assassins; three targets; numerous people to get through to get to those targets; numerous other people to get by to flee the scene; a city essentially under martial law; and one – exactly one – bullet. Anyone see anything wrong with that scenario?

Anyone notice anything peculiar about the two images of Lewis Powell in my last post? Anything at all? Other than, of course, the fact that one of them had been colorized, making it appear unsettlingly contemporary? Because they are, to be sure, very unusual images. There's really nothing else like them in all of recorded history – except for, that is, the remarkable images that also exist of most of his alleged co-conspirators. And perhaps it is time for us to now meet those alleged conspirators, beginning with the rather dashing gentleman pictured below, Mr. Samuel Bland Arnold, who looks almost like he could be a 21st century actor posing for a publicity photo for his latest blockbuster film.



Arnold was thirty at the time of the assassination and was working as a commissary clerk at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. He was said to be a former Confederate soldier, though it seems very likely that he was actually a Union operative (as appears to be the case with almost all of Booth's alleged accomplices). The files of the Bureau of Military Justice (a misnomer if ever there was one) contain the following tidbits of information on Arnold:

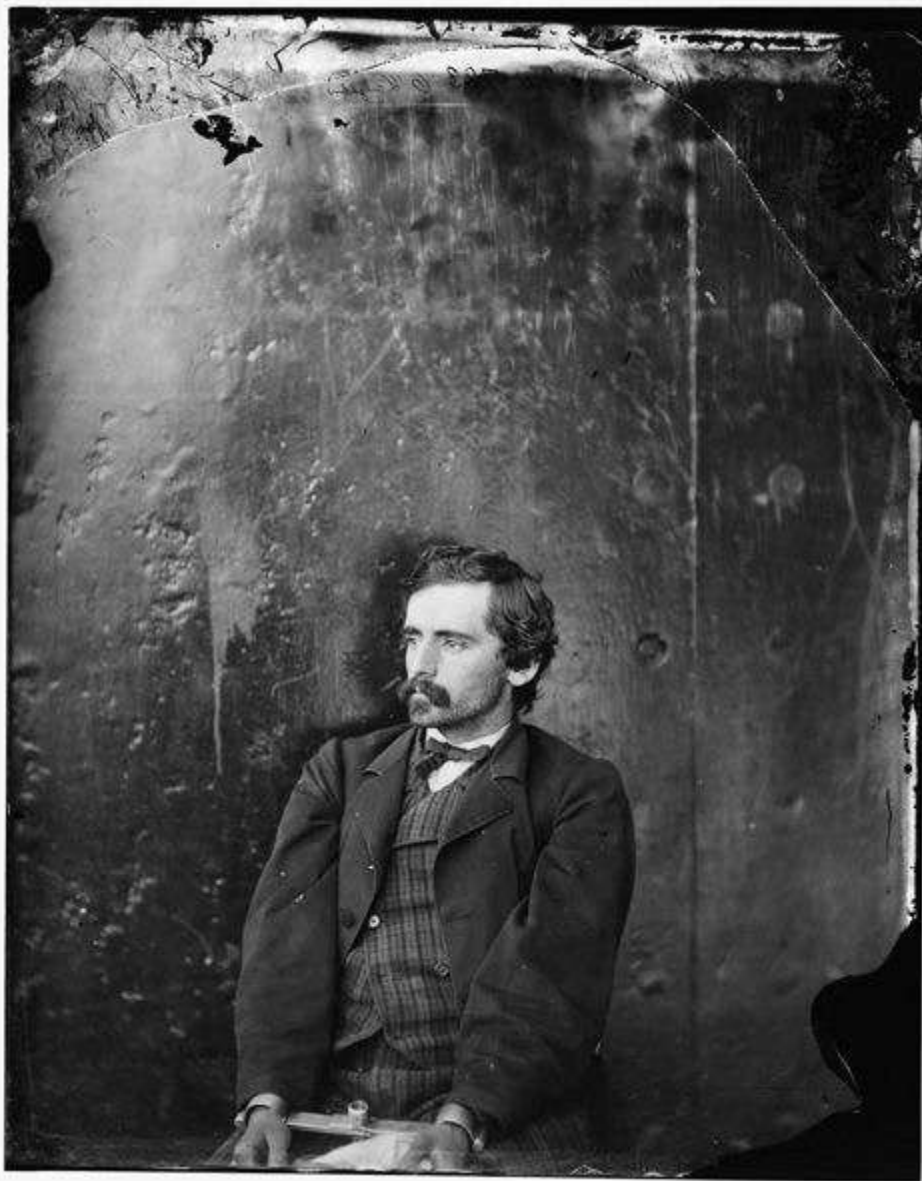
"Samuel B. Arnold was born at Georgetown, D.C., of highly respectable parents ... He was first sent to be educated at Georgetown College, from there he was sent to the Reverend J.H. Dashills, [in] Baltimore County, his parents having removed from Georgetown to Baltimore. He was one year in Rockingham County, Virginia, under the charge of the Reverend Mr. Gibbins, and afterward sent to Saint Timothy Hall, Catonsville, Maryland, and place[d] under the Rev. L. Vanbakelin."

The picture painted here is of a well educated young man who had a rather privileged upbringing in and around the nation's capital. Not at all the kind of guy you would expect to have donned a Confederate uniform, unless he did so as a covert Union operative. Arnold was convicted of

complicity in the plot to kill Lincoln and was handed a life sentence by the military tribunal. He served only four years though before being pardoned by President Johnson and released in 1869. Arnold lived to the ripe old age of seventy-two, passing away on the autumnal equinox of 1906.

Next up is Michael O'Laughlin (or O'Laughlen – the two are used interchangeably throughout the literature on the assassination), who, like Arnold, was a ruggedly handsome, well dressed young man from a well-to-do family. Just twenty-four when Lincoln was shot, O'Laughlin had known Booth since childhood, when they had lived across the street from each other in Baltimore (Arnold had also been a childhood friend of Mr. Booth). The Bureau of Military Justice files reveal the following about O'Laughlin:

“Michael O'Laughlin was born in the City of Baltimore ... He was educated at a School conducted by a highly respectable Teacher at the corner of Front and LaFayette Sts., and after leaving School learned the trade of ornamental Plaster work, and also acquired the art of Engraving. The company he was in the habit of associating with was not of a character that a person indisposed to evil would have made choice of. His appearance was generally of a genteel character.”

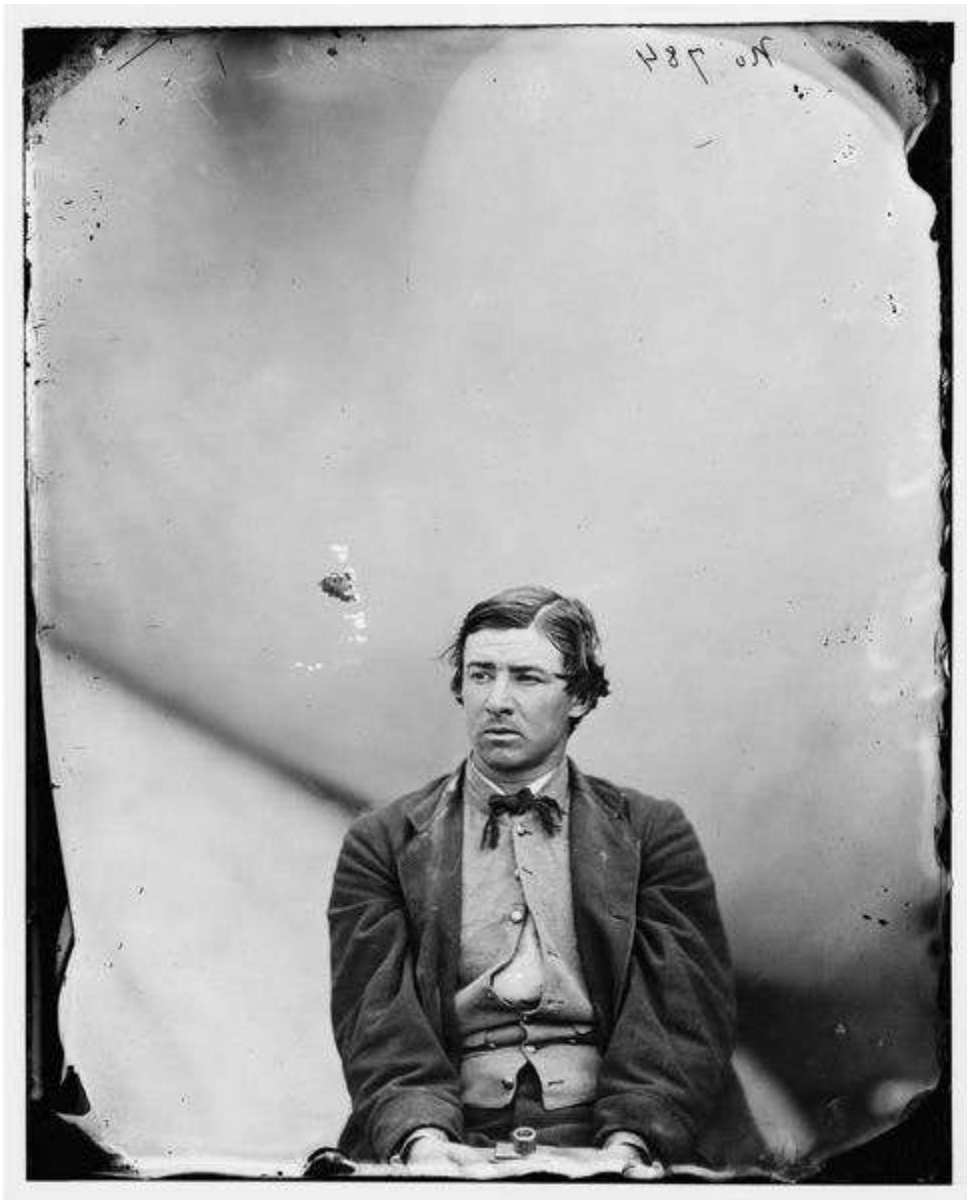


In 1865, O'Laughlin was working for his older brother as a clerk in a Baltimore feed store. That brother, according to government files, was a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle. Testimony before the military tribunal indicated that Michael likely was as well. Convicted by that tribunal, O'Laughlin was given a life sentence, which proved to be a death sentence when he contracted yellow fever in prison and died, strangely enough, on or about the autumnal equinox of 1867. His remains are interred in the same Baltimore cemetery where Arnold and Booth can be found.

Like Arnold and O'Laughlin (and Booth), David Edgar Herold (frequently identified in print as David Herald) was a well educated young man from an upscale family. Herold was born in Maryland and raised in – where else? – Washington, DC. His father was the chief clerk at the Washington Navy Yard store – the same Washington Navy Yard whose guarded bridge Booth and Herold were inexplicably allowed to cross on the night of April 14, 1865.

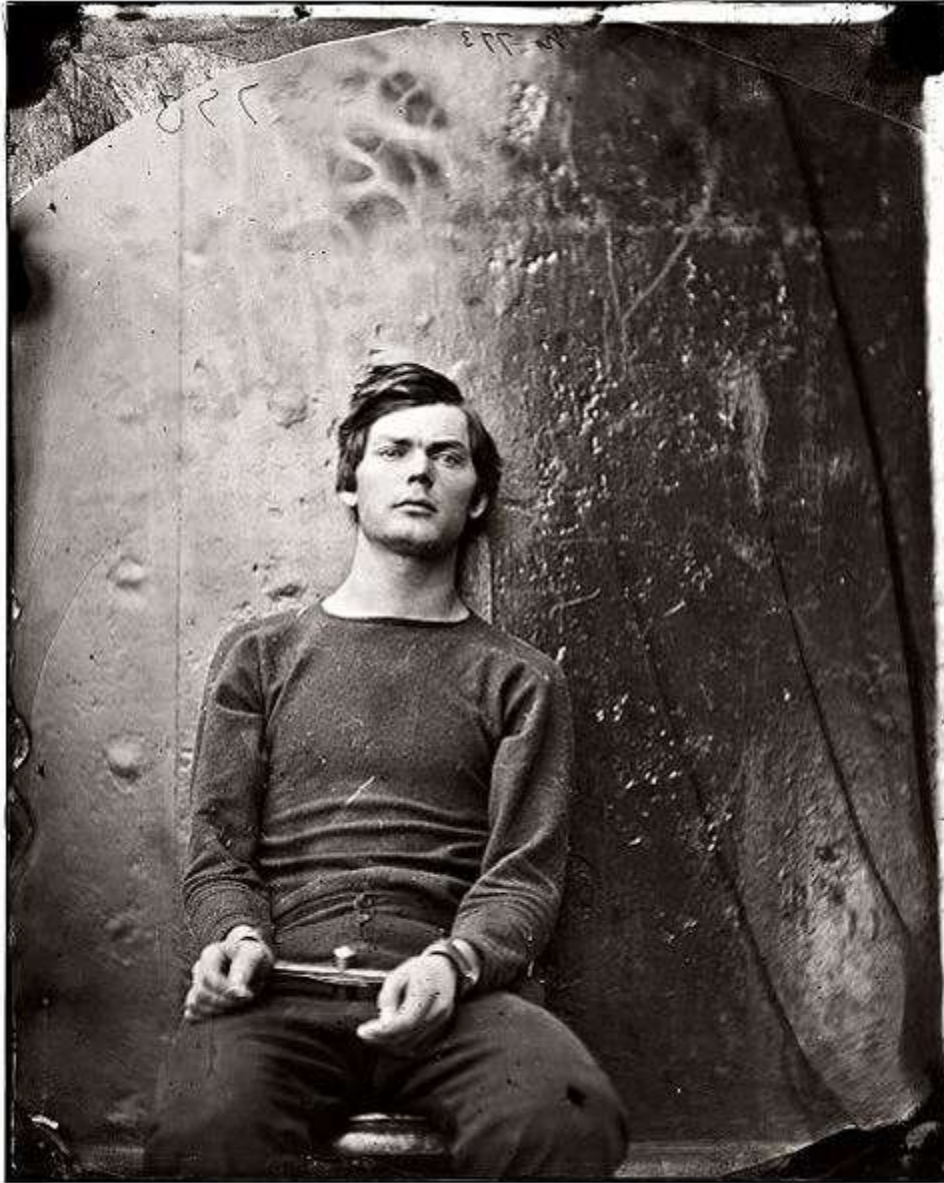
Herold attended Georgetown College, followed by the Rittenhouse Academy and then the prestigious Charlotte Hall Military Academy. He later went to work for various pharmacists and doctors, including our old friend "Dr." Francis Tumblety. On one occasion in 1863, when he was dispatched to the White House to deliver a bottle of castor oil, Herold had the honor of personally meeting President Lincoln.





Tried along with seven of his alleged co-conspirators, Herold was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. That sentence was carried out on July 7, 1865, just after Herold's twenty-third birthday. He is, as would be expected, buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, DC. Thus far we have met four lads (Booth, Herold, McLaughlin, and Arnold) who all were raised in and lived and worked in the Baltimore/Washington DC area. Considering that the conspiracy to kill Lincoln, to the extent that it is acknowledged at all, is invariably cast as a Confederate conspiracy, there don't appear to have been too many southerners in the crowd. There was at least one though – our old friend Lewis Thornton Powell.

The youngest of the alleged conspirators – just twenty at the time of the assassination – Powell was also known as Lewis Paine, Lewis Payne, Reverend Wood, The Reverend, James Wood, Mosby, and Kincheloe, among other aliases. As his shadowy identities would seem to imply, he was by many accounts an intelligence operative. Raised in Alabama, Georgia and Florida, Powell was educated by his father, the Reverend George C. Powell.

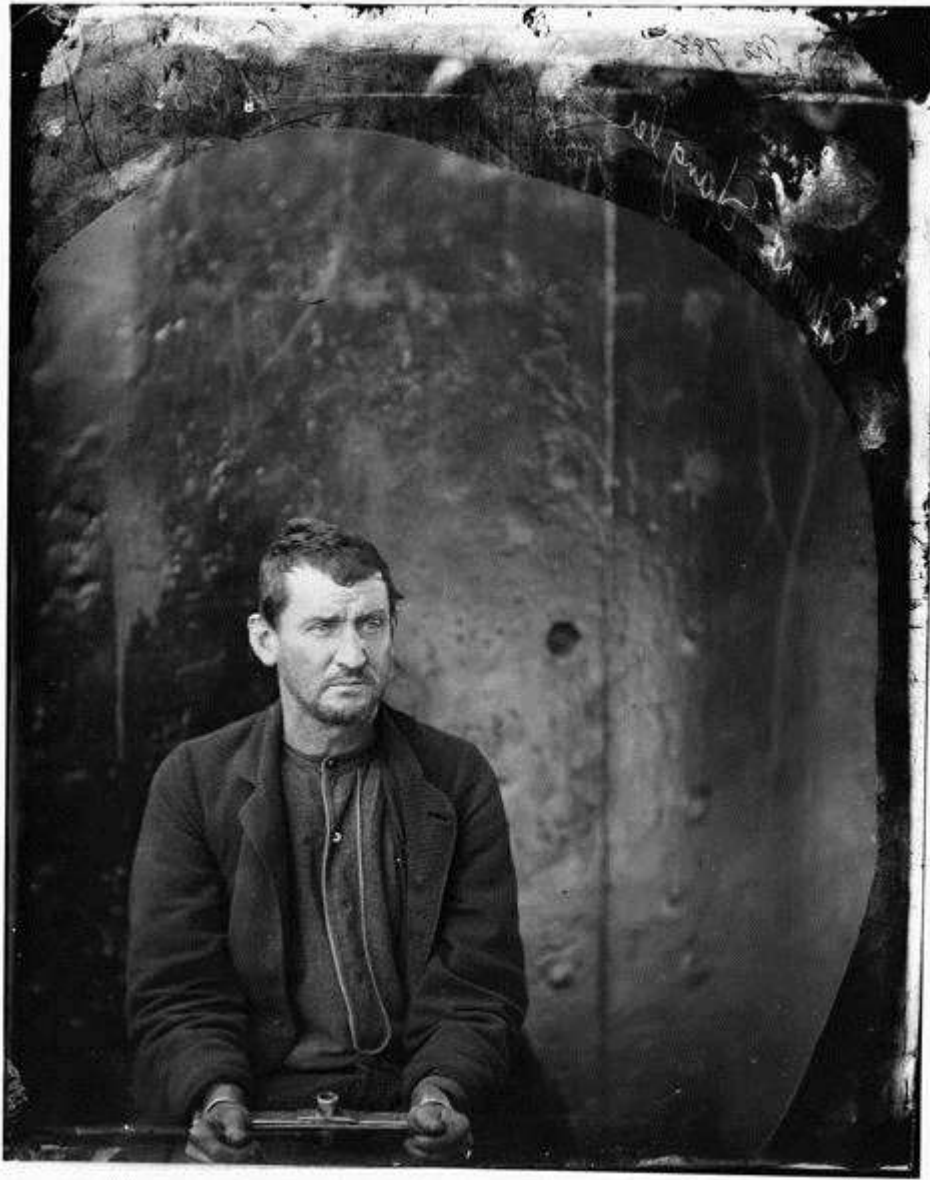


Lewis entered the service at a young age – either sixteen or seventeen, depending upon the source. Powell's two older brothers enlisted as well, with all three serving with the 2nd Florida Infantry. Lewis was the only one of the three to survive the Civil War. Wounded at Gettysburg in early July 1863, he was taken prisoner and sent to a POW hospital. Following his recovery, he was put to work as a male nurse in a hospital in Baltimore, from where he reportedly escaped, apparently by basically walking out the door.

After that, according to historian Theodore Roscoe (*The Web of Conspiracy*), his "movements are hard to follow." Author Jim Bishop added, in *The Day Lincoln Was Shot*, that "There is an unexplained hitch in his [military] records." According to various accounts, he went to work with the paramilitary forces serving under John Singleton Mosby. In January 1865, he turned up in a boardinghouse in Baltimore, Maryland and allegedly became a Lincoln assassination conspirator. On July 7, 1865, he was hanged.

There is scant evidence that Powell knew Booth at all, though an apocryphal tale is often told of a very young Lewis meeting Booth in a theater following a performance by the acclaimed actor. There doesn't appear to be any evidence at all linking him to the other alleged conspirators. He photographed really well though.

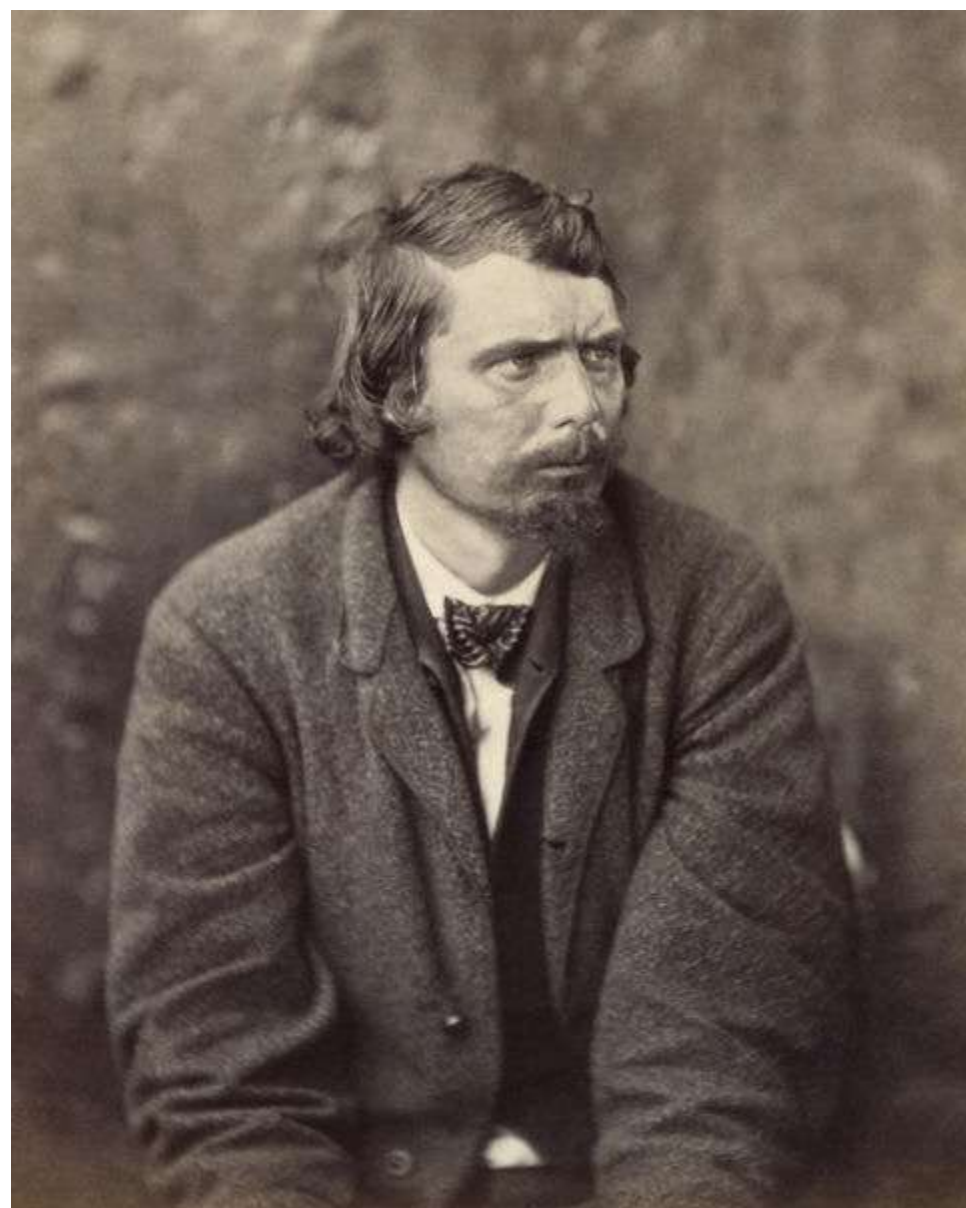
Moving back up north, we next meet the hapless Ned Spangler, also known as Ed Spangler, Edward Spangler, Edman Spangler, and Edmund Spangler. The oldest of the alleged male conspirators at thirty-nine, Spangler was a journeyman carpenter originally from Pennsylvania, though he had spent the majority of his life in the Baltimore area. During the Civil War, he was living in Washington, DC, where he was employed at Ford's Theater as a carpenter and stagehand.





Spangler had met Booth many years earlier when he worked on the Booth family's Tudor mansion. In the aftermath of the Lincoln assassination, he was accused of holding Booth's horse and aiding and abetting the actor's escape from the theater. The charges though were dubious at best. Sentenced to a six-year prison term, the most lenient sentence handed down by the military tribunal, he was pardoned four years later by President Andrew Johnson. Spangler died on February 7, 1875, reportedly of tuberculosis.

Next up is the only foreign national in the group, George Andrew Atzerodt, who was brought over to America from Germany when he was eight. Raised in, of course, Maryland, Atzerodt and his brother owned a carriage repair shop where George worked as a painter. At the time of the assassination, he was twenty-nine.





The military tribunal maintained that Atzerodt had been assigned the task of assassinating newly-installed Vice President Andrew Johnson, but he had allegedly lost his nerve and failed to carry out the assignment. In truth, there is no real evidence that Johnson, who was likely involved or at least had knowledge of the plot, was ever targeted. As with Stanton, this was a case of the conspirators themselves claiming to be intended victims. Atzerodt was found guilty of his alleged crimes and was hanged on July 7, 1865.

The seventh of the alleged conspirators was Dr. Samuel Mudd, yet another Marylander. Like many of the others, Mudd was born into a large, well-to-do family and he was well educated, having graduated from both Georgetown College in DC and the medical school at the University of Maryland in Baltimore. Mudd worked as both a country doctor and a tobacco farmer, and was reportedly a slave owner who harbored southern sympathies.

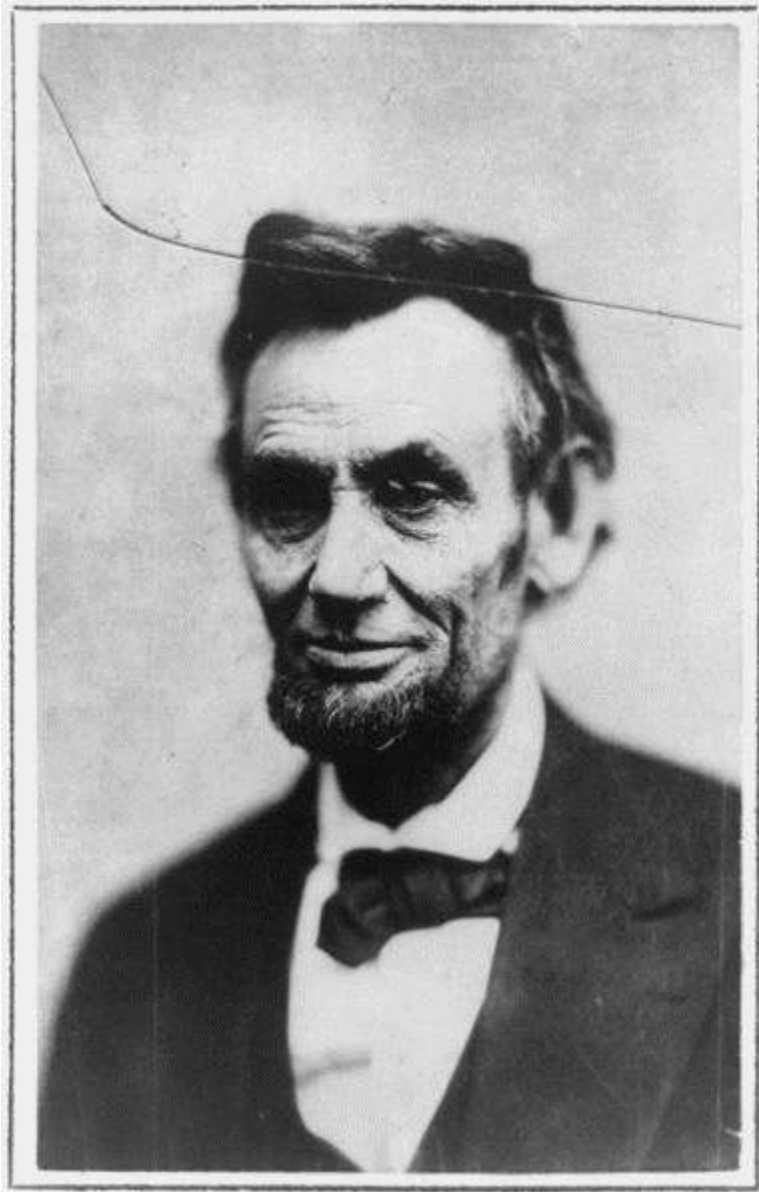


Mudd, thirty-two at the time, stood trial along with the others on charges of having aided and abetted Booth's plot and having offered medical aid to the injured actor. His actual role has been fiercely debated by mainstream historians, all of whom have grossly misrepresented the Lincoln assassination. Convicted by the tribunal, Mudd was sentenced to life in prison but was pardoned just four years later by Johnson.

Having now met seven of the nine people who stood trial as Booth's alleged co-conspirators, is there anything that stands out as unusual about the images adorning this post? Anything at all? And keep in mind that these are official booking photos, otherwise known as mugshots. But they certainly don't look like any other mugshots ever taken. We certainly have no such images of Lee Harvey Oswald. Or Sirhan Sirhan. Or Charles Guiteau. Or Leon Czolgosz. Or James Earl Ray. Or John Hinckley. Or Mark David Chapman. Or any other alleged assassin or attempted assassin. Or anyone ever arrested on suspicion of having committed any crime.

No one else, you see, had one of the top professional photographers of the era come by to take their mugshots. No one else had the benefit of dramatic backdrops, professional lighting, and flattering poses and camera angles. And no one else was photographed by the very same guy, Alexander Gardner, who was long credited as being the guy who took the last known images of President Abraham Lincoln.

When called upon to photograph the people accused of plotting against that president, Gardner certainly rose to the occasion. The images of the alleged Lincoln conspirators are arguably the finest work that the Civil War photographer ever did. The portraits of the conspirators' victim, taken not long before Lincoln's death, are rather lackluster in comparison.





The very same Alexander Gardner was also the guy who, just weeks after lovingly photographing the alleged conspirators, photographed several of those same conspirators being led to the gallows and hanged. And the guy who officially photographed Lincoln's funeral. And the guy who took the only image of what was claimed to be the body of John Wilkes Booth, after the actor had allegedly been gunned down and transported back to Washington.





Left to right: Mary Surratt, Lewis Powell, David Herold, and George Atzerodt

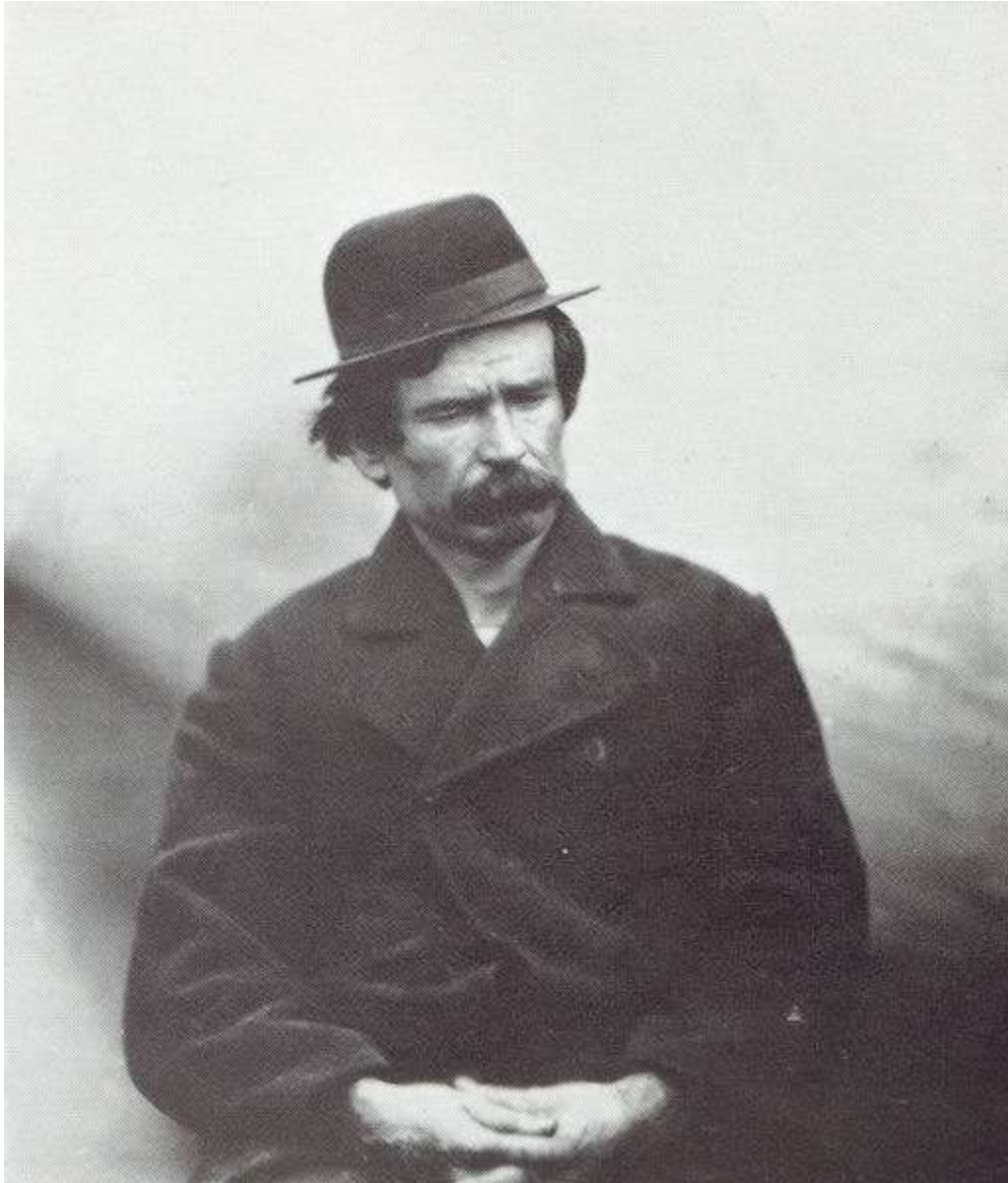
That image though won't be displayed here, for reasons explained by author W.C. Jameson (*Return of Assassin*): "Following the work of the identification committee, the body was photographed by Alexander Gardner, one of the members. Gardner conducted his work in the presence of War Department detective James A. Wardell. Gardner was allowed to take only one photograph and was quickly hastened to a darkroom to develop it. Wardell stood by his side the entire time, and when the picture was finished, Wardell took possession of it, along with the plate ... Moments later, Lafayette Baker took the photographic plate from Wardell. In response to subsequent inquiries, the government denied that any photographs were ever taken of the body ... To this day, no one knows what became of either the picture or the plate."

Theodore Roscoe adds that, "Undoubtedly Gardner gave the glass plate to Lafayette Baker or to Stanton. But the Secret Service Chief made no mention of it in his history. Stanton never mentioned it. War Department records are absolutely silent on the subject. The photograph never reached public domain."

Nothing unusual about any of that. Returning now to the collection of the world's most glamorous mugshots, it should be noted that there are, beyond their mere existence, other curiosities concerning these photos. Like the fact that the photo of Dr. Mudd that was officially released, and presented above, isn't actually Dr. Mudd at all. It appears to be Hartmann Richter, a cousin of George Atzerodt who was never charged with any complicity in the assassination plot. The real Dr. Mudd is pictured below.



And then there is the guy in the next image, officially photographed as a conspirator yet never charged, tried or even identified. The government just pretended as though he never existed.



The appearance of the alleged conspirators in these striking images stands in stark contrast to their treatment throughout their confinement, which can only be described as barbaric. The suspects' ankles and wrists were kept shackled at all times. They were forced to wear specially-designed heavy leather hoods at all times other than when they were in court. The hoods were very tightly fit and featured pads that put tremendous pressure on the prisoners' eyes, causing intense pain in addition to subjecting the wearers to extreme and prolonged sensory deprivation. Some of the prisoners were also fitted with iron collars attached to a heavy ball and chain. These also had to be worn at all times.

All suspects were confined to tiny solitary cells outfitted with just a thin straw mattress, a worn army blanket, and an open bucket to use as a toilet. They were allowed no visitors and their guards were even forbidden from speaking to them. Armed sentries kept watch at all times to ensure that the prisoners had no human interaction whatsoever. Each suspect was assigned to a

cluster of three cells, insuring that they had no neighbors to interact with. It was widely rumored that they were being tortured in more overt ways as well, which was undoubtedly the case. No attorneys were provided for the defendants; they had to retain their own counsel, despite being completely cut off from the outside world. Consequently, some of them began the proceedings with no representation. Even after obtaining counsel, they were not allowed to have any private consultations with their attorneys. And they were not allowed to testify or speak in court at all, nor could any statements made by them be introduced. But other than all that – and numerous other factors, which will be discussed later – the conspirators were given a fair trial. Let's now close out this edition by meeting the last of the alleged conspirators who were tried by military tribunal – the one who, without explanation, was not photographed by Mr. Gardner. That would be, of course, Mary Surratt, the first woman to be executed in these United States.



Surratt was, shockingly, a native Marylander from a rather wealthy family. Born sometime in the early 1820s (no one seems to know exactly when), she was educated at a private Catholic boarding school in Alexandria, Virginia, at a time when, as Theodore Roscoe noted, “higher learning for females was frowned upon as radical.” At fifteen (or sixteen, or nineteen), she married John Surratt, with whom she had three offspring, Isaac, Anna, and John, Jr.

The Surratts did well for themselves for a number of years. At one time, John owned as many as 1,200 acres of land and a number of businesses, including a hotel, a tavern and a boardinghouse. Much of that land straddled the border between DC and Maryland, just thirteen miles from downtown Washington, DC. The settlement there soon came to be known as Surrattsville, which is frequently claimed to have been heavily involved in Confederate espionage activities.

Spymaster Lafayette Baker, accompanied by some 300 Union soldiers, converged on Surrattsville in late 1861 to launch a full investigation of the Surratt family and various others suspected of involvement in the Confederate underground. According to pseudo-historian Roy Chamlee, Jr. (*Lincoln's Assassins*), Baker's team unearthed compelling evidence of a vast network of covert Confederate operations. They made though only a few token arrests, which, given that thousands elsewhere were rounded up by Baker's thugs in mass arrests based on far less evidence than what was found in Surrattsville, strongly suggests that the operations in Surrattsville weren't actually aimed at aiding the south,

In any event, John Surratt died in 1862 and his widow fell upon hard times. She was nevertheless able to finance a costly move to the heart of DC in late 1864, taking possession of a boardinghouse just four blocks from Ford's Theater. It was in that boardinghouse that Booth and the others allegedly plotted first the kidnapping of, and then the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Found guilty by the military tribunal, Mary Surratt was hanged on July 7, 1865.

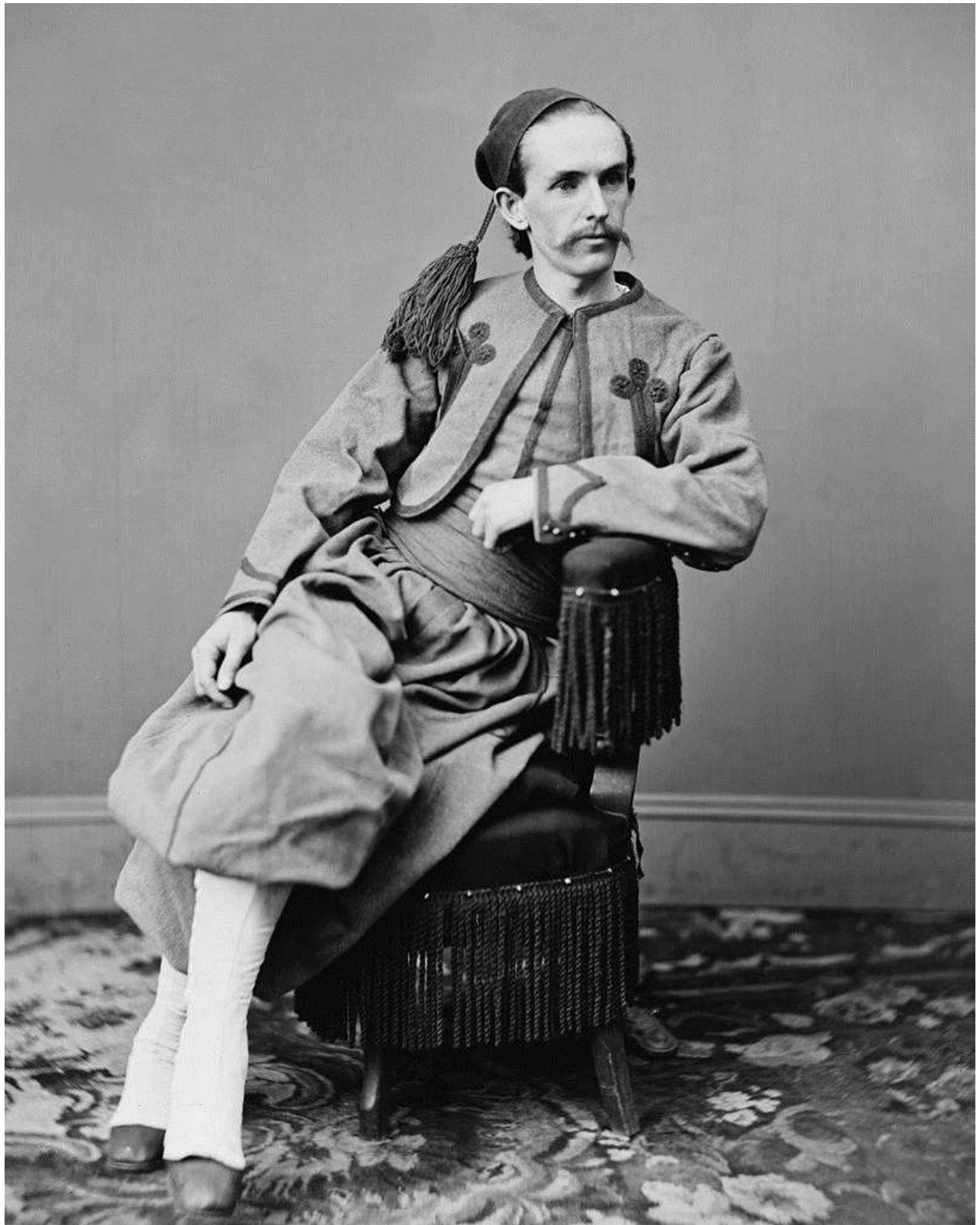
In the last installment, we met the seven men and one woman who faced trial by military tribunal for their alleged roles in the plot to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln. But there were two others involved in the supposed conspiracy: the mastermind and assassin, John Wilkes Booth, and his alleged right-hand man, John Harrison Surratt, Jr., son of the executed Mary Surratt. Like most of his alleged co-conspirators, Surratt was a well educated, good looking young man from a well-to-do Northern family. He was born in April 1844 to John and Mary Surratt, and was baptized at St. Peter's Church in – where else? – Washington, DC. He was educated at St. Charles College in, naturally enough, Maryland. At the tender age of eighteen, following the death of his father, Surratt became the Postmaster of Surrattsville. Beyond that, little is known about the early life of the man cast by the government as Booth's primary accomplice. As Theodore Roscoe wrote in *The Web of Conspiracy*:

“Official records on John Harrison Surratt, Jr., are similarly devoid of depth ... He passes through Washington like a shadow. His appearances in the house on H Street are shadowy. Now he is glimpsed in Richmond. Next he is glimpsed in Canada. The authorities can never quite lay their hands on him, and neither can the historians. Of the immediate members of Booth's coterie, least is known about John Harrison Surratt, Jr.”



John Harrison Surratt, Jr., as sketched by an artist for Harper's Weekly

Roscoe claims, as have many other historians, that Surratt “operated as spy and as message-bearer, conveying Confederate dispatches between Richmond, Washington, and Montreal, Canada. By the time Mrs. Surratt’s boardinghouse was well established in Washington, John H. Surratt had become a well paid and highly adept operator in the Secret Service of the C.S.A. [Confederate States of America]” Maybe so. It seems far more likely though, given various facts of the case, that he was actually a Union operative posing as a Confederate operative. Or that the two ‘sides’ were actually one and the same, as seems likely. Of the ten alleged conspirators, Surratt, who celebrated his 21st birthday just one day before Lincoln was gunned down, was the only one not to be captured or killed in the massive manhunt that followed the assassination. He quickly made his way to Canada, where he found sanctuary with a Catholic priest during the time that his mother was being tried, sentenced and hanged. He left Canada in early September, some two months after the executions had been carried out. From that point on, the US government appears to have been well aware of his movements and whereabouts.



John Surratt in his Papal Zouave uniform

On March 4, 1867, the *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle* summarized the findings of an investigation by the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives as follows: "It appears

that Surratt sailed from Canada in September 1865, and landed in Liverpool on the 27th of the same month; that the fact of his landing was communicated to Secretary Seward by the American vice consul, Mr. Wilding. No steps were taken by the President or Secretary of State to secure his arrest. No demand was made upon England for his return to this country, nor is there any evidence of the procurement or attempted procurement of an indictment against him.” Surratt himself would later say that, “While I was in London, Liverpool and Birmingham, our consuls at those ports knew who I was and advised our State Department of my whereabouts, but nothing was done.” Curious behavior indeed for a government that had, just months earlier, aggressively prosecuted and executed lesser conspirators.

On November 24, 1865, two months into Surratt’s leisurely stay in England, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton abruptly withdrew the standing reward on Surratt’s head, clearly signaling to Europe and elsewhere that the US wasn’t all that interested in pursuing the capture and prosecution of the alleged conspirator. Stanton, needless to say, offered no explanation for his unusual actions.

In April 1866, Surratt sailed from England to Italy, arriving in Rome, where he was almost immediately assigned a position with the Pope’s elite Papal Zouave military guard. On April 21, a fellow Zouave, Henri de Sainte-Marie, who happened to be an old friend from Maryland, informed America’s minister to Rome, General Rufus King, of Surratt’s whereabouts and true identity. A Cardinal Antonelli explained to King that “if the American government desired the surrender of the criminal there would be no difficulty in the way.” The US government, nevertheless, chose to look the other way.

Returning once again to the summary of the findings of the House Committee, we find that “news of [Surratt’s] presence in Rome did reach the ears of minister King. He was informed by another than the Secretary of State that Surratt was in the military service of the Pope, and communicated the fact by letter, dated August 8, 1866, to his department. Notwithstanding this, no steps were taken to identify or secure the arrest of the *supposed* conspirator and assassin ...” [emphasis added]

No explanation was given, of course, for the nearly four-month delay in drafting and sending the letter. On November 11, 1866, after Surratt had been going about his business in Rome for some seven months, making no effort to disguise himself, Papal authorities ordered his arrest. He allegedly then leapt from a cliff and made his escape, somehow supposedly surviving a 100-foot drop and evading at least 50 soldiers who were in hot pursuit within minutes. He then casually made his way across Italy, keeping a low profile by continuing to wear the garishly colored uniform of the Papal Zouave.



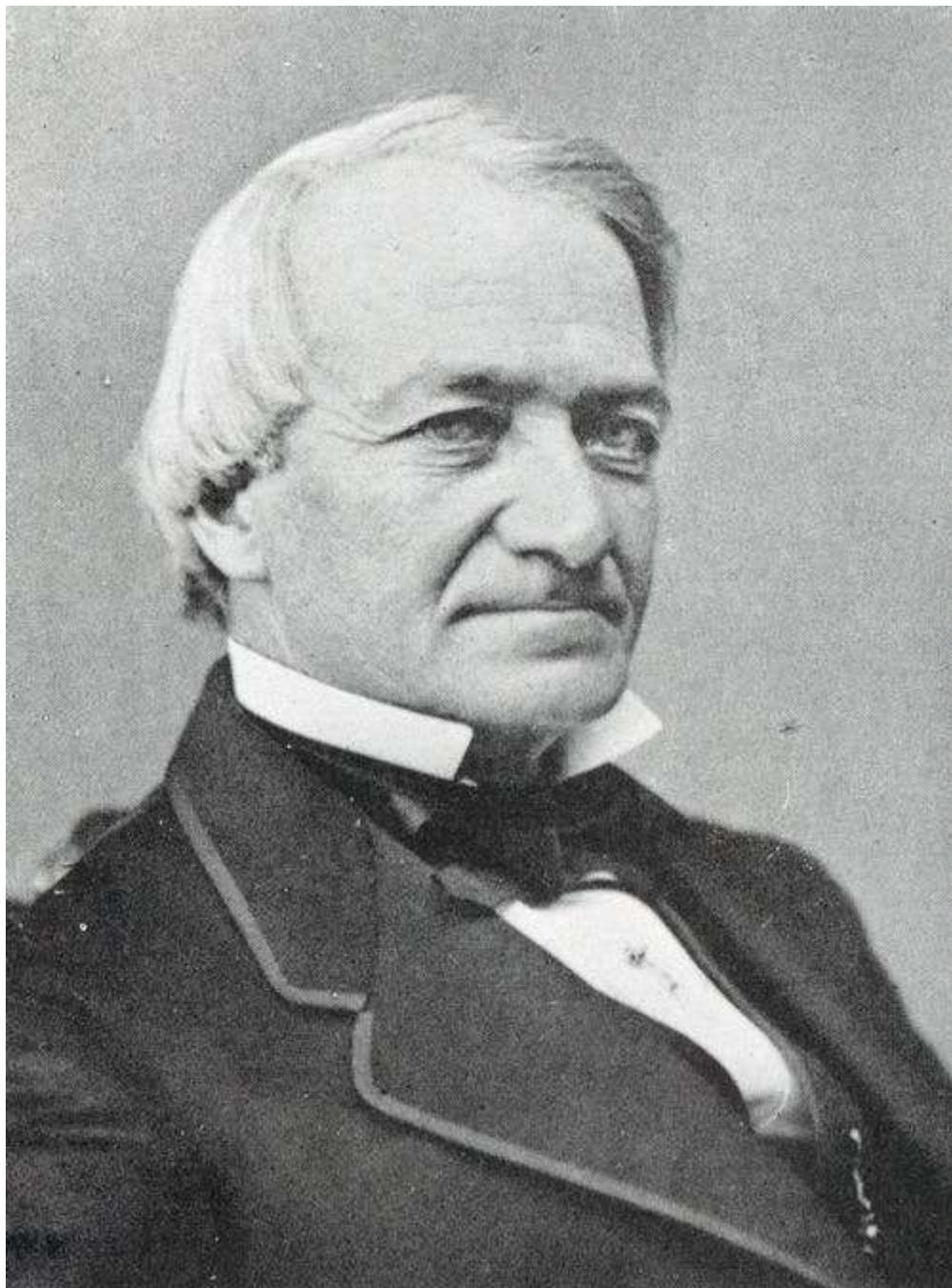
Barracks at Veroli, Italy, from where John Surrat purportedly escaped

After making his way to Naples, where he was sheltered by the local police and allowed to sleep at the station as a non-paying guest for three nights, he booked passage first to Malta and then to Alexandria, Egypt. On November 27, 1866, he was finally arrested by US authorities. It was almost another full month though before he was dispatched back to the US aboard the *Swatara*, a US Navy vessel, which set sail on the winter solstice, December 21, 1866.

That return voyage took unusually long to reach the states, nearly a month and a half. Had a paddleboat been available, Washington likely would have opted to use that. Upon reaching US shores, the vessel was delayed for another few weeks while the crew waited for ice to melt on the Potomac. There were, of course, other ports available from which Surratt could have been quickly transported by train to Washington, but authorities chose to delay his arrival for as long as possible.

As researcher Vaughan Shelton (*Mask for Treason*) wrote, “When the papal government in Rome finally forced the issue by arresting Surratt, every possible tactic was used to delay his return.” Otto Eisenschiml (*In the Shadow of Lincoln’s Death*) concurred, noting that “Stanton had tried his utmost to keep Surratt from being brought back at all ...”

On February 4, 1867, the Grand Jury of the District of Columbia indicted John Surratt, who was still being held aboard the *Swatara* at the mouth of the Potomac. On February 19, the *Swatara* finally anchored at the Washington Navy Yard and Surratt set foot on US soil for the first time in nearly two years. A bench warrant for his arrest was issued that same day. Four days later, on February 23, Surratt was brought to court to enter a plea.



Lead defense attorney Joseph H. Bradley



Co-counsel

Richard T. Merrick

On April 18, 1867, Surratt's defense attorneys filed a motion to set a date for the start of the trial, saying they were fully prepared to proceed. On that very same day, the district attorney's office filed a motion for a continuance. It was just the first of many attempts by the state to delay the onset of the trial. The *New York Herald* reported, on May 19, 1867, that the "prisoner's legal representatives have over and over again reported themselves ready, but, contrary to the general ruling, the prosecution, after six months of preparation, has never yet been able to say, 'We are prepared to proceed with the trial.'" Ten days later, the *Baltimore Sun* added that it "is hinted that, for reasons not made public, the trial of Surratt is not at all desirable."

The question that most obviously comes to mind throughout this sordid chapter of US history is why the government suddenly lost the desire to aggressively pursue and prosecute the last alleged Lincoln conspirator? The primary reason is that, with the war over, Washington no longer had any justification for seeking 'justice' through a military tribunal and would have to rely instead on civilian courts. And that meant that the proceedings couldn't be controlled and corrupted to nearly the extent that they had been throughout the first mock trial.

That presented Washington with a huge problem. Without the muzzling of the defendant, and without the wholesale introduction of perjured testimony and manufactured evidence, and with the requirement that actual rules of law be followed, the state had little chance for a conviction. And given that eight others had already been either executed or exiled to America's version of Siberia, despite the fact that they had played lesser roles in the alleged conspiracy, it wasn't going to look very good to have John Surratt walk out of the courtroom a free man.

In addition, the government had pulled out all the stops to lay the assassination to rest as quickly as possible. The other alleged conspirators had been rounded up, indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced, and executed/imprisoned in less than three months, primarily because Washington had a vested interest in wrapping things up as quickly as possible, before too many troubling questions could be raised. The last thing they now wanted to do was reopen the case to public scrutiny.

Given little choice though in the matter, the case proceeded to trial in June 1867. And true to form, the state did its very best to rig the proceedings. As America's first Secret Service chief, William P. Wood, later wrote, Surratt was "confronted with an abundance of perjured testimony." He was also confronted with an abundance of bogus evidence, including a document that had supposedly been in the water for six weeks before being recovered, but which showed no signs of exposure whatsoever.

And then there were the laughably biased jury instructions delivered by presiding Judge George Fisher, which kicked off with the immortal words: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed. So spake the Almighty." One would have to search far and wide through the annals of American jurisprudence to find a more wildly inappropriate set of jury instructions.



Presiding Judge George P. Fisher

To insure that the trial was properly rigged, Secretary of State William Seward hired Edwards Pierrepont, an old friend of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, to assist the prosecution, although neither the State Department nor the War Department should have had anything to do with what was ostensibly a civil trial. Pierrepont was a descendant of James Pierpont, a cofounder of Yale University. Also hired by Seward, to assist Pierrepont, was Albert G. Riddle. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles' diary would later reveal that Riddle "had been employed by Seward to hunt up, or manufacture, testimony against Surratt."

One of the most bizarre aspects of the Surratt trial was the testimony delivered by our old friend Henry Rathbone, who was called to the stand, as he had been at the military trial, to provide eyewitness testimony as to the shooting of Lincoln. Although it was not commented upon at the

time, or for decades after, Rathbone was clearly not spontaneously recalling events as they had happened, but rather was reciting his testimony from a memorized script.

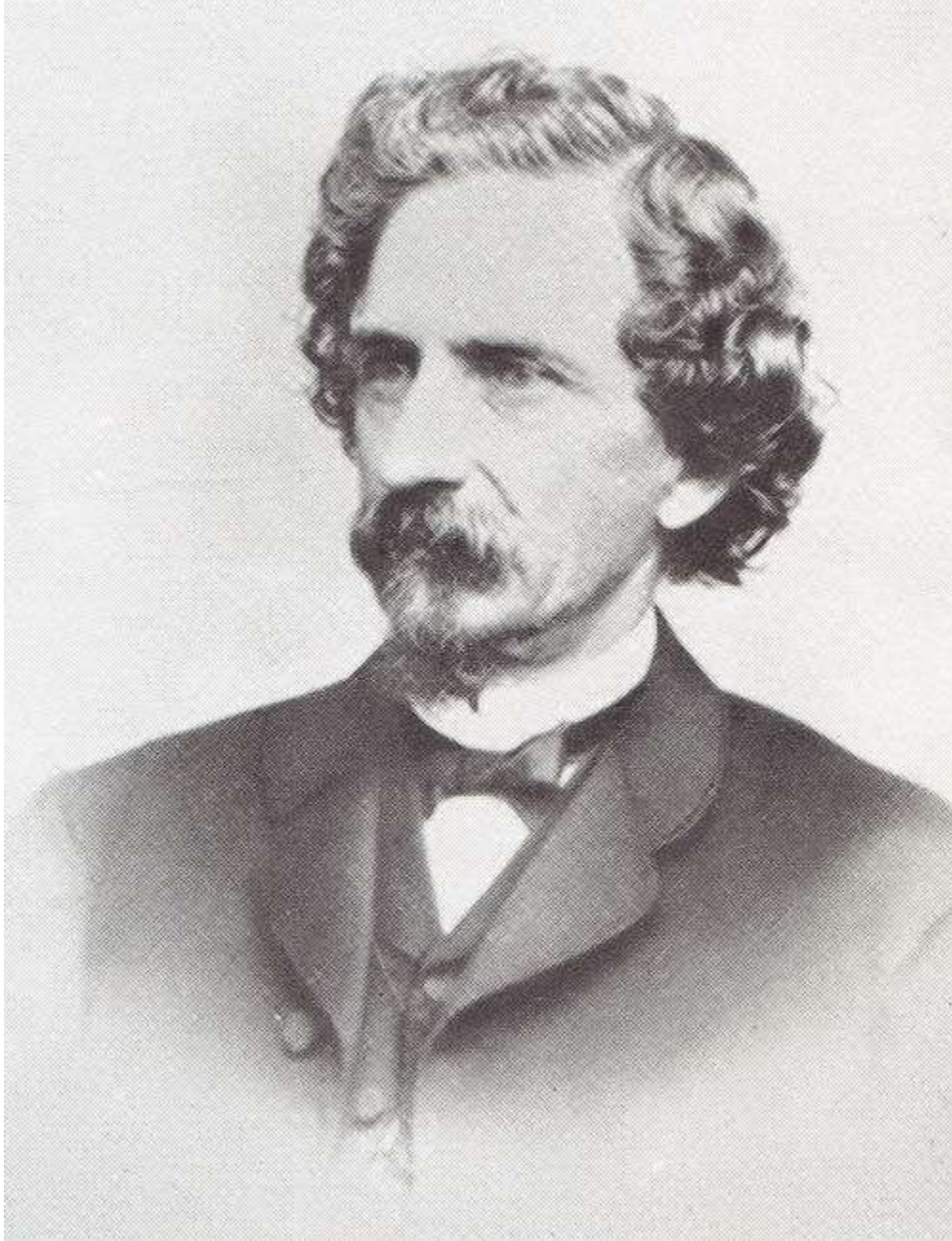
That script appears to have been created on April 17, 1865, two days after Lincoln died, when Rathbone was purportedly deposed. A portion of that alleged deposition reads as follows: “That on April 14th, 1865, at about 20 minutes past 8 o’clock in the evening, he, with Miss Clara H. Harris, left his residence, at the corner of Fifteenth and H Streets, and joined the President and Mrs. Lincoln, and went with them in their carriage to Ford’s Theater, in Tenth Street ... When the party entered the box, a cushioned armchair was standing at the end of the box farthest from the stage and nearest the audience ... When the second scene of the third act was being performed, and while this deponent was intently observing the proceedings upon the stage, with his back toward the door, he heard the discharge of a pistol behind him, and looking around, saw, through the smoke, a man between the door and the President ... This deponent instantly sprang toward him and seized him; he wrested himself from the grasp, and made a violent thrust at the breast of deponent with a large knife. Deponent parried the blow by striking it up, and received a wound several inches deep in his left arm, between the elbow and the shoulder ...”

One month later, on May 15, 1865, Rathbone testified before the military tribunal. With the exception of delivering his testimony in the first person, it was a nearly verbatim recital of the script prepared the month before, and went a little something like this: “On the evening of the 14th of April last, at about 20 minutes past 8 o’clock, I, in company with Miss Harris, left my residence at the corner of Fifteenth and H Streets, and joined the President and Mrs. Lincoln, and went with them, in their carriage, to Ford’s Theater in Tenth Street ... On entering the box there was a large armchair that was placed nearest the audience, farthest from the stage ... When the second scene of the third act was being performed, and while I was intently observing the proceedings upon the stage, with my back towards the door, I heard the discharge of a pistol behind me, and, looking round, saw, through the smoke, a man between the door and the President ... I instantly sprang towards him, and seized him. He wrested himself from my grasp, and made a violent thrust at my breast with a large knife. I parried the blow by striking it up, and received a wound several inches deep in my left arm, between the elbow and the shoulder ...”

A little over two years later, on June 17, 1867, Rathbone dusted off his script and delivered the following testimony at the trial of John Surratt: “On the evening of the 14th of April, at about 20 minutes past 8, I, in company with Miss Harris, left my residence at the corner of Fifteenth and H streets, and joined the President and Mrs. Lincoln, and went with them in their carriage to Ford’s Theater, on Tenth street ... On entering the box there was a large armchair placed nearest the audience, and furthest from the stage ... When the second scene of the third act was being performed, and while I was intently observing the performance on the stage, I heard the report of a pistol from behind me, and on looking round saw dimly through the smoke the form of a man between the President and the door ... I immediately sprung towards him and seized him. He wrested himself from my grasp, and at the same time made a violent thrust at me with a large knife. I parried the blow by striking it up, and received it on my left arm, between the elbow and the shoulder, and received a deep wound ...”



State Department/War Department representatives Edwards Pierrepont



Albert G. Riddle

In the end though, the government's brazen attempts to corrupt the proceedings failed to pay dividends and the jury was left hung 8-4 in favor of acquittal. Even with the obviously perjured testimony, the manufactured evidence, and the wildly inappropriate jury instructions, the state was only able to secure four votes for conviction. And Surratt had found himself a number of new fans. As Eisenschiml noted, "The ladies of Washington considered him quite attractive and thronged the courtroom."

John Harrison Surratt walked out of court a free man, and the state quietly opted not to further pursue the charges. Five years later, he married Mary Victorine Hunter, a second cousin of none other than Francis Scott Key, whose son's murderer, it will be recalled, was defended by Edwin

Stanton. Key's great-great-granddaughter Pauline Potter, by the way, later married Baron Philippe de Rothschild, of the infamous Rothschild banking family.

Surratt lived to the ripe old age of 72, passing away, curiously enough, on April 21, 1916, precisely 50 years to the day from when he had been identified in Rome as a member of the Papal Zouave. It is said that he had penned a biography, but he supposedly opted to burn it a few days before his death. In a similar vein, Robert Todd Lincoln is said to have burned all his father's private papers shortly before his own death – because, I suppose, one wouldn't want the truth about the assassination of one's father to reach the public domain.

Defense attorney Joseph H. Bradley, whom we met in the last installment, had this to say to the jury and spectators at John Surratt's trial: "Who was John Wilkes Booth? ... He was a man of polished exterior, pleasing address, highly respectable in every regard, received into the best circles of society; his company sought after; exceedingly bold, courteous, and considered generous to a fault; a warm and liberal-hearted friend, a man who had obtained a reputation upon the stage."

The woman who once reported him for rape in Philadelphia, and the irate, jealous husband who once severely throttled him in Syracuse, New York, might disagree.

Francis Wilson, one of Booth's biographers (*John Wilkes Booth: Fact and Fiction of Lincoln's Assassination*), posed the following question: "How was it possible for Booth to obtain such power over a fellow human being as to command him to perform an act of murder and to know that that command would be enthusiastically obeyed?" A little over a century after the assassination of Lincoln, prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi would ponder the very same question about a guy by the name of Charlie Manson: "I tend to think that there is something more, some missing link that enabled him to so rape and bastardize the minds of his followers that they would go against the most ingrained of all commandments, Thou shalt not kill, and willingly, even eagerly, murder at his command."

A friend of Booth's from childhood, John Deery, said that the John Wilkes Booth that he knew "cast a spell over most men with whom he came in contact, and I believe all women without exception."



Junius Brutus Booth, father of John Wilkes Booth

So who was this charismatic enigma known as John Wilkes Booth – the man known to history as possibly the most famous assassin who ever lived? Just about everyone knows that he was an actor, one of the finest and arguably the most popular of his generation. But he was much more than just that, a fact obscured by the century-and-a-half focus on John Wilkes Booth the actor. In reality, John Wilkes Booth, and the Booth family in general, were very deeply tied to the power

structures in Washington and London, and had been for a very, very long time. And they still are today.

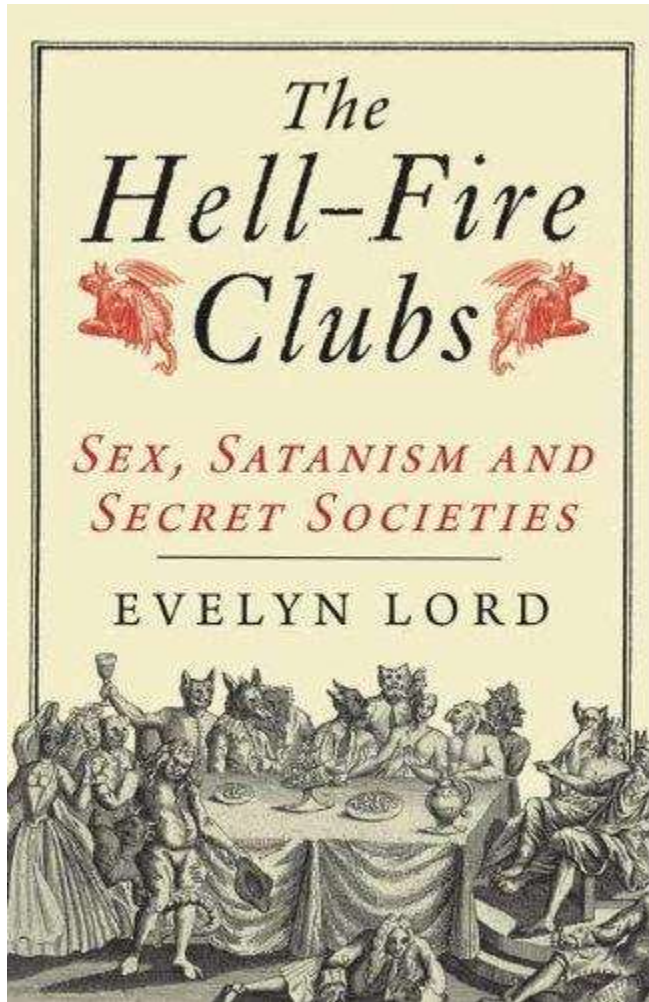
Booth's most famous ancestor was undoubtedly his namesake, John Wilkes, who lived from October 17, 1725 until December 26, 1797. Throughout his life, Wilkes served as a Member of Parliament, a judge, a journalist and essayist, and the Lord Mayor of London. A revered statesman, Wilkes was also a member of the Hellfire Club and a noted libertine (other notable libertines throughout history include the Marquis de Sade, Aleister Crowley, and Anton LaVey). That would be the same Hellfire Club that included as a member a 'Founding Father' by the name of Benjamin Franklin. And that would be the same Benjamin Franklin whose London home from that era yielded the remains of at least ten bodies, six of them children.



Lord Mayor of London John Wilkes

It was the Hellfire Club, by the way, that first coined the phrase “Do what thou wilt,” which was later appropriated by Aleister Crowley. And it was the Hellfire Club that was widely rumored during its heyday to be conducting black masses and other occult/Satanic rituals, along with drunken orgies and various other acts of debauchery.

John Wilkes was also notable for being considered during his lifetime the ugliest man in all of England. He never though suffered from a shortage of beautiful female companions. Aside from a nine-year marriage, Wilkes remained single for his 72 years on this planet and was considered quite the ladies man, fathering an unknown number of children. Like his descendent and namesake, Wilkes apparently had a knack for “cast[ing] a spell” over women.



Two other of John Wilkes Booth's famous ancestors were Henry Booth, the 1st Earl of Warrington, who lived from 1652 to 1694, and his son George Booth, who lived from 1675 to 1758 and succeeded his father as the 2nd (and last) Earl of Warrington. At various times during his life, Henry Booth served as a Member of Parliament, a member of the Privy Council of England, a noted writer, and a mayor.

John Wilkes Booth was also descended from Barton Booth, who lived from 1681 to 1733 and who was described by one biographer as the “most popular actor with the English royalty known to history.” Many generations later, namesake Sydney Barton Booth, a son of Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., would become an actor and writer of some renown before passing away in 1937.



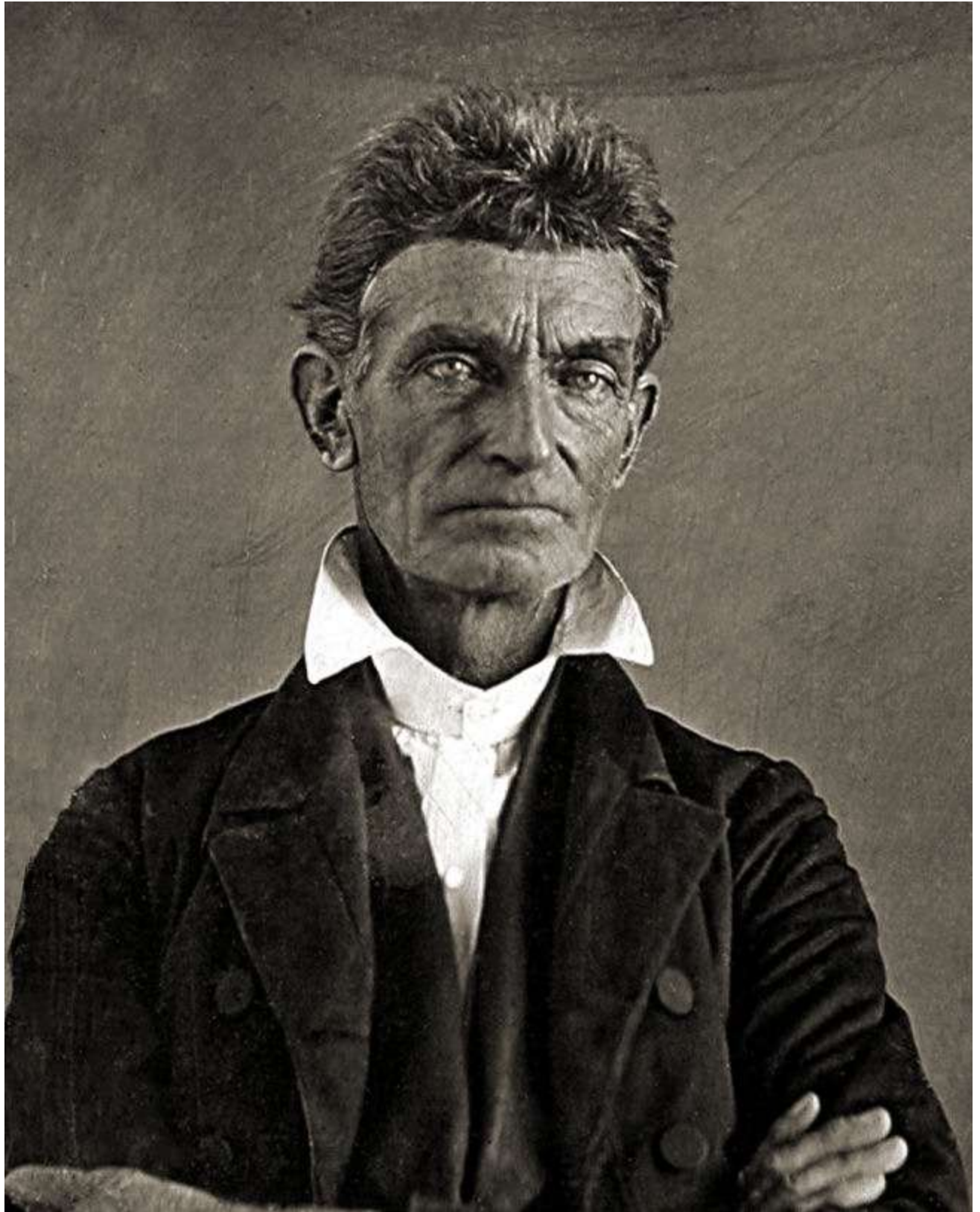


Henry and George Booth, the 1st and 2nd Earls of Warrington

The alleged assassin's grandfather was Richard Booth, an eccentric English barrister with a fondness for alcohol – a fondness that would be shared by his son, Junius Brutus Booth, and his grandson, John Wilkes Booth. Junius was born in London in 1796 and was performing on stage by the age of seventeen. At nineteen, he married Marie Christine Adelaide Delannoy. Less than five months later, she bore him his first child, who died in infancy, as would a number of Junius Brutus Booth's offspring.

In June 1821, at the age of twenty-five, Junius set sail for America with his mistress, Mary Ann Holmes, leaving behind his wife and only surviving child, Richard Junius Booth. Junius and Mary Ann would pose as man and wife for the next thirty years, producing no fewer than ten illegitimate offspring, four of whom didn't make it through childhood. The pair weren't actually married until 1851, the year Junius finally divorced his actual wife, and were married just one year before Junius passed away in November 1852.

During his lifetime, Junius was considered to be one of the finest actors of his generation. He was also regarded as a playwright, scholar, philosopher and linguist. Named for one of the most notorious assassins of all time, Junius once set a fine example for son John by sending a letter to then-President Andrew Jackson threatening to slit his throat and/or have him burned at the stake. And he thoughtfully signed that letter and included a return address. It was, nevertheless, dismissed as either a hoax or a joke.



John Brown

Junius and Mary Ann purchased a 150-acre estate in Maryland that would ultimately feature a large pool, stables, and a Gothic home known as Tudor Hall, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Junius began construction on the home shortly before his death and so never lived there, though his offspring, including John Wilkes Booth, did. Ned Spangler, it will be recalled, was involved in the construction of the home.

John Wilkes Booth, the ninth of Junius and Mary Ann's ten offspring, was born on May 10, 1838. A well educated young man, he was regarded as an excellent horseman and marksman as well as a talented athlete. Like his father, he made his acting debut at seventeen, in an 1855 production of Richard III. By 1861, he was one of the most popular actors in America and there was considerable demand for his services.



Abraham Lincoln and John Wilkes Booth at Lincoln's second inaugural address

On December 2, 1859, John Wilkes Booth was among the soldiers standing guard on the scaffold when probable agent provocateur John Brown was hanged. Booth was not a soldier though – he purportedly either borrowed or stole a militia uniform and posed as a soldier to secure the position. On March 4, 1865, Booth found himself prominently placed among the onlookers at Lincoln's second inaugural address. He was there as a guest of US Senator John P. Hale. Unknown at the time was that Booth was secretly engaged to Hale's daughter, Lucy Hale. Senator Hale had worked closely with fellow Senator William Seward before Seward's appointment as Secretary of State. Notably, Hale was a northern senator, representing New Hampshire, and he was known for his staunchly abolitionist views. It makes perfect sense then that his daughter would be engaged to an alleged Confederate operative.



Senator John P. Hale

During John Wilkes Booth's lifetime, there was another member of the Booth/Wilkes clan who achieved a considerable amount of public notoriety. Charles Wilkes was a US naval officer who ultimately attained the rank of rear admiral, as well as a celebrated explorer who led the United

States Exploring Expedition from 1838 to 1842. He was also a great-nephew of John Wilkes, making him a blood relative of John Wilkes Booth and his numerous siblings.

Charles Wilkes was raised by his aunt, Elizabeth Ann Seton, who was a woman of considerable social prominence who later became the first American-born woman to be canonized by the Catholic Church. In the 1820s, Wilkes counted among his associates a genocidal Grand Master Mason by the name of Andrew Jackson – the same Andrew Jackson who was also, by some reports, a friend of Junius Brutus Booth, the guy who ‘jokingly’ threatened to assassinate him.



Charles Wilkes

Many years later, another member of the Booth clan, Theresa Cara Booth, was born on September 23, 1954. Theresa is a direct descendent of Algernon Booth, Junius Brutus Booth's brother and John Wilkes Booth's uncle. She became an attorney in 1976 and a member of the

Queen's Counsel in 1995. Two years later, Theresa Booth – better known as Cherie Blair, wife of Tony Blair – became the First Lady of Downing Street. Nothing unusual about that, I suppose. In the aftermath of the Lincoln assassination, actors were viewed with considerable suspicion across the country. The entire cast of *Our American Cousin* was arrested and numerous other productions closed for a time due to the lynch-mob mentality that was sweeping the nation. No one was above suspicion and, as previously noted, more than 2,000 people were arrested as possible co-conspirators. Those with only the loosest connections to the accused coup plotters were scooped up and held for varying lengths of time.

Two of John Wilkes Booth's brothers, Edwin and Junius Brutus, Jr., were fellow actors. Clearly then they had two big strikes against them, which should have put them at the very top of the government's round-up list. And yet not a single member of the Booth clan was arrested in the frenzy of arrests and accusations. Not one. It always helps to have friends in high places.

Brower's Hotel, Philadelphia.

July 4th 1835.



You damn'd old Scoundrel if you
don't sign the pardon of your
fellow men now under sentence
of Death De Ruiz & De Soto. I
will cut your throat whilst
you are sleeping. I wrote to
you repeated Cautions - so look
out or damn you I'll have
you burnt ^{at the Stake} in the
City of Washington.

Your Master

James Butler Booth

You know me! Look out!

The Op-Ed page of the *Los Angeles Times* apparently now operates in part as a forum for unpaid advertisements for intelligence agency-approved works of fiction. I say that because just a few days ago that page featured what was essentially a half-page ad for Jeff Bauman's hopelessly fraudulent account of the Boston Marathon bombings. And yesterday that same page featured a barely disguised advertisement for a book written by a professional liar by the name of Mel Ayton.

Ayton has apparently penned a whole series of disinformational books on various presidential assassinations and attempted assassinations. His latest, *Hunting the President: Threats, Plots and Assassination Attempts – From FDR to Obama*, carries on in that fine tradition. The following paragraph is from his wildly inaccurate Op-Ed piece:

“Lincoln was the first American president to be assassinated. But the motivations that drove his assassin were unfortunately not unique. Understanding the nature of those who want to kill a president goes considerably further toward explaining assassinations than looking to fanciful conspiracy theories.”



Cherie Blair, aka Theresa Cara Booth

Let's now take a peek at what “fanciful” theory it is that Ayton is pitching: “Booth's desire for fame and recognition is a common theme among assassins. In researching a book on presidential killers and would-be killers, I found that they tended to share certain personality traits. While some had been treated for mental illness, an even more predominant characteristic is that many of them were disillusioned with and resentful of American society after a lifetime of failure. And most of them also had a burning desire for notoriety. Killing an American president, most would-be assassins believed, would win them a place in history, making a ‘somebody’ out of a ‘nobody.’”

Every single word of the preceding paragraph can only be described as complete and utter bullshit. Booth already had fame and recognition beyond his wildest dreams. He was far from being a “nobody.” To the contrary, he was making upwards of \$20,000 a year, a staggering amount in those days, and had the love, respect and admiration of men and women all across the country. He was wealthy, good looking, supremely talented, and had lived a very charmed life. And given that he was only twenty-six at the time of the assassination, it is hardly accurate to say that he had faced a “lifetime” of failure. In truth, he had never known failure at all in his short life.

Compulsive liar Ayton’s body of work is, unfortunately, typical of what has been written about Lincoln and his alleged assassin over the last 149 years. Listed below, in order of the date of release, are some of the more honest books that have been published (some decidedly better than others).

Bates, Finis L. The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth, J.L Nichols & Company, 1907

Wilson, Francis John Wilkes Booth: Fact and Fiction of Lincoln’s Assassination, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929

Eisenschiml, Otto Why Was Lincoln Murdered?, Little, Brown and Company, 1937

Eisenschiml, Otto In the Shadow of Lincoln’s Death, Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1940

Roscoe, Theodore The Web of Conspiracy, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959

Shelton, Vaughan Mask for Treason: The Lincoln Murder Trial, Stackpole Books, 1965

Balsiger, David and Charles Sellier, Jr. The Lincoln Conspiracy, Schick Sunn Classic Books, 1977

Jameson, W.C. Return of Assassin: John Wilkes Booth, Republic of Texas Press, 1999

“The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, only days after the end of the war, was a terrible tragedy. Much has been speculated about the events leading up to the murder and immediately afterward, but few people know what *really* happened.” So says Bill O’Reilly on page 1 of his tome on the Lincoln assassination. What he doesn’t tell readers is that after reading his novelized account, they will still have no clue what *really* happened.

One thing that O’Reilly opts to leave out of his book entirely is the mockery of a trial held for the alleged conspirators. After spending the first 276 pages of his book covering the period from April 1, 1865 to April 26, 1865 (the day Booth was allegedly gunned down at Garrett’s barn), O’Reilly then abruptly jumps ahead to July 7, 1865, the day four of the alleged conspirators were hanged. Apparently nothing of significance happened in May or June of 1865. Or maybe it is best not to shine too bright a light on one of the most sordid chapters of US history.

US Navy Secretary Gideon Welles is on record as stating that Secretary of War Edwin Stanton wanted the alleged conspirators to be “tried and executed before President Lincoln was buried.”

Convictions were obviously a given. Lincoln was laid to rest on May 4, 1865, nineteen days after he died and just before the trial of the conspirators began, thwarting Stanton's wishes, but 'justice' was dispensed very quickly nonetheless.

Stanton favored a military trial, a course of action opposed by various other members of the Lincoln cabinet, including both Welles and former Attorney General Edward Bates, who noted that "if the offenders are done to death by that tribunal, however truly guilty, they will pass for martyrs with half the world." Many believed that a military trial would be unconstitutional given that all of the defendants were civilians. Stanton nevertheless prevailed.

It would in fact be later determined that the proceedings had been unconstitutional, both because the suspects were subjected to military 'justice,' and because they were denied their right to individual trials. That ruling would not, however, resurrect the five alleged conspirators who paid with their lives.

While awaiting what passed for a trial, the prisoners were held in appalling conditions aboard two ironclad vessels, the *Montauk* and the *Saugus* (except for Mudd and Surratt, who were reportedly held elsewhere and spared the tortuous hoods). Very special attention appears to have been paid to Lewis Powell. Throughout his confinement, Powell was personally guarded by Thomas T. Eckert, which is undoubtedly the only time in the nation's history that a sitting Assistant Secretary of War served as a lowly prison guard. Even more curiously, despite the fact that Powell was kept shackled, hooded, isolated, and otherwise deprived, he was nevertheless allowed to keep a knife while imprisoned. And false reports were circulated indicating that he was suicidal.



Thomas T. Eckert

It is perfectly clear, in retrospect, that the government had contingency plans to have Powell 'suicided' if necessary.

On May 1, 1865, newly-installed President Andrew Johnson ordered that the eight alleged conspirators face a nine-man military tribunal. The members of that tribunal – seven generals and two colonels – were all handpicked by Stanton. All but a couple were unknown to the public and none of them knew anything about the so-called 'rule of law' or about evidentiary or procedural rules. That didn't prove to be a problem though – they just made up the tribunal rules as they went along.

As Vaughan Shelton wrote back in 1965, "All but one or two were nearly as unknown then as they are now. There was not a noteworthy war record in the whole group. In fact the two whose names might be recognized by the average reader – Major General David Hunter, presiding officer, and Major General Lew Wallace (later author of *Ben Hur*) – had attained rank by political connections, and their names had been associated with military defeats throughout the four-year contest. All appeared to be qualified largely by their prejudices, total ignorance of the law, and subservience to the will of the prosecutors. It was common talk in Washington that the military commission was assembled for the purpose of convicting the accused persons – not to weigh the merits of their cases."

Besides being completely unqualified to sit in judgment of the accused, the panel had something else in common, as various photographs reveal: many of them, maybe all of them, were Freemasons. As were the prosecutors. And at least some of the defense attorneys. And Edwin Stanton. And Lafayette Baker. And John Wilkes Booth. And seemingly just about everyone else who played a prominent role in the assassination conspiracy and cover-up. And many of the generals who directed the action on the battlefields of the Civil War. On both sides.



Confederate General Albert Pike

Seated on the panel were Major General David “Black Dave” Hunter, Brigadier General Albion Parris Howe, Lieutenant Colonel David Ramsey Clendenin, Brigadier General Thomas Maley Harris, Brevet Brigadier General James Adams Ekin, Major General Lew Wallace, Brevet Colonel Charles Henry Tompkins, Brigadier General Robert Sanford Foster, and Brevet Major General August Valentine Kautz. The lead prosecutor was Brigadier General Joseph Holt, then the Judge Advocate General of the United States Army and a former Secretary of War. Joining him as Special Judge Advocates were John Armor Bingham, a US Representative from Ohio and a future US Ambassador to Japan, and Brevet Brigadier General Lawrence Burnett. Both Bingham and Burnett were appointed, of course, by Edwin Stanton.

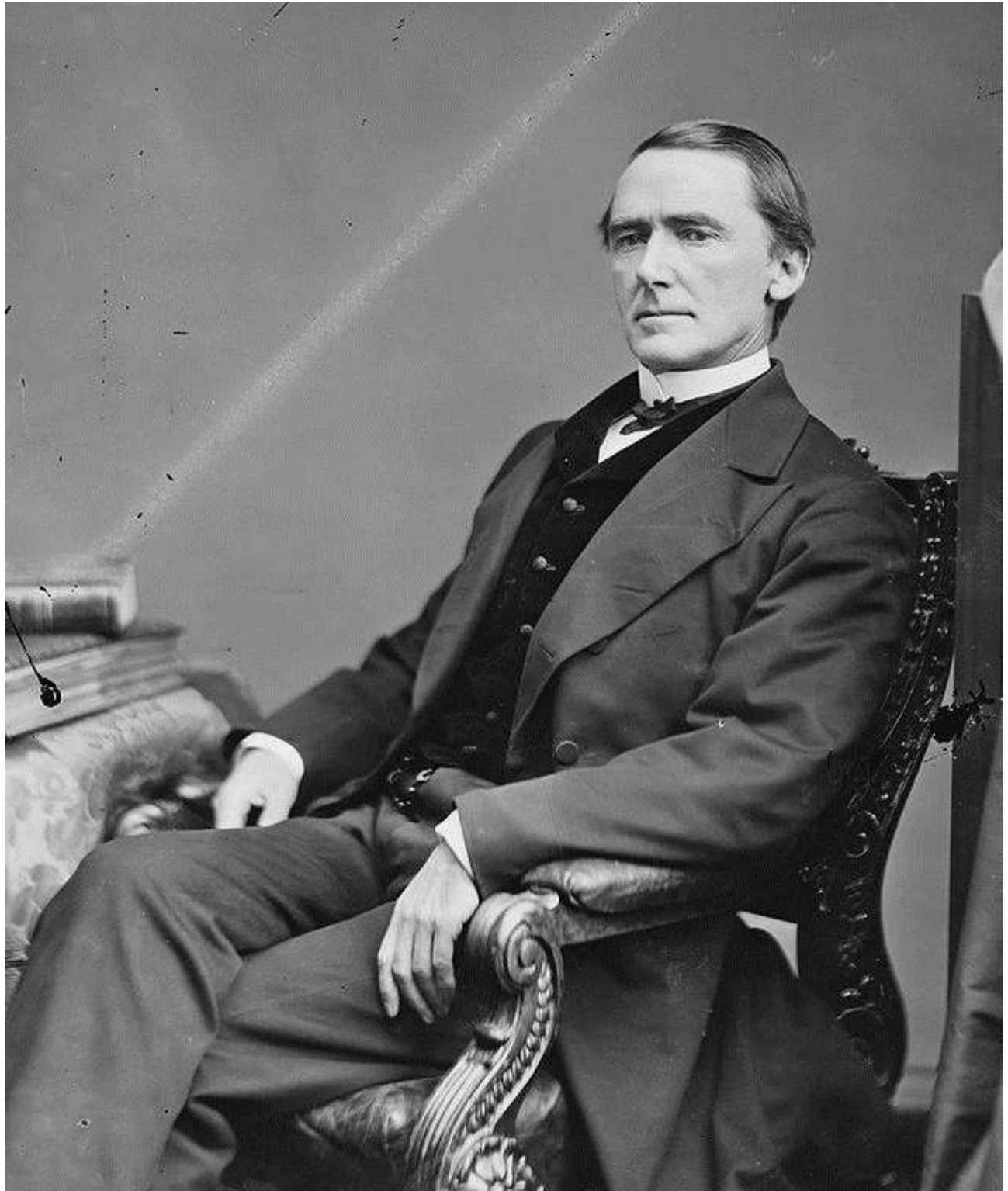


Pretty Masons all in a row: the nine tribunal members and three prosecutors

Shockingly enough, the assembled panel of 'judges' showed extreme bias throughout the seven-week proceedings. That bias was revealed, for example, by the jurists' handling of objections. The defense attorneys, most of whom appear to have actually been working for the state, lodged only twelve objections, all of which were overruled. Prosecutors, on the other hand, voiced fifty-four objections, fifty-one of which were sustained.

The prisoners were arraigned on May 10, 1865, just one day after the charges against them had been read (Holt wanted those charges withheld from the press and public). Two days later, on May 12, testimony began. The defendants had been given just three days to obtain legal counsel, which they had to do while being quite literally muzzled. Ultimately assembled for the defense were Captain William Doster, Frederick Stone, Thomas Ewing, Jr., Walter Smith Cox, and Colonel Frederick Aiken.

Three members of that group appear to have been richly rewarded for their 'service' to country. Just two years after the 'trial,' Stone became a US Representative from Maryland. Ewing also joined the US Congress, representing a district in Ohio. Cox became a federal judge and, perhaps quite tellingly, presided at the trial of alleged presidential assassin Charles Guiteau just a couple years after being seated.



Defense attorney Frederick Stone

Aiken, who represented Mary Surratt after the curious withdrawal of her first attorney, Reverdy Johnson – who was a sitting US Senator, a former US Attorney General, and a future Minister to the UK – may have actually been legitimately working on behalf of his client. Notably, he faced a much different fate after the trial concluded than did Stone, Ewing and Cox. Within a year,

Aiken's law practice had imploded and he had been arrested for bouncing a check. He died in 1878 at the relatively young age of forty-six and was buried in an unmarked grave.

Very little else is known about the young defense attorney. As his *Wikipedia* page notes, "Information on Aiken's early life is largely unknown; his date of birth, city of birth, and even his full name varies depending on source." And "like his birth records, his war service also remains largely unknown." Even less appears to be known about the ethereal William Doster, who was tasked with defending both Atzerodt and Powell, and who also may not have been thoroughly co-opted.

The reality though is that no defense attorney, no matter how devoted or how skilled, could have saved any of the defendants from their fates. All that was required for conviction was a simple majority of five votes – five votes from a nine-man panel predisposed to convict before the trial even began. Only one additional vote was required to impose the death penalty. And the tribunal's pronouncements would be final; there would be no appeals allowed. All of that, of course, was brazenly unconstitutional.



Union General George McClellan

Stanton's War Department did not just put the eight defendants on trial; the entire Confederacy was put on trial in a shameless attempt to inflame public opinion and inspire bloodlust.

As Shelton noted, witnesses told tales of “Plots to burn northern cities, start epidemics, instigate riots” and other nefarious deeds, including poisoning public water supplies, destroying historical buildings, and starving Union POWs. Most of these alleged plots were never actually carried out. And even if they had been, none of that had any relevance at all as to the guilt or innocence of the defendants and would not have been allowed into evidence in any legitimate court proceedings.

Another problem with the introduction of such testimony is that most of the ‘witnesses’ who delivered it didn’t actually exist. One such witness who testified as “Sanford Conover,” for example, was actually Charles Dunham, who also used the alias “James Watson Wallace.” It was later revealed that Dunham had run what was dubbed a “school for perjured witnesses” at the National Hotel, where he had coached others on how to properly deliver their perjured testimony. Dunham soon found himself in prison after being convicted for both perjury and suborning perjury.

One of those receiving schooling was “Richard Montgomery,” who was actually James Thompson, a burglar from New York with a long criminal record. Appearing as “Henry Van Steinacker” was Hans Von Winklestein, a prison inmate who gained his release shortly after testifying. A Canadian presented to the court as “Dr.” James Merritt was denounced by his own government as a fraud and a quack. And so on.



Left to right: Thomas Harris, David Hunter, August Kautz, Albion Howe, Lew Wallace, and John Bingham

Defense attorney Doster, whose vehement objection to the introduction of the irrelevant, inflammatory testimony was overruled, would later claim that some of the other prosecution witnesses were actually NDP detectives paid by the government for their testimony. And it

would later be revealed that NDP chief Lafayette Baker's order to his underlings instructed them to "extort confessions and procure testimony to establish the conspiracy ... by promises, rewards, threats, deceit, force, or any other effectual means."

Many of the state's witnesses were in fact paid handsomely for their testimony. Merritt, for example, collected a \$6,000 paycheck, the equivalent of more than \$150,000 today. Not bad for a day's work.

There were numerous other irregularities in 1865's version of The Trial of the Century. Major Henry Rathbone, as we have already seen, delivered a bizarrely verbatim recital of his deposition testimony. For those who have forgotten, here's another little taste of Rathbone's version of events, first from his deposition on April 17, 1865, and then from his testimony before the tribunal one month later, on May 15, 1865.

"Deponent then turned to the President; his position was not changed; his head was slightly bent forward, and his eyes were closed. Deponent saw that he was unconscious, and supposing him mortally wounded, rushed to the door for the purpose of calling medical aid. On reaching the outer door of the passageway, as above described, deponent found it barred by a heavy piece of plank, one end of which was secured in the wall ... This wedge, or bar, was about four feet from the floor. Persons upon the outside were beating against the door for the purpose of entering. Deponent removed the bar, and the door was opened ..."

"I then turned to the President. His position was not changed: his head was slightly bent forward, and his eyes were closed. I saw that he was unconscious, and, supposing him mortally wounded, rushed to the door for the purpose of calling medical aid. On reaching the outer door of the passageway, I found it barred by a heavy piece of plank, one end of which was secured in the wall ... This wedge or bar, was about four feet from the floor. Persons upon the outside were beating against the door for the purpose of entering. I removed the bar, and the door was opened ..."



Union General William Tecumseh Sherman

Rathbone was clearly ‘reading’ his testimony from a memorized script, which raises the obvious question of: why? Why was Rathbone so thoroughly rehearsed that he was able to recite his deposition testimony virtually verbatim, without even minor variations in the wording?

Historians, needless to say, have never addressed that question. Another question that has never been addressed is why the photo of John Wilkes Booth that was used throughout the trial wasn’t actually of John Wilkes Booth; it was instead an image of his brother, Edwin Booth. What that means, of course, is that every witness who identified Booth as the man they had seen or heard discussing, carrying out, or fleeing from the assassination, was actually identifying Edwin Booth as the culprit. And again, the obvious question that is raised, but that has never been asked or answered, is: why?

In a bold move, defense counsel Doster subpoenaed sitting President Andrew Johnson to appear as a witness, but Johnson cavalierly ignored the summons, with no legal repercussions.

Numerous other witnesses who should have been called were strangely absent from the proceedings, like Mary Todd Lincoln and Clara Harris, both of whom were eyewitnesses to the assassination of Lincoln. And William Seward, Frederick Seward, Fanny Seward, Frances Seward, and Emerick Hansell, all of whom were allegedly eyewitnesses to the supposed bloodbath at the Seward home.

The three witnesses who did testify about the alleged attack at the Seward residence – William Bell, George Robinson and Augustus Seward – presented wildly contradictory and problematic accounts, made all the more problematic by the fact that, according to all the early reports, Augustus Seward wasn't actually at the home at the time of the alleged attack.



Confederate General Robert E. Lee with various other Confederate generals in 1869

It will probably come as a shock to no one that in 1865 America, the testimony of a black man carried considerably less weight than the testimony of a white man, especially when the white men in question were the Secretary of State, an Assistant Secretary of State, and a US State Department courier. Why then did the state leave William Seward, Frederick Seward and Emerick Hansell (along with three of the Seward women) on the sidelines while calling to the stand two black servants – two men who were, if we're being honest here, just a step above slaves in the social hierarchy of the time?

According to reports, there were as many as eight eyewitnesses to the carnage at the Seward mansion – six of them white and five of them members of the Seward family. But the only two of the eight called were a black 'houseboy' who was unable to give his age when asked in court, and a black nurse. The only member of the Seward family who was called was the one who wasn't actually home and therefore didn't witness anything.



Defense attorney Thomas Ewing, Jr.

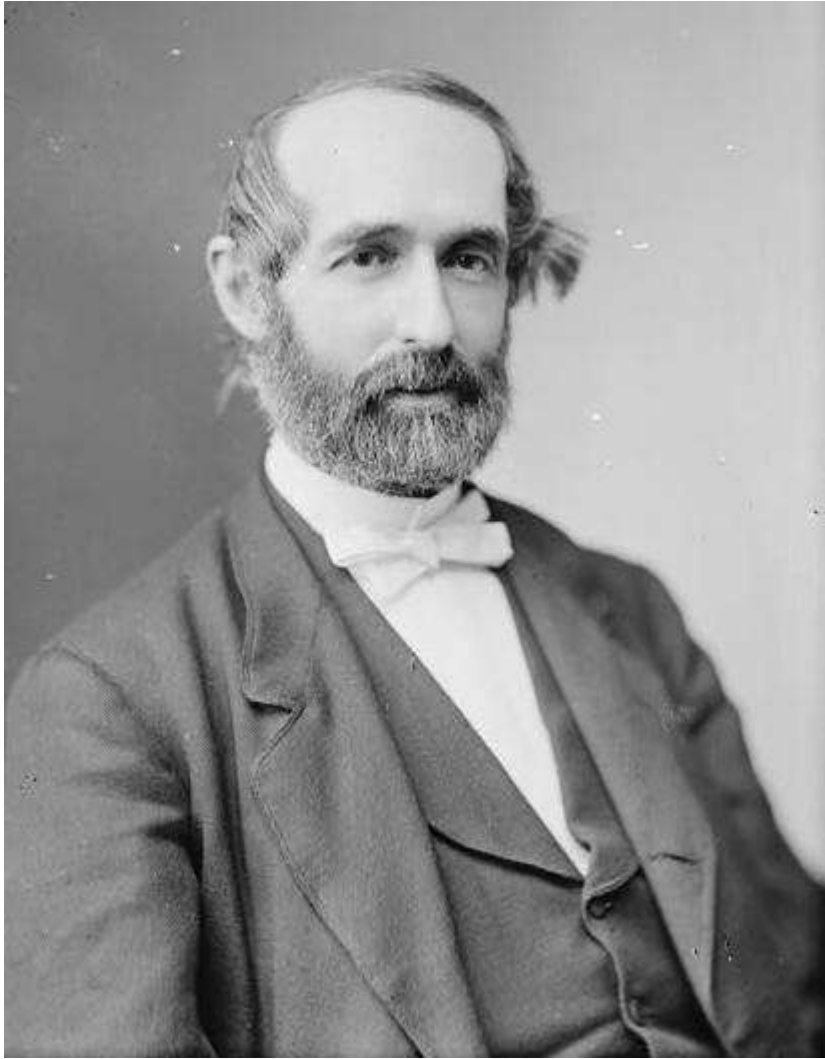
As previously stated, the first arrivals to the house after the alleged attack were Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, and Surgeon General Joseph Barnes. Arriving shortly after them was Assistant Secretary of War Thomas Eckert, who would soon be serving as Lewis Powell's prison guard. Unanswered, of course, is the question of why these four prominent individuals converged on the Seward house before anyone else arrived. And why they didn't instead head immediately to Ford's Theater, where the president lay near death. No mention was made by any of them of encountering Major Augustus Seward that evening. And testimony at the tribunal also indicated that Augustus was not at home the evening of April 14. And yet, nevertheless, he was presented to the courtroom and to the public as the principal eyewitness to the alleged carnage.

According to the official story, Powell came calling at the Seward home the night of April 14 under the guise of delivering medicine for the ailing William Seward. He was greeted by houseboy Bell, whom he allegedly brushed past while insisting that he was to hand-deliver the medications. Powell was then confronted at the top of the stairs by Frederick Seward, who insisted that Powell leave the package with him and not bother the sleeping Secretary of State. Powell then turned to leave, took a few steps down the stairs, and then pulled a gun and attempted to shoot Frederick. When the gun failed to fire, he supposedly bum-rushed Frederick and brutally beat him nearly to death.

According to Bill O'Reilly's overwrought version of events, "The two men grapple as Powell leaps up onto the landing and then uses the butt of his gun to pistol-whip Frederick. Finally, Frederick Seward is knocked unconscious. His body makes a horrible thud as he collapses to the floor, his skull shattered in two places, gray matter trickling out through the gashes, blood streaming down his face."

During that encounter, Fanny Seward supposedly looked out from her father's room and in doing so conveniently gave away William Seward's location. So after incapacitating Frederick, Powell next burst into William Seward's room and encountered George Robinson, whom he grappled with before beginning to brutally slash away at Seward. At that time, Augustus Seward, who had been awakened by all the commotion, allegedly entered the room and began grappling with Powell. Powell though got the best of him as well and then bolted out of the room and down the stairs. In most versions of the story, there is no further mention of Fanny Seward, who was supposedly in her father's room throughout the ordeal.

On his way out of the house, Powell allegedly encountered Hansell, who had just arrived at the home. Hansell was supposedly brutally attacked and left for dead just inside the entrance to the home. Powell then exited the residence and rode off into the night. And that, in a nutshell, is the official story of how one man was allegedly able to leave at least five people mortally wounded while walking away without a scratch.



Frederick Seward, showing the severe scarring from his alleged beating

The witnesses who appeared before the military tribunal, however, had a very hard time keeping the details of that story straight. Here is a portion of Robinson's testimony, delivered on May 19, 1865: "The first I saw of [Powell] I heard a scuffling in the hall; I opened the door to see what the trouble was; as I opened the door he stood close up to it; as soon as it was opened wide enough he struck me and knocked me partially down and then rushed up to the bed of Mr. Seward, struck him and maimed him; as soon as I could get on my feet I endeavored to haul him off the bed and he turned on me; in the scuffle there was a man come into the room who clutched him; between the two of us we got him to the door, or by the door, when he clinched his hand around my neck, knocked me down, broke away from the other man and rushed down stairs." Amazingly enough, neither the prosecutors nor the defense attorneys bothered to ask him who this other mystery man was. Clearly though it wasn't Augustus Seward, who Robinson, a household servant, would certainly have recognized. When asked specifically whether he saw Powell's alleged "encounter with Major Seward," Robinson replied that he "did not see that." When asked about Frederick Seward, he responded as follows: "I did not see Mr. Frederick Seward around at all." So George Robinson did not see the guy who was supposedly lying in a bloody heap just outside the door to William Seward's room. He also didn't see the guy who

supposedly assisted him with trying to subdue Powell. And he didn't see, or at least didn't mention, Fanny Seward. But he did see some mysterious, unidentified stranger. When later asked, "Where was [Frederick] when [Powell] came out [of Seward's room]?", his unexpected response was: "The first I saw of Mr. Frederick was in the room standing up; he had come inside the door." So it appears that the guy who was lying near death somehow magically got up and strolled into the room, hopefully after pushing the gray matter back into his shattered skull.



JOSEPH HOLT



COLONEL HENRY L. BURNETT



JOHN A. BINGHAM

The prosecution team: one of Burnett's duties was to oversee the rewriting of the trial transcript to remove various contradictions and inconsistencies

Robinson also told the court that he never heard Powell utter a sound throughout the ordeal. Judge Advocate Holt, sounding a bit incredulous and clearly not getting the answers he wanted, asked the witness this question: "You say that this man, during the whole of this bloody work, made no remark at all; that he said nothing?" Robinson responded with: "I did not hear him make any remark."

Let's now listen in to some of Augustus Seward's testimony, because this is where it really gets interesting: "I retired to bed about 7 o'clock on the night of the 14th, with the understanding that I would be called at 11 o'clock, to sit up with my father; I very shortly fell asleep, and so remained until wakened by the screams of my sister; I jumped out of bed and ran into my father's room in my shirt and drawers; the gas in the room had been shut down rather low, and I saw what appeared to be two men, one trying to hold the other; my first impression was that my father had become delirious, and that the nurse was trying to hold him. I went up and took hold of him, but saw at once from his size and the struggle that it was not my father; it then struck me that the nurse had become delirious and was striking about the room at random; knowing the delicate state of my father's health, I endeavored to shove the person I had hold of to the door, with the intention of putting him out of his room; while I was pushing him he struck me five or six times over the head with whatever he had in his left hand; I supposed it at the time to be a bottle or decanter he had seized from the table; during this time he repeated with an intensely

strong voice-‘I am mad, I am mad;’ on reaching the hall he gave a sudden turn and breaking away from me, disappeared down stairs.”

You got all that straight? Augustus first mistook Powell – a strapping, physically fit, 20-year-old man – for his frail, 63-year-old, bedridden father. Following that, he next mistook Powell, a decidedly fair-skinned Caucasian lad, for his father’s black nurse. He also completely failed to notice that Robinson was right alongside him grappling with Powell. And he failed to notice that his sister was in the room. And he distinctly heard Powell loudly proclaiming himself to be mad, even though Robinson, also in the room, didn’t hear Powell utter a word.

Augustus was also asked about his brother Frederick, to which he responded: “I never saw anything of my brother the whole time.” In other words, he didn’t notice that he had to practically step over his brother’s prone, bloody body to get to his father’s room. And he apparently wasn’t paying attention when Frederick stood up and walked into that room.



It's Booth's photograph – just not the right Booth

Coupled with the conflicting testimony of Seward and Robinson, there is the enduring mystery surrounding Emerick Hansell. According to the official version of events, Hansell was left lying nearly lifeless just inside the front door of the home. But Dr. T.S. Verdi, the Seward family physician, testified that he “found Mr. Hansell, a messenger of the State Department, lying on a bed, wounded by a cut in the side some two and a half inches deep.” He went on to say that that bed was in a third-floor bedroom! Needless to say, no explanation was offered as to how and why Hansell could have ended up there. On that particular night, apparently, it was not uncommon for mortally wounded guys to get up all by themselves and wander around the Seward manor.

It seems pretty obvious that of all the witnesses to testify before the tribunal, none were more important to securing convictions than those who claimed to have witnessed the crimes actually being committed. It seems more than a bit odd then that the state bypassed both the First Lady and a senator’s daughter in favor of an otherwise obscure future murderer named Henry Rathbone, who was clearly reading from a script written by unseen others. And it also seems more than a little odd that the state also left no fewer than five members of the Seward household *and* a State Department courier sitting on the sidelines in favor of two lowly household servants and a member of the Seward family who, by all accounts other than his own, wasn’t even in the home that night.

It is on the shoulders of those four men – Augustus Seward, William Bell, George Robinson, and Henry Rathbone, all of whom are all but forgotten and all of whom presented obviously perjured testimony – that the official story of what happened on the evening of April 14, 1865 in the presidential box at Ford’s Theater and at the Seward home has now rested for 149 years.



Defense attorney William Doster

As for Bell, his testimony was problematic as well: “When [Powell] came he rang the bell and I went to the door, and this man came in; he had a little package in his hand, and said it was medicine from Dr. Verdi; he said he was sent by Dr. Verdi with particular directions how he was to take the medicine, and he said he must go up; I told him he could not go up ... he said that would not do, and I started to go up, and finding he would go up I started past him and went up the stairs before him ... I noticed that his step was very heavy, and I asked him not to walk so heavy, he would disturb Mr. Seward; he met Mr. Frederick Seward on the steps outside the door, and had some conversation with him in the hall.”

After describing a lengthy argument between Powell and Frederick Seward, Bell testified that Powell “started toward the steps as if to go down, and I started to go down before him; I had gone about three steps, and turned around, saying ‘don’t walk so heavy;’ by the time I had turned round he jumped back and struck Mr. Frederick Seward, and by the time I had turned clear around, Mr. Frederick Seward had fallen, and thrown up his hands, then I ran downstairs and called ‘murder;’ I went to the front door and cried murder; then I ran down to General Auger’s headquarters at the corner.”

Finding no one there, Bell ran back to the house in time to see Powell run out and get on his horse. Asked if he saw “with what [Powell] struck Mr. Fred. Seward,” Bell responded that “it appeared to be round and wound with velvet; I took it to be a knife afterwards.” For the record, it was actually supposed to be a gun.

Probably seeking to avoid perjuring himself too brazenly, Bell adopted the “I didn’t see nothing” approach. Powell, acting with superhuman strength and speed, managed to get to and subdue

Frederick Seward before Bell could even turn around – after which Bell left the house, missing the rest of the carnage and returning just in time to witness Powell's escape.

One wonders though how Emerick Hansell, the Steven Parent of this story (look it up), somehow managed to not see or hear Bell's frantic flight and shouts of "murder" as he approached the Seward house that night. And why no patrols were near enough to respond to his cries. And exactly how long it took William Bell to turn "clear around." In any event, we know that we can rule Bell out as being the mystery man who assisted George Robinson.



Union General Ambrose Burnside

Amazingly enough, after nearly a century-and-a-half, no one has ever seriously questioned the official narrative of what exactly happened that night. There have been just a relative handful of books written that question various aspects of the assassination, such as whether there were other, unseen conspirators, and whether John Wilkes Booth really was gunned down at Garrett's barn, but even the authors of those books have unquestioningly accepted that what the state says went down in that presidential box and in the Seward home really did happen.

But why? On what basis should we blindly accept those aspects of the official story? Why should we believe a guy who when called upon three times to tell his story under oath, told that story in the exact same words all three times? And why should we believe two guys who supposedly stood side-by-side to fight off an intruder without either noticing the other's presence? And who both somehow failed to notice the allegedly mortally wounded Frederick Seward lying right

outside the door? And why should we believe a guy who absurdly claimed that he confused a young, physically fit Lewis Powell for his own invalid, aging father, and then claimed to have confused the very same Lewis Powell with the shorter, older, and much darker George Robinson?

How is it possible that no one has questioned any of that? Do I have to fucking do everything around here?

There were, needless to say, other irregularities in what passed for a trial, including the wholesale suppression of exculpatory evidence. And the introduction of brazenly manufactured evidence, like a supposed cipher letter, also introduced into evidence at John Surratt's trial, that had allegedly been retrieved from a river but that clearly had never been in the water.



Confederate General Robert E. Lee, with son

To briefly recap then, all of the following were distinguishing characteristics of the 'trial' of the conspirators:

1. The defendants were informed of the charges against them just 72 hours before the trial began, depriving them of the ability to put together an effective defense.
2. The defendants, all civilians, were subjected to military justice.

3. The defendants were denied their right to individual trials.
4. The defendants were not allowed to speak in their own defense.
5. The state willfully withheld the list of prosecution witnesses, denying the defendants their right to know the nature of the testimony they would be defending themselves against.
6. The state freely introduced inflammatory, prejudicial testimony.
7. The state made extensive use of witnesses testifying under assumed identities.
8. The state made extensive use of paid witnesses.
9. The defendants were prohibited from privately consulting with their attorneys.
10. The state was not shy about suppressing exculpatory evidence.
11. The state was also not shy about introducing manufactured evidence.
12. The state allowed subpoenaed defense witnesses to ignore those subpoenas.
13. Only a simple majority was required to convict, and only a 2/3 majority was required to impose the death penalty.

And yet, through seven weeks of the most extreme prosecutorial misconduct imaginable, the entire defense team raised only twelve objections. They should have raised that many just during the first hour of the first day of the proceedings. If not sooner.



Union General John Pope

On June 29, 1965, the tribunal members met in a secret session to begin reviewing the evidence. It didn't take them long to find all the defendants guilty. On July 5, President Johnson approved

all the sentences handed down by the commissioners, including the death sentence for Mary Surratt. The very next day, four of the prisoners were informed that they would hang in less than 24 hours.

Mary Surratt's spiritual advisers were denied access to her until they gave their assurances that they would not proclaim their belief in her innocence. Even then, they were allowed access only for a few hours. All of the prisoners were guarded very closely during their final hours by Thomas Eckert, Lafayette Baker, and a number of his thuggish detectives. Some of the gathered witnesses described the condemned prisoners as looking drugged as they were led to the gallows by Baker's men.

More than a thousand soldiers ringed the prison walls to keep protestors at bay. Just after 1:30 PM on the afternoon of July 7, 1865, four soldiers kicked away the posts that were temporarily supporting the floor of the gallows and Mary Surratt, Lewis Thornton Powell, David Herold, and George Adzerodt fell to their deaths.

Meanwhile, military personnel escorted Dr. Samuel Mudd, Michael O'Laughlin, Ed Spangler, and Samuel Arnold to a remote, isolated, desolate facility known as Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas off the coast of Florida. Photos reveal that what was once undoubtedly a gorgeous tropical atoll had been converted by the US military into a veritable hell on Earth. The facility reportedly featured underground torture cells and dungeons. All four prisoners were held in solitary confinement in conditions so appalling that one of them, Michael O'Laughlin, was dead within two years.



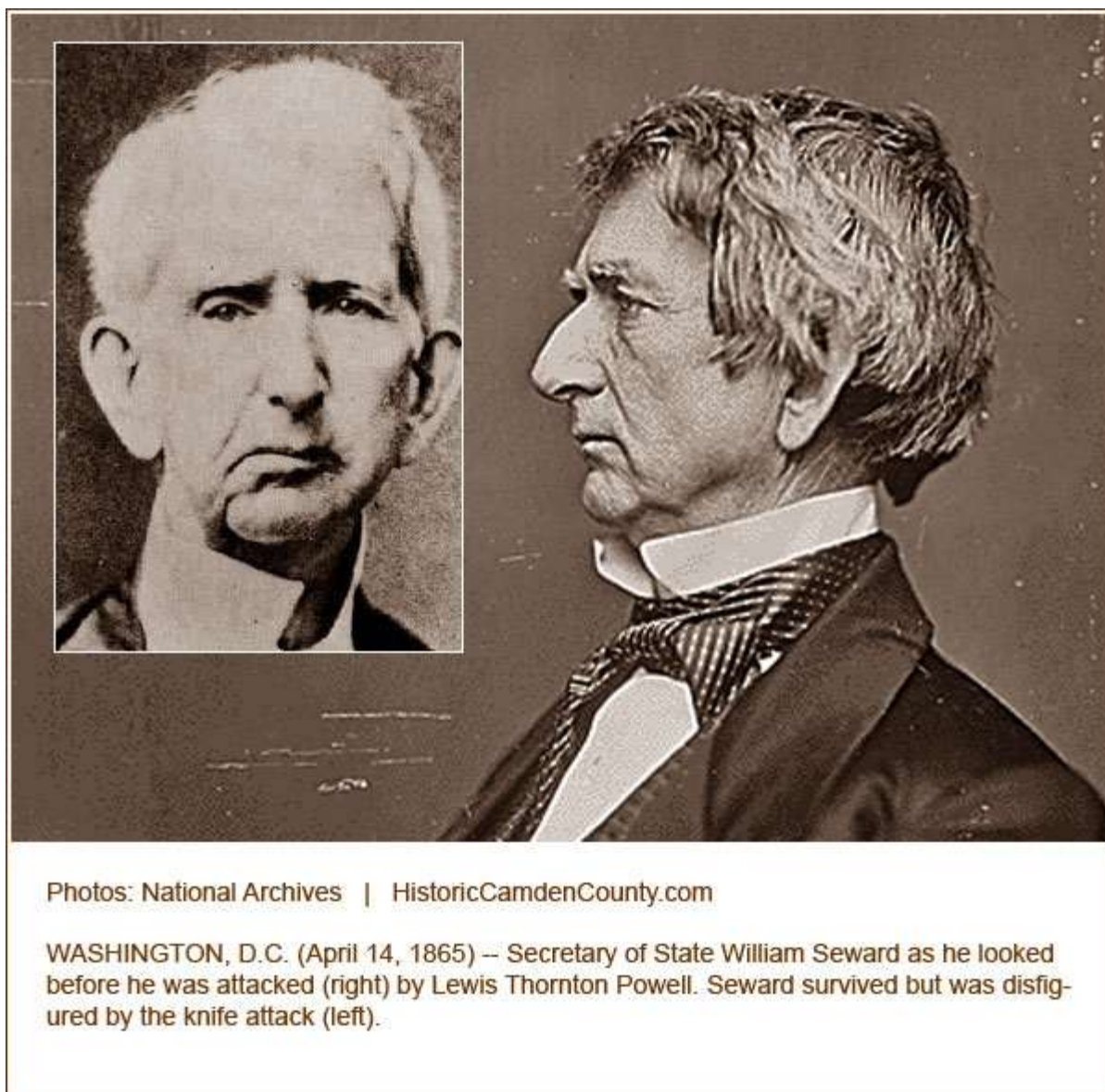
Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas

And that, dear readers, is how 'justice' was meted out to the eight alleged accomplices of John Wilkes Booth.

In my continuing quest to gain some kind of understanding of exactly what happened on the night of April 14, 1865, I have worked my way through several more rather tedious treatments of the Lincoln assassination, including a relatively new tome by Leonard Guttridge and Ray Neff (*Dark Union*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003) that adds several new layers of complexity to the fabled attack on Secretary of State William Seward. And by “new layers of complexity,” I really mean new layers of absurdity.

One thing we learn from the authors is that the “house where the Swards lived was a thirty-room mansion overlooking Lafayette Square.” A three-story, thirty-room mansion. But like virtually everyone else who has written about the alleged attack at the Seward home, the authors offer little commentary on how Lewis Powell, who by all accounts had never been in the home, could have so easily navigated his way through it.

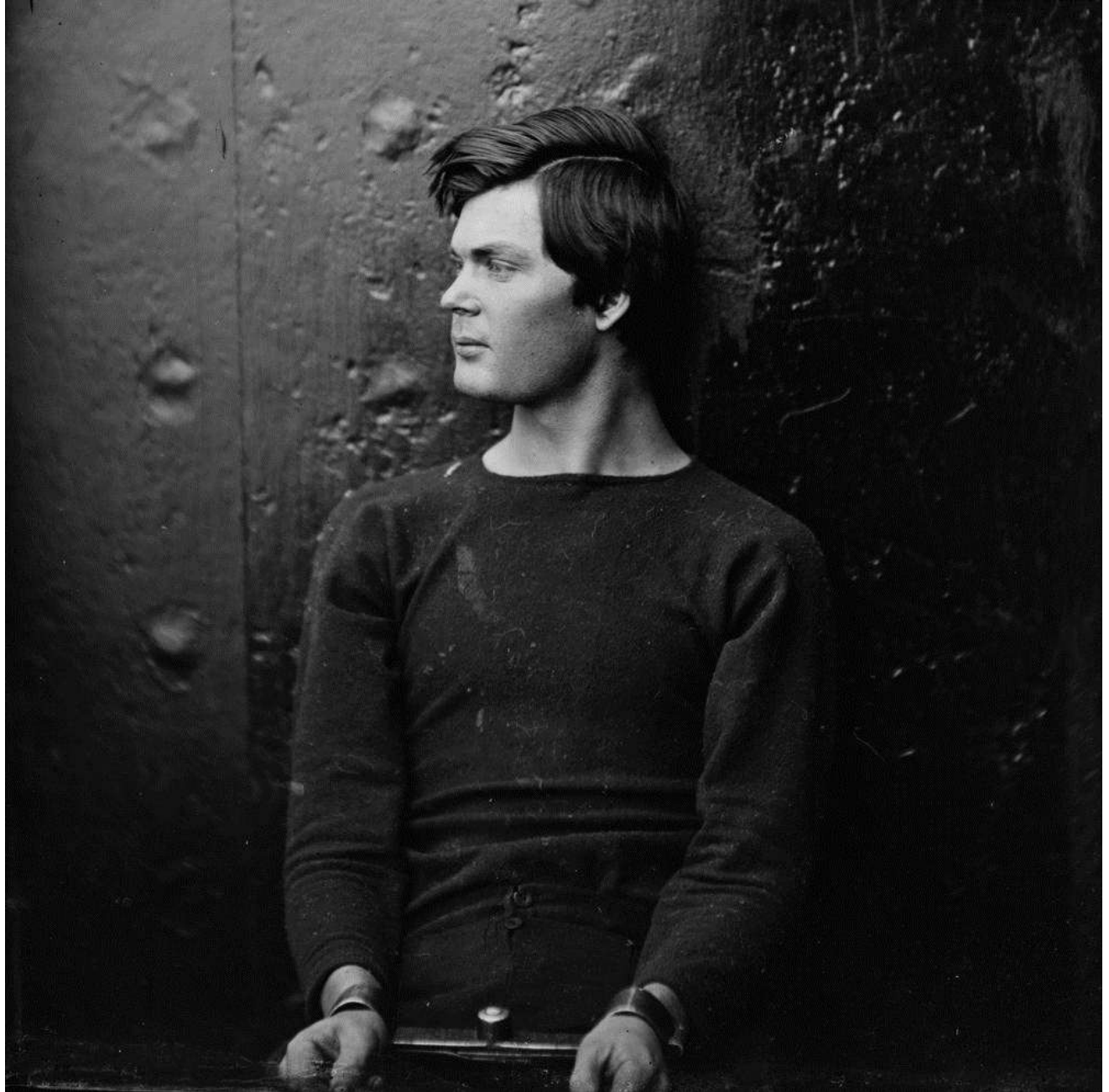
The authors also inform us that, “This was no assassin’s work. Seward’s body was otherwise unscathed. The knife struck nowhere near the heart or any other vital organ. It was not aimed at the windpipe. It targeted Seward’s face – in particular, his ligatured jaw.” In other words, none of the wounds that Seward allegedly sustained that night were inconsistent with the injuries he was known to have suffered as a result of the carriage accident. It is, I have to say, a rather remarkable ‘coincidence’ that Powell’s knife struck only where Seward was previously injured.



Contradicting virtually everything else that has been written about the alleged attempted assassination of Seward, Guttridge and Neff also claim that “Two male nurses had been assigned to the secretary, and two State Department messengers, each armed with a Colt revolver, were working shifts as Seward’s bodyguard. That Good Friday evening one of the messengers, Emerick Hansell, reached Seward’s home shortly after nine in the evening ... After a meal in the kitchen, he settled himself in an alcove on the third floor, where most of the family bedrooms were located.”

So now we find that, in addition to two active-duty military personnel (George Robinson and Augustus Seward) and two other able-bodied men (William Bell and Frederick Seward) being present in the home, William Seward actually had an armed guard stationed right down the hall from his room – and yet Powell was still able to locate, get to, and brutally attack his target. Well done, Mr. Powell!

According to Guttridge and Neff, Hansell didn't enter into the melee until after William Seward had been attacked and Powell was grappling with Robinson: "Then another figure plunged into the room. It wasn't Fred. He had already staggered to his bedroom, beaten nearly senseless. The new arrival was Emerick Hansell ... He heard Robinson cry, 'Hansey, help me.'"



The always photogenic Lewis Powell

In case anyone missed any of that, let's run through the scenario presented by Neff and Guttridge: William Seward had an armed guard stationed just down the hall from his room. We have no idea why he had an armed guard since the President didn't even have one, but we'll just play along and say that he had one. That guard though didn't respond when Powell came calling at the door, forcing his way in. He didn't respond when Powell argued with Bell and pushed past him. He didn't respond when Powell "walked heavy" up two flights of stairs. He didn't respond

when Frederick Powell stood on the landing loudly arguing with Powell. He didn't respond when Powell then physically attacked Frederick, leaving him for dead (or to wander off to his bedroom, or to get up and wander into his father's room). He didn't respond when William Bell ran from the house screaming "murder!" He didn't respond when Powell forced his way into William Seward's room. He didn't respond when Powell attacked first Robinson and then Seward. No, it wasn't until Powell was fighting his way out of the bedroom that Hansell decided to respond. And even then, despite the fact that Powell had nearly killed three people, including the guy that Hansell was assigned to protect, he opted not to use his weapon, choosing instead to become another casualty.

Does all of that make perfect sense to everyone?

If so, then this infinitely fascinating bit of assassination trivia should make perfect sense as well: "The Seward episode was further complicated by a coincidence. Within twenty-four hours of the Good Friday attack, newspapers reported that Emerick Hansell, the State Department messenger on protective duty and knifed on the third floor, had died of his wounds. The obituaries were all but correct. There were two men named Emerick Hansell. One had indeed succumbed in Washington, but he was a farrier at the Union cavalry depot at Giesboro at the edge of the city. His widow was informed that he was kicked in the head while shoeing a horse. He lingered a week, to die just eight hours after the stabbing of his namesake."

Call me a skeptic if you will, but I am finding it very difficult to believe that that was a 'coincidence.' Truth be told, I'm finding it almost impossible to believe that there were two guys named Emerick Hansell living in Washington, DC in 1865, let alone that one of them died within hours of the other being brutally attacked. If such reports did indeed circulate, then they had to be deliberately false reports. And those false reports led to a very predictable outcome:

"The farrier's death had the effect of stilling questions that only the other Hansell might have answered. Many years would pass before the State Department's messenger, then in pensioned retirement following a resumed career on the federal payroll, would give his story under strict guarantees of confidentiality. His recollection then was that he had been the third man on the landing, rushing to Private Robinson's aid, convinced that the man he and the soldier grappled with was Major Augustus Seward, the secretary's troubled son."

It is obvious from this passage that Guttridge and Neff based their account of the alleged attack at the Seward residence on Hansell's belated, off-the-record recollections. The authors appear to be unaware that Hansell's story is wildly at odds with the accounts of other supposed witnesses, or perhaps they just don't care.



The Seward family home in Washington, DC

We now have testimony from three guys claiming to have been in William Seward's bedroom and to have acted in his defense. One of them, Augustus Seward, had no one assisting him and he thought he was fighting against either his father or his father's nurse. Another of them, Emerick Hansell, was assisted only by Robinson and thought he was grappling with Augustus Seward. The third, George Robinson, thought that he was fighting with a guy he described to a newspaper reporter as having "light sandy hair, whiskers and moustache." And he, of course, thought that he was assisted by someone who was never identified.

None of the three saw Frederick Seward lying unconscious outside William Seward's room, but Robinson did see him enter the room. None of them made any mention of the presence of Fanny Seward, though her belatedly released statement would hold that she was in the room as well. None of them saw Frances or Anna Seward either, though you would think they would have come to see what all the commotion was about at some point. Though Powell and Hansell were both supposedly packing heat, and Augustus Seward's testimony at trial indicated that he retrieved a gun as well, not a single shot was fired that night at the Seward mansion. After being awakened by the commotion, which necessarily would have included Bell's shouts of murder, Major Seward nevertheless opted to initially respond without a weapon. Hansell apparently responded without his weapon as well. And Bell, ignoring the fact that Seward already had an armed guard and a militarily trained and armed son, felt the need to run down the street seeking outside help.

It's hard to imagine a more ridiculously contradictory set of stories. Two of the 'witnesses' essentially identified each other as the assailant, and the third offered up a description that did not in any way fit the always clean-shaven Lewis Powell. To say that there was reasonable doubt in this case would be a serious understatement, but the tribunal had no problem convicting Powell and sentencing him to death (there were even, as previously stated, contingency plans to have him executed before the trial even concluded).

But then again, Doster did wrap up his ‘defense’ of Powell by delivering a closing argument that began as follows: “May it please the court: There are three things in the case of the prisoner, Powell, which are admitted beyond civil or dispute: (1) That he is the person who attempted to take the life of the Secretary of State. (2) That he is not within the medical definition of insanity. (3) That he believed what he did was right and justifiable. The question of his identity and the question of his sanity are, therefore, settled, and among the things of the past.” With a defense like that, how could he lose?



Lewis Powell's empty gravesite

Perhaps James Swanson, who appears to fancy himself to be the reigning expert on the Lincoln assassination, can clear up the confusion surrounding what exactly happened at the Seward manor. In his bestselling *Manhunt: The Twelve-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer* (William Morrow, 2006) Swanson spins a uniquely preposterous account of the alleged attack. Like other self-styled historians, he handpicks facts from the accounts of various alleged participants while conveniently leaving out all the contradictory elements of those accounts.

One thing that Swanson does get right in his overly wordy account is an acknowledgement that Powell's alleged assignment would have been a very difficult one: “This was a difficult mission even for a man like Powell, a battle-hardened and extremely strong ex-Confederate soldier. Powell had three problems. First, how could he get inside Seward's house? ... Once inside, it was Powell's job to track down Secretary Seward in the sprawling, three-story mansion ...

Powell faced a third challenge: he did not know how many occupants ... were on the premises.” In Swanson's telling of the tale, on the night of April 14, 1865, “Fanny [Seward] watched over her father and listened to the sights and sounds of the never-ending celebrations in the streets.” Of primary interest here is the mention of the “never-ending celebrations.” General Lee had just surrendered to General Grant, the Civil War was all but over, and the nation's capitol was in a celebratory mood. Just the night before, public buildings and private homes across the city were lit up with candles and gaslights while fireworks exploded overhead, providing, by all accounts, a uniquely awe-inspiring view of the city.

The next day, April 14, was a Friday and those celebrations continued well into the night, with tens of thousands of people taking to the streets to join in the revelry. The Seward mansion sat, as previously noted, right across the street from Lafayette Square, which surely would have been filled that night with a sizable portion of that mass of humanity. Keep that in mind as we work our way through Swanson's highly dubious account.

“Around 10:00 P.M.,” according to Swanson, Fanny Seward “put down her book, *Legends of Charlemagne*, turned down the gaslights, and, along with Sergeant George Robinson, a wounded veteran now serving as an army nurse, kept watch over her recovering father.” For the record, Robinson was not yet a sergeant, which is one of many factual inaccuracies that can be found throughout Swanson's supposedly authoritative books.

Shortly after Fanny had lowered the lights, Lewis Powell approached the front door of the home and “rang the bell ... [and] William Bell, a nineteen-year-old black servant, hurried to answer the

door.” Amazingly, Swanson knows what William’s age was at the time even though Bell himself was unable to provide that information when asked at trial! In any event, an argument ensued between Powell and Bell and, “For five minutes, the assassin and the servant bickered about whether Powell would leave the medicine with Bell.”

Powell next pushed past Bell and proceeded up the stairs, where, as we know, he encountered Fred Seward and argued with him as well. After appearing to lose the argument, Powell began to retreat down the stairs but then quickly pivoted and attempted to shoot Fred Seward. When the gun failed to fire, “Powell raised the pistol high in the air and brought down a crushing blow to Seward’s head. He hit him so hard that he broke the pistol’s steel ramrod, jamming the cylinder and making it impossible to fire again.”

Broke the steel ramrod?! No shit? I could see possibly bending it, but how do you “break” a steel ramrod? Had Powell or anyone else hit Seward with that kind of force, and then delivered a few more equally devastating blows, he would certainly have killed him. But according to Swanson, Powell didn’t even knock him down (directly contradicting, of course, Bell’s sworn testimony at trial): “Powell moved lightning fast. He shoved Fred aside and struck Robinson in the forehead hard with the knife.” Swanson later informs us that Fred remained conscious and on his feet throughout the ordeal, though he mostly just “wandered around the house like a zombie, babbling the same phrase, ‘It is ... it is,’ over and over unable to complete the thought.”

Meanwhile, “The assassin pushed past the reeling sergeant and the waiflike girl blocking his path and sprinted to the bed” where the ailing William Seward lay helpless. According to Swanson, the only thing that saved Seward’s life was Powell’s poor aim, which resulted in him completely missing the motionless secretary of state with his first two knife thrusts. By the time he connected, Robinson had rejoined the fight and was attempting to pull Powell away from Seward. At about that time, “Fanny ... screamed, not once, but in a ceaseless, howling, and terrifying wail that woke her brother Augustus, or ‘Gus,’ who was asleep in a room nearby. Fanny then opened a window and screamed to the street below.”

So now, in addition to Bell running down the street screaming “murder,” we have Fanny Seward screaming out an open window. And yet still, with celebrants swarming around the capitol, no one was able to respond in time to even see Powell, let alone try to stop him! Sounds perfectly reasonable to me. As does the fact that “Gus” was able to sleep through the knock on the door, the argument between Bell and Powell, Powell’s noisy ascent of the stairs, Powell’s argument with Frederick, Powell’s attack on Frederick, Powell forcing his way into William Seward’s room, Powell’s attack on Robinson, Powell’s attack on William Seward, and all the screaming that all the victims would undoubtedly have been doing as they were being viciously attacked. Old Gus was a pretty sound sleeper, I guess.

According to Swanson, Augustus Seward and George Robinson then jointly battled Powell, which we already know directly contradicts the sworn testimony of both of them. That fight supposedly spilled over into the hallway outside Seward’s room. At that time, “Secretary Seward’s wife, alarmed by Fanny’s screams, emerged from her third-floor, back bedroom in time to witness the climax of the hallway struggle between Powell and her son Gus.

Uncomprehending, she assumed that her husband had become delirious and was running amok. Fred’s wife, Anna, rushed to the scene ...”

Apparently Frances and Anna Seward slept even more soundly than Augustus. With their arrival though, Powell was outnumbered six to one, and that didn’t even include Hansell, who, according to Swanson, decided that his best bet was to get the hell out of Dodge: “On [Powell’s] way out, he caught up with Emerick Hansell, who was running down the staircase, trying to stay

ahead of the assassin. The State Department messenger, on duty at Seward's home, was fleeing rather than joining the battle."

Of course he was. That's probably why we all remember him being lynched, which is undoubtedly what would have happened if Swanson's tall tale was true. I guess Hansell slept through most of the ordeal as well, foolishly choosing to flee at the same time as Powell. You'd think he would have just stayed wherever it was that he was hiding. Or run sooner. Those would have been safer options. But then again, since he had a gun and was backed up by at least six people, and the assailant was unarmed, maybe he should have just done his job. That way, he wouldn't have had to haul his gravely wounded body up two flights of stairs to get into bed before the doctor got there.

It is more than a little odd, I must say, that both Augustus Seward and Frances Seward claimed to initially believe that the 'intruder' was actually William Seward "running amok." Was that a common thing for the secretary of state to do? Even when everyone knew that he was confined to bed and completely immobile?

Mr. Robinson, by the way, had a change of heart after telling a reporter about the intruder with "light sandy hair, whiskers and moustache." By the time the trial rolled around just a few weeks later, Robinson was sure that Powell was the assailant. That may have been due to the fact that he had received a gold medal, \$5,000 in cash, and a promotion. And he later was awarded the knife allegedly used by Powell in the attack.



This is said to be the only known remains of Lewis Powell

It is impossible for me to believe that the alleged events at the Seward home ever took place. All the available evidence overwhelmingly suggests that it was an entirely manufactured affair. Fanny and Frances Seward, as previously discussed, did not live long after the alleged attack. Neither, of course, did Lewis Powell. William and Frederick Seward chose to never speak publicly about the alleged incident. Augustus Seward, George Robinson, William Bell, and (belatedly) Emerick Hansell gave wildly conflicting accounts. And as mainstream historians continue to work diligently to bend the conflicting accounts into some kind of believable storyline, the story just gets more and more ridiculous.

The more deeply immersed in this I become, the more I am convinced that the key to understanding the Lincoln assassination may be in understanding what *didn't* happen at the Seward residence. For if the alleged parallel attack on the Swards never took place, then clearly there was much more to the events of April 14, 1865 than the activities of John Wilkes Booth and a ragtag band of conspirators.

Before wrapping up, let's take a look at one final curiosity surrounding the alleged attack on the Seward family: in all the accounts that I have read – and I have now worked my way through fourteen books chronicling the Lincoln assassination – it is either stated or implied that Powell (and Bell) ascended just one flight of stairs to get to William Seward's bedroom, and descended just one flight to exit the house. But Seward's bedroom was on the third floor of the home, which meant that reaching him (and Frederick and the rest of the cast) would have required first ascending one flight of stairs, then crossing a second-floor landing, and then ascending a second flight of stairs.

That curious fact seems to have remained deliberately obscured for many, many years now. And it's not hard to figure out why, for if that fact is pointed out, it raises the very obvious question of exactly how Powell would have known to bypass the home's second floor and proceed directly to the third.

If there is anything we can be certain about in regards to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, it is that we will never know what really happened in the presidential box at Ford's Theatre at approximately 10:15 PM on the night of April 14, 1865.

In addition to the guy who made a hasty exit across the stage and out the back door, and the guy who caught a bullet to the head and never regained consciousness, there were, depending upon which version of events one chooses to believe, either three or four eyewitnesses present in that box that fateful evening. Mary Todd Lincoln was certainly there, as were Major Henry Rathbone and his fiancé/stepsister Clara Harris. By some accounts (including Forbes' own account) presidential aide Charles Forbes was there as well.

The Lincoln party arrived at the theater around 8:30 PM, about a half-hour after the play, *Our American Cousin*, had begun. The show was briefly halted while the band played "Hail to the Chief," accompanied by a rousing ovation from the crowd, after which the Lincolns and their guests quietly took their seats and the play resumed. Some two hours later, the president lay mortally wounded with a lead ball lodged in his brain.

this earth, sons, the most idolising, the noblest, purest, most talented – that were ever given to parents – Their presence grand & beautiful – too good for this world, so full of sorrow – Yet the time will come, when the severance, will be over, together husband, wife and children – never more to be separated – I grieve for those who have been called upon to give up their precious ones, and until the sunlight of a happier clime dawns upon us, we will never know until then, why, we have been visited, by such sorrow.”

Clara Harris was similarly tight-lipped about what she witnessed at Ford’s Theatre. Her account also comes from personal correspondence, this one written on April 29, 1865, just two weeks after the tragedy: “That terrible Friday night is to me yet almost like some dreadful vision ... We four composed the party that evening. They drove to our door in the gayest spirits; chatting on our way – and the President was received with the greatest enthusiasm. They say we were watched by the assassins; ay, as we alighted from the carriage. Oh, how could anyone be so cruel as to strike that kind, dear, honest face! And when I think of that fiend barring himself in alone with us, my blood runs cold. My dress is saturated with blood; my hands and face were covered. You may imagine what a scene! And so, all through that dreadful night, when we stood by that dying bed. Poor Mrs. Lincoln was and is almost crazy. Henry narrowly escaped with his life. The knife struck at his heart with all the force of a practiced and powerful arm; he fortunately parried the blow, and received a wound in his arm, extending along the bone, from the elbow nearly to the shoulder. He concealed it for some time, but was finally carried home in swoon; the loss of blood had been so great from an artery and veins severed. He is now getting quite well, but cannot as yet use his arm ...”

It wasn’t until almost thirty years after the assassination that Charles Forbes swore out an affidavit; unfortunately, that affidavit also fails to shed any light at all on the events of that evening: “I was the personal attendant of the late President Lincoln from shortly after his first inauguration up to the time he fell by the assassin’s bullet ... I accompanied him in the carriage, was with him from the carriage to the box in the theatre, and was in the box when the assassin fired his fatal shot.” Curious that nearly three decades after John Wilkes Booth was identified as the assassin, Forbes referred to him merely as “the assassin.”

And that, dear readers, is the sum total of what we have from three of the four eyewitnesses. Considering once again that this was, as I may have mentioned, the Crime of the Century, that is a rather remarkable set of circumstances.

length and in the center of the railing is a small pillar overhung with a curtain. The depth of the box from front to rear is about nine feet. The elevation of the box above the stage including the railing is about ten or twelve feet.

“When the party entered the box a cushioned armchair was standing at the end of the box furthest from the stage and nearest the audience. This was also the nearest point to the door from which the box is entered. The President seated himself in this chair and, except that he once left the chair for the purpose of putting on his overcoat, remained so seated until he was shot. Mrs. Lincoln was seated in a chair between the President and the pillar in the centre, above described. At the opposite end of the box – that nearest the stage – were two chairs. In one of these, standing in the corner, Miss Harris was seated. At her left hand and along the wall running from that end of the box to the rear stood a small sofa. At the end of this sofa next to Miss Harris this deponent was seated, and the President, as they were sitting, was about seven or eight feet and the distance between this deponent and the door was about the same. The distance between the President as he sat and the door was about four or five feet. The door, according to the recollections of this deponent, was not closed during the evening.

“When the second scene of the third act was being performed and while this deponent was intently viewing the proceedings upon the stage with his back toward the door he heard the discharge of a pistol behind him and looking round saw through the smoke, a man between the door and the President. At the same time deponent heard him shout some word which deponent thinks was ‘Freedom.’ This deponent instantly sprang towards him and seized him. He wrested himself from the grasp and made a violent thrust at the breast of this deponent with a large knife. Deponent parried the blow by striking it up and received a wound several inches deep in his left arm between the elbow and the shoulder. The orifice of the wound is about an inch and a half in length and extends upwards towards the shoulder several inches. The man rushed to the front of the box and deponent endeavored to seize him again but only caught his clothes as he was leaping over the railing of the box. The clothes, as this deponent believes, were torn in this attempt to seize him. As he went over upon the stage, deponent cried out with a loud voice ‘Stop that man.’ Deponent then turned to the President. His position was not changed. His head was slightly bent forward and his eyes were closed. Deponent saw that he was unconscious and, supposing him mortally wounded, rushed to the door for the purpose of calling medical aid. On reaching the outer door of the passageway as above described, deponent found it barred by a heavy piece of plank, one end of which secured in the wall and the other resting against the door. It had been so securely fastened that it required considerable force to remove it. This wedge or bar was about four feet from the floor. Persons upon the outside were beating against the door for the purpose of entering. Deponent removed the bar and the door was opened. Several persons who represented themselves to be surgeons were allowed to enter. Deponent saw there Colonel Crawford and requested him to prevent other persons from entering the box. Deponent then returned to the box and found the surgeon examining the Presidents person. They had not yet discovered the wound. As soon as it was discovered, it was determined to remove him from the Theatre. He was carried out this deponent then proceeded to assist Mrs. Lincoln, who was intensely excited, to leave the Theatre. On reaching the head of the stairs, deponent requested Major Potter to aid him in assisting Mrs. Lincoln across the street to the house which the President was being conveyed. The wound which the deponent had received had been bleeding very profusely and on reaching the house, feeling very faint from the loss of blood, he seated himself in the hall and soon after fainted away and was laid upon the floor. Upon the return of consciousness deponent was taken in the carriage to his residence.

“In review of this transaction it is the confident belief of this deponent that the time which elapsed between the discharge of the pistol and the time when the assassin leaped from the box did not exceed thirty seconds. Neither Mrs. Lincoln nor Miss Harris had left their seats.”



Rathbone's deposition and subsequent testimony were given at a time when attorneys did not have the luxury of submitting photographic evidence to set the scene for jurors. It appears then that prosecutors used his detailed physical description to paint a mental image for those in the courtroom. And it is very hard to believe that Rathbone would have spontaneously offered up such testimony. Those details were undoubtedly provided to him as part of the script he appears to have been following.

Let us now look at all the other reasons why Rathbone's account is seriously lacking in credibility. First of all, he claims that the alleged assailant was in the box for up to thirty seconds after shooting Lincoln, long enough to grapple with and seriously wound Rathbone. But the accounts of other witnesses in the theater that evening directly contradict that notion. A witness identified only as "Basset," for instance, claimed that "A second after the shot was fired a man vaulted over the ballister of the box." Witness Frederick Sawyer wrote that, "The whole occurrence, the shot, the leap, the escape – was done while you could count to eight." Actor Harry Hawk, after describing the sequence of events, claimed that "The above all occurred in the space of a few seconds, and at the time I did not know the president was shot."

How then was there time for the alleged struggle with Rathbone? And if Rathbone had been grappling with an assailant as said assailant was leaping over the front railing, as Rathbone claimed, those actions would have been visible to many of the witnesses in the theater. And yet

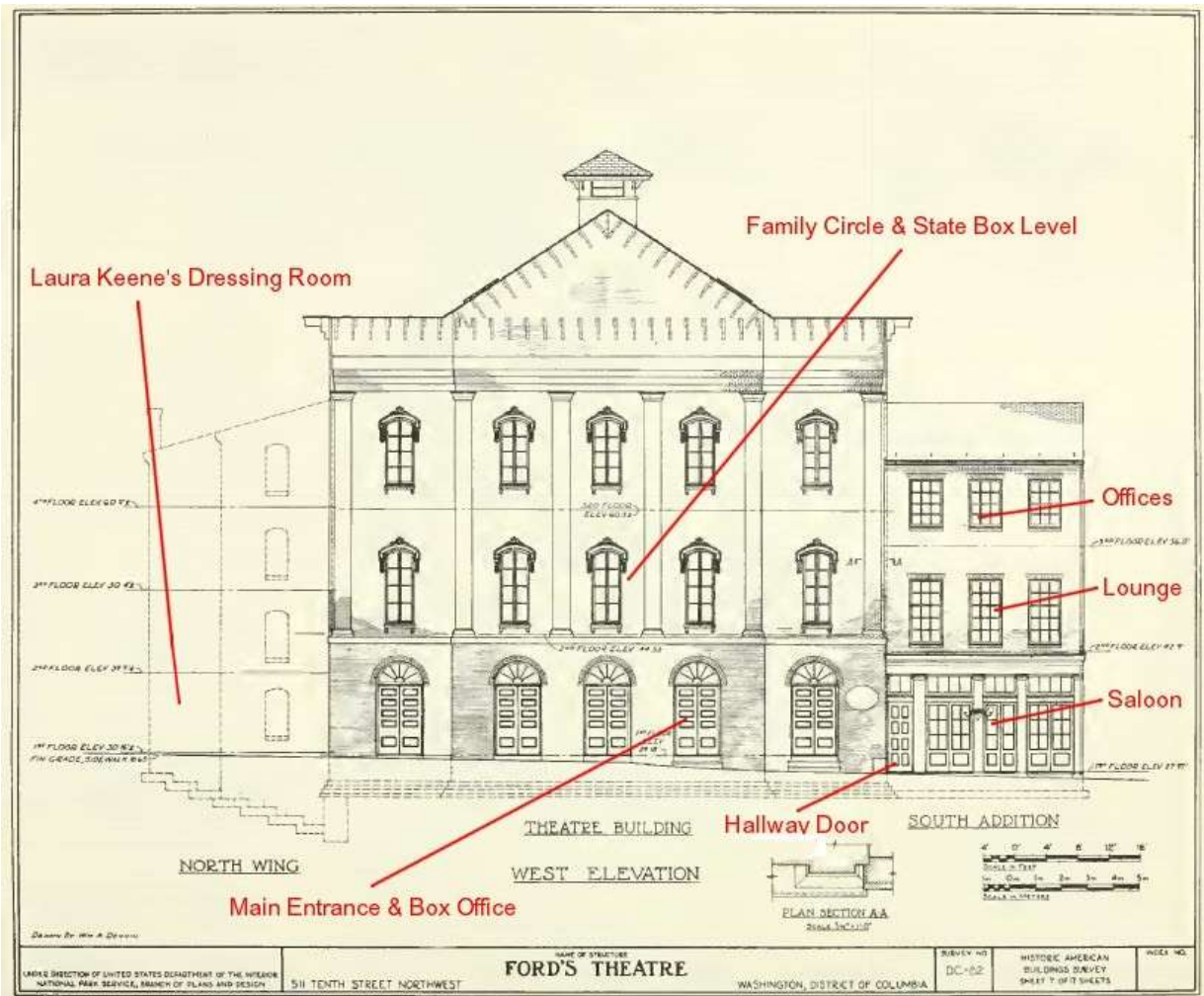
none of the witnesses who claimed to see the man leap from the box mentioned seeing him struggling with Rathbone either before or while doing so.



Another problem is that Rathbone claims to have suffered a substantial wound that bled profusely, so much so that his fiancé allegedly found herself drenched in blood, and yet of all the witnesses who said they saw the fleeing man prominently brandish a large knife as he made his exit across the stage, not one of them mentioned seeing any blood on that knife. Or on the man's hands. Or on his clothing. How is it possible that he could have cut Rathbone so severely, and then continued grappling with him, and yet walked away with no visible blood on him?

Yet another minor problem is that neither Rathbone nor his fiancé made any mention of his very serious wound ever being treated. He claimed that the wound was so severe that he passed out from blood loss, but that he then was merely taken home and dropped off. According to the official story, there were at least three skilled surgeons on hand, none of whom could really do much for the mortally wounded Lincoln. Why then didn't anyone bother to attend to such a grave wound inflicted on a guest of the President? From what I hear, those severed arteries can be a real killer if left unattended.

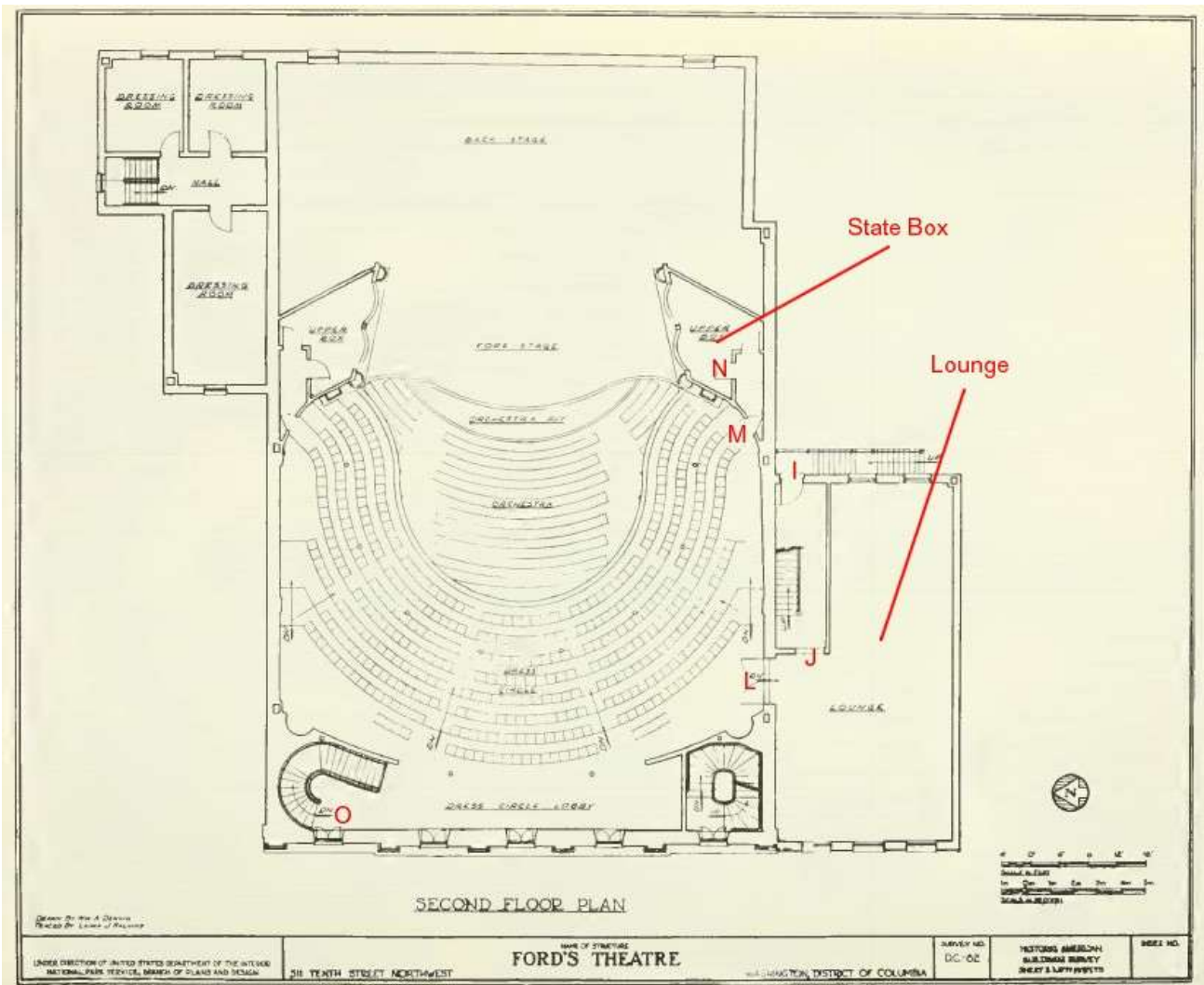
What we seem to have here is a situation in which: (a) witness accounts don't allow for enough time for Rathbone to have been seriously wounded; (b) Rathbone never received treatment for a serious wound; (c) the knife that allegedly inflicted the wound was bloodless just seconds later, as was the guy carrying it; and (d) none of the self-proclaimed witnesses in the theater that night saw Rathbone grappling with his alleged assailant.



Moving on to other peculiarities in Rathbone's account, one obvious question that is raised is: why would John Wilkes Booth, or anyone else entering the box for the purpose of killing Lincoln in the manner in which it occurred, take the time to wedge the outer door shut? Any pursuers weren't going to come from that direction. And if the alleged plan went awry, the assailant might need to flee in that direction. So why cut off a possible means of escape? And how is it that a sturdy wood plank of the precise length needed to do the job just happened to be on hand? Those are questions that historians have never really provided satisfactory answers to. According to Rathbone's account, the inner door to the box was open all night. How then would the party not have heard an intruder enter the outer door and then close it and forcibly wedge it shut ... before sneaking up behind the President? It doesn't seem possible for an uninvited intruder to have done that. And there was no reason to do it. Booth, it will be recalled, was ludicrously armed with a single-shot derringer. The plan, therefore, was heavily dependent upon the element of surprise. Why then risk discovery by pointlessly wedging the door shut? Who then really wedged that door shut and why? Did it benefit the alleged assailant, or did it provide a window of opportunity to stage the scene before any responders could get to the president?

Several other questions are raised by Rathbone's account, including why the president was seated furthest from the stage and closest to the door? Wouldn't the guest of honor customarily

get the best seat in the house? Why had the furniture in the box that day been arranged to place him furthest from the stage? And being that he was the fourth member of the party, why didn't Rathbone sit in the fourth chair along the front of the box? Why did he choose instead to sit alone on a sofa slightly behind the others?



Beyond the problems with Rathbone's account, there are other problems with the official story of what went down in Ford's Theatre on April 14, 1865. According to witness accounts, the man fleeing across the stage brandished his knife in his right hand, indicating that he was right-handed. But the bullet that killed Lincoln, purportedly fired by an assailant standing behind him, entered behind his left ear and traveled diagonally through the brain cavity, ending up behind his right eye. That would be a rather tricky shot to pull off for a right-hander. To the extent that historians have addressed this anomaly, it is generally claimed that Lincoln turned his head just as the shot was fired. But that is purely speculation aimed at bringing the known facts of the case in line with the official story.

According to all the early witness accounts, events played out very quickly and the suspect was across the stage and out of the building before anyone realized what had happened. It was only then, when it was too late to apprehend the suspect, that Mary Lincoln's anguished cries from the

box could be heard, along with Rathbone's futile exhortations to stop the fleeing suspect. But why did it take so long for Mary Todd and the others to cry out?

Mary Lincoln had had her husband gunned down as he sat right beside her, hand in hand. She had then witnessed a violent struggle between her husband's killer and Major Rathbone, during which Rathbone was grievously wounded, bathing the box in blood. Had Rathbone succumbed to his alleged wound, Mary and Clara would have been left alone in that box with a knife-wielding madman. You would think then that they would have been screaming bloody murder throughout the ordeal, and quite likely trying to exit that box. Help, after all, was just steps away. But instead the two ladies remained stoic, and seated, throughout the performance. It wasn't until the assailant had leaped from the box to the stage, regained his footing, run across the stage and then exited the building that Mary verbally responded to the attack. And Clara Harris never responded at all.

Why the curiously delayed reactions from everyone in the presidential box? And why, as previously asked in this series, would the assailant have chosen such a fundamentally preposterous weapon as a single-shot derringer for this mission? And who would plan an escape route that included an exceedingly risky leap onto a very hard stage floor below, especially while wearing riding boots with spurs? Was that really a planned escape route, or was it an improvised one?

Such are the questions that historians have avoided asking for 150 years now.



One thing that we cannot definitively conclude from the early witness accounts, contrary to popular opinion, is that the guy who hastily exited Ford's Theatre that evening was John Wilkes Booth. In witness accounts recorded years after the official story had cast a long shadow over that day's events, Booth's name pops up fairly often. But it isn't so easy to find in the early accounts.

One guy closest to the scene was Army Captain Theodore McGowan, who was seated in Ford's Theatre not far from the entrance to the president's box. I like to think that this guy was an upright sort of guy, primarily because he had a very honorable name. When called upon to testify at the military tribunal, McGowan had this to say: "I was present at Ford's Theatre on the night of the assassination. I was sitting in the aisle leading by the wall toward the door of the President's box, when a man came and disturbed me in my seat, causing me to push my chair forward to permit him to pass; he stopped about three feet from where I was sitting, and leisurely took a survey of the house. I looked at him because he happened to be in my line of sight ... I know J. Wilkes Booth, but, not seeing the face of the assassin fully, I did not at the time recognize him as Booth."

So here we have a guy who knew Booth, and yet from just three feet away, with the guy directly in his line of sight, he did not recognize the man in the theater as Booth. It is a fairly safe bet that the government exerted considerable pressure on Captain McGowan to positively identify Booth, and yet he proved unable, or unwilling, to do so. Curious also that McGowan referred to him in the present tense when Booth was supposed to be dead.

So what are we to make of all of this? Was Rathbone really gravely injured? Or was his wound a substantially less severe one that was self-inflicted while responders were held at bay by the barricaded door? Was it really John Wilkes Booth who entered the presidential box that evening? And whoever it was, did he enter for the purpose of assassinating the president? Would a small derringer have been the weapon of choice for an assassin, or was it a weapon that would have been easy for someone else in that box to have brought along?

One thing we do know – Henry Rathbone's actions in the years after the assassination clearly demonstrated that he was fully capable of two things: murder, and self-inflicted knife wounds.

It should be noted here that it has never made any sense at all why John Wilkes Booth would have chosen Ford's Theatre as the ideal site to assassinate the president. As eyewitness Edwin Bates noted the day after the shooting, "the probability was that the man when found would be discovered to be some insane person, that the lowest depths of human depravity even in a rebel of the worst type would not permit to commit such a horrible deed in so bold a manner before thousands of people & where there could be so little chance of escape." (Timothy S. Good *We Saw Lincoln Shot*, University Press of Mississippi, 1995)

As H. Donald Winkler has written, there were numerous opportunities to kill Lincoln that would not have put the assassin at such high risk of capture: "the president had made himself an easy target. He stole away for solitary walks, especially at night. He held public receptions where security was almost nonexistent. He conferred with generals in the field. He stood atop a parapet at Fort Stevens on the outskirts of Washington for a clear view of Jubal Early's approaching Confederate forces as soldiers around him were shot dead. He attended the theater frequently. He had walked virtually unguarded through the streets of the fallen Confederate capital. When he and his family stayed at his summer retreat at the Soldiers Home on the outskirts of Washington, he often rode back and forth to the White House in an unguarded carriage. Nearly every night, before going to bed, he strolled without protection down a densely shaded path through the White House grounds to the War Department's telegraph office to learn the latest news from the war front." (H. Donald Winkler *Lincoln and Booth*, Cumberland House, 2003)

The only conceivable reason to carry out the mission at Ford's was to make the assassination as much of a public spectacle as possible. Which was also true, of course, of the events that played out in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963, and the events that played out in New York on September 11, 2001. If there had been television in 1865, you can bet that the cameras would have been rolling in Ford's Theatre on the night of April 14.

Beginning at about 10:30 PM or shortly thereafter on that particular evening, a curious series of events played out in Washington, DC. At about that time, according to the official narrative, a man riding hell-bent-for-leather to get out of town approached the Navy Yard Bridge. The bridge though was closed due to a curfew imposed by the War Department, and armed guards were under standing orders not to let anyone cross without official authorization.

The rider on the swift horse allegedly identified himself as John Wilkes Booth. He did not, of course, need to do that. It wasn't as if the guard, Silas Cobb, was going to ask him for an ID to verify his identity. In those days, a man had to be taken at his word as to who he really was. Those engaged in activities that could earn you jail time, or worse, generally used an array of aliases. But the guy who had allegedly committed the 'Crime of the Century' just minutes earlier purportedly used his real name.

In that regard, Booth was a very accommodating kind of guy. Earlier in the day, when he had supposedly stopped by the Kirkwood House to visit Vice President Johnson – a guy supposedly slated to be assassinated just hours later – Booth had thoughtfully left a calling card. According to Capt. Theodore McGowan, he left another one at the entrance to the presidential box at Ford's Theatre: "He took a small pack of visiting-cards from his pocket, selecting one and replacing the others, stood a second, perhaps, with it in his hand, and then showed it to the President's messenger, who was sitting just below him." Booth was a big believer, it seems, in dropping breadcrumbs along the evidence trail.

Silas Cobb, for reasons that historians have never been able to explain, and often have never attempted to explain, allowed the rider to pass over the closed bridge and into Maryland. Cobb was never reprimanded or punished in any way for allowing the president's assassin to escape the city – which is okay, I suppose, since the same is true of everyone else who blatantly 'dropped the ball' that night.

Just minutes later, another rider looking to cross into Maryland approached the bridge. This rider, who would later be identified in the official narrative as David Herold, failed to properly identify himself. He was, nevertheless, also allowed to cross the officially closed bridge. Minutes after that, a third rider supposedly approached the bridge. This one, local stableman John Fletcher, was supposedly in hot pursuit of David Herold.

Fletcher would later claim that he had seen Herold riding through town on a horse that was supposed to have been returned, and, fearing that the horse was being stolen, he had run back to his stables, saddled and mounted another horse, and took off in pursuit of Herold. Cobb supposedly told Fletcher that he would let him pass, once again in violation of standing orders, but that he wouldn't be able to return, so Fletcher abandoned his alleged pursuit and returned to his stables.

This alleged sequence of events raises any number of deeply troubling questions that historians have done their very best to avoid answering, or even addressing. First and most obviously, why were both Booth and Herold allegedly allowed to pass over a closed bridge despite standing orders to the contrary? Another obvious question is how would John Fletcher have possibly known, after going to fetch his own horse, which way David Herold was headed on the dark streets of Washington?

Yet another painfully obvious question is why would John Wilkes Booth have given his real name? True enough, this was 1865 and travel was by horseback and the world was not a connected sort of place, so Booth would have been confident that Cobb would have had no clue yet about the shooting of Lincoln. But pursuers would surely be on the way very soon, with Ford's Theatre just three miles away, and tipping them off as to your flight path probably isn't such a good idea.

The next obvious question is why *didn't* pursuers arrive there shortly after this sequence of events? Indeed, why didn't anyone arrive there throughout the entire night? Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who quickly assumed control of the manhunt, had an impressive array of manpower at his disposal: federal troops, metro police, cavalry troops, provost marshals, and Lafayette Baker's NDP detectives. Yet none of them ever made their way over to the Navy Yard Bridge, though it was well known as an underground Confederate route.

Manpower was deployed first to the north and northwest, the least likely escape routes. The only hole in the dragnet throughout the entire night was the underground route to the South across the Navy Yard Bridge, which was never mentioned that night in any War Department dispatches. Had anyone involved in the manhunt – anyone at all – bothered to stop by the Navy Yard Bridge, it would have been quickly discovered that Booth and a likely accomplice had crossed over into Maryland. But that didn't happen and pursuers were instead sent on wild goose chases throughout the night.

Another less obvious question is why was Booth so woefully unprepared for his escape? He had to assume that he was going to have to hide out for a time and/or survive on the trail. Why then did he bring no provisions with him? No change of clothes, no bedroll or blanket, no weapons other than his dagger, no toiletries or razor, no food. Nothing that would be required for survival on the road. And the same was true of Herold.

Why would Booth, or any reasonably sane person, plot an assassination at a venue from which escape was highly unlikely? Why would the very first phase of that escape involve an incredibly risky leap onto a hard stage floor while wearing riding boots with spurs? Why would his escape route necessitate crossing a bridge that he had no reasonable expectation of being allowed to cross? And why would he have failed to bring along any provisions to survive during his time on the lam?

There is also the question of why there was a two to three-hour interruption in telegraph service in and out of Washington following the assassination. Stanton had been installed as Secretary of War in January 1862 on the recommendation of Secretary of State William Seward. On February 14, Lincoln had signed Executive Order #1, giving Stanton the power of arbitrary arrest. That too had been at Seward's urging. By early March, Stanton had assumed control of all the nation's telegraph lines and had the machinery comprising the hub of the system moved to the War Department offices. He would soon seize control of the country's transportation system as well. In addition to the civilian telegraph system, the War Department had its own system as well, to transmit secure news and updates on the war effort. Both systems were housed next to Stanton's office at the War Department. On the night of April 14, the civilian telegraph service was out for up to three hours following the assassination, disrupting communications in and out of Washington. That curious fact was never publicly acknowledged. There was also an unexplained delay in getting the news out on the War Department's telegraph service. The first dispatch concerning the shooting of Lincoln was not written until 1:30 AM, more than three hours after the events at Ford's Theatre; it wasn't sent until 2:15 AM, some four hours after the curtain fell at Ford's.

Then there were the curious actions of LA Gobright, the Associated Press agent in the nation's capitol. At around 11:00 PM, he sent out his first dispatch, which was oddly vague and lacking in details. Even odder, he quickly followed it with a second dispatch instructing recipients that the first message was "stopped." Gobright, it should be noted, was very close to the scene and knew what had gone down. He supposedly rushed over to Ford's immediately after the shooting and is credited with being the guy who allegedly found the derringer on the floor of the box, where it had conveniently been left behind but had apparently not been noticed by anyone else. I guess securing the crime scene wasn't a big priority in those days, even when it was the scene of the Crime of the Century, so it was up to reporters to gather the physical evidence.

And some of you probably thought that having controlled assets in the media was some kind of mid-20th century innovation that began with Operation Mockingbird. Guess again.

Yet another problem with the official story is that this was supposed to be a very well planned, coordinated attack on multiple targets. The attacks on President Lincoln in Ford's Theatre, Secretary of State William Seward in his family home, Vice President Andrew Johnson in his hotel room, and possibly Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in his family home, were supposed to occur simultaneously, which would have been an extremely difficult operation to pull off given the limitations in communications in those days.

A considerable amount of research and planning would have had to go into such an ambitious project. But the reality is that it wasn't known that the Lincolns were going to be attending Ford's Theatre until the very day that Lincoln was shot, which didn't leave a lot of time to plan such an intricate series of attacks. Yet we are to believe the plan was thwarted only by such things as Lewis Powell's ineptitude with a knife and George Adzerodt's cowardice.

And if there was an extensive amount of planning done, then why was no thought apparently given to the aftermath and escape? Lewis Powell never made it out of the city and supposedly ended up hiding out in a tree for a few days. Booth chose an escape route that included a dangerous jump onto a stage floor in front of hundreds of potential pursuers, followed by heading directly to a closed bridge under armed guard. And then he was off into the wilderness for an extended stay, with a broken leg and no provisions.

One aspect of the events of that day that is frequently downplayed is the late cancellation by General Ulysses Grant and his wife, which was highly unusual. Declining a presidential invitation was all but unthinkable in those days; canceling at the eleventh hour was obviously an even worse affront. Especially when this was to be a major historical event – the first joint public appearance of the victorious president and his heroic general. And especially when the reason given for the cancellation – that the Grants had to catch an evening train to go see their kids in New Jersey – didn't hold much water.

As Winkler has written, "the Grants could have taken a Saturday morning train with better connections than the six o'clock Friday evening train, which was much slower and necessitated a long wait in Philadelphia. The morning train would have reunited the Grants with their children just two hours later than the earlier train." So the Grants could have spent the evening at the theater basking in the adulation of the crowd, then enjoyed a good night's sleep in Washington, and still got to their children almost as quickly. Why then would they choose to both inconvenience themselves and snub the president?

And they were not the only ones to snub the president. After the cancellation by the Grants, Lincoln asked a few other notable figures in Washington, who all declined. One of them was Speaker of the House Schuyler Colfax, Jr., who would, four years later, take over the vice-president's office. And so it was that the guys who would take over as president and vice-

president when Lincoln's term expired both opted to snub Lincoln on the evening of his assassination. Lucky break for them, I guess. And the guy who immediately took over at the White House, just as soon as he sobered up, caught a really lucky break when George Adzerodt supposedly opted not to assassinate him.

Schuyler Colfax, by the way, was a member of the extended van Cortland/Schuyler/Rensselaer clan that also includes Laurel Canyon's own David van Cortland Crosby.

By various accounts, Lincoln walked over to the War Department on the afternoon/evening of April 14 to ask Stanton if Major Thomas Eckert might serve as his guest/bodyguard that evening. Eckert had run the War Department's telegraph service since 1862. He was a large, powerfully built, physically imposing man who historians agree would have provided Lincoln with considerable protection. But Stanton refused, claiming that Eckert had important work to do that night. In truth, Eckert would be at home that evening, doing nothing of any importance.

Though Eckert was ostensibly recruited by the War Department based on his expertise with telegraph systems, he was a close confidant of Stanton who was known to receive assignments far removed from organizing and running communications systems. One of those assignments, as previously noted, was as Lewis Powell's personal guard during his confinement and 'trial.' Not long after completing that assignment, Eckert was rewarded with a promotion to Assistant Secretary of War.

Yet another longstanding problem with the official story is the unexplained assignment of ne'er-do-well police officer John Parker as Lincoln's personal bodyguard, an assignment he had landed just over a week earlier. That assignment had come, though no one really likes to talk much about it, at the instigation of Mary Todd Lincoln. Mary wrote a letter on April 3, 1865, handwritten on White House stationery, that read as follows: "This is to certify that John F. Parker, a member of the Metropolitan Police, has been detailed for duty at the Executive Mansion. By order of Mrs. Lincoln." The next day, she wrote another requesting that Parker be exempted from the draft.

Due directly to Mary Lincoln's actions, it was Parker who was assigned to guard the president at Ford's Theatre. True to his nature, he arrived at least two hours late for that assignment. And then promptly abandoned his post, leaving the president unguarded. So that he could wander next door and get good and drunk, by some accounts. He next surfaced at 6:00 AM the next morning at the police precinct, in the company of a drunken hooker. Parker attempted to book her, but records indicate that he was unable to make a case against her and she was released. Parker had a habit of arresting prostitutes who refused to provide him with free services. In any event, the important point here is that Parker obviously had more important business to attend to than preventing the assassination of the president.

Metro police superintendent A.C. Richards – the same guy who the industrious AP agent supposedly turned the derringer over to – filed charges against Parker in May 1865. But those charges were dropped the next month without explanation and Parker continued on in his position. Numerous questions still surround this particular aspect of the assassination, as summarized by H. Donald Winkler:

"Inquiring minds should have raised the following questions regarding Mary Lincoln, Edwin M. Stanton, and John Parker: On what basis and on whose authority did the first lady authorize Parker's assignment to the White House? On whose recommendation was Parker's name submitted to her? Was she aware of Parker's record? If she was, why did she want such a person to guard her husband? If she was not familiar with Parker, what prompted her to approve him without knowing more about him? Did she know him at all? Was she related to him, or did she

think she was related to him? (Her mother's family name was Parker.) Did she authorize Parker to leave his post to watch the play? Was Stanton aware of Parker's assignment to the White House? If he was not, should he have been? If he was, why didn't he object to it? Considering the secretary's concern for the president's safety, shouldn't his department have investigated anyone proposed for assignment to protect the president? Considering the innocent people arrested after the assassination, why didn't Stanton order Parker's arrest or at least investigate his apparent misconduct? Was it not possible that Parker was part of Booth's conspiracy? Didn't that possibility deserve investigation? Regarding Parker's superiors, did Stanton consider that one of them might have issued orders allowing Parker to leave his post? Was he aware of Mary Lincoln's endorsement of Parker? Was that a factor in his decision not to arrest Parker? Did the secretary in any way try to influence any pending charges against Parker? If so, why? Was he trying to protect Mary Lincoln? Did Stanton know Parker or have any contact with him before April 14? Did any of his staff know Parker? Did Parker have any communication with Mary Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth, Stanton, or anyone from the War Department on or before April 14, 1865? Did he know Booth? Did Booth bribe him to leave his post? Who dictated Parker's duties for that night? What specifically were his instructions? Why did he leave his post? Did it not occur to Parker that by doing so he was jeopardizing the president's life?"

As Winkler added, "Such questions apparently were never asked, and the participants never commented on them. No one seemed to want to set the record straight."

Keep in mind that that lengthy list of questions only covers one small aspect of the events of that day. There are literally hundreds of unanswered, and frequently unasked, questions still surrounding the Lincoln assassination. As one further example, there is the question of how it was that in at least a half-dozen isolated pockets of the country, news of Lincoln's assassination was reported four to twelve hours before the Lincolns had arrived at Ford's Theatre?

Folks in St. Joseph, Minnesota, which was 40 miles from the nearest railroad and 80 miles from the nearest telegraph service, learned of Lincoln's death while he was still very much alive. So did the good people of Manchester, New Hampshire. And the people living in Middleton, New York. And in Newburgh, New York as well. Ace reporters at the Whig Press got the scoop before the shot was fired.

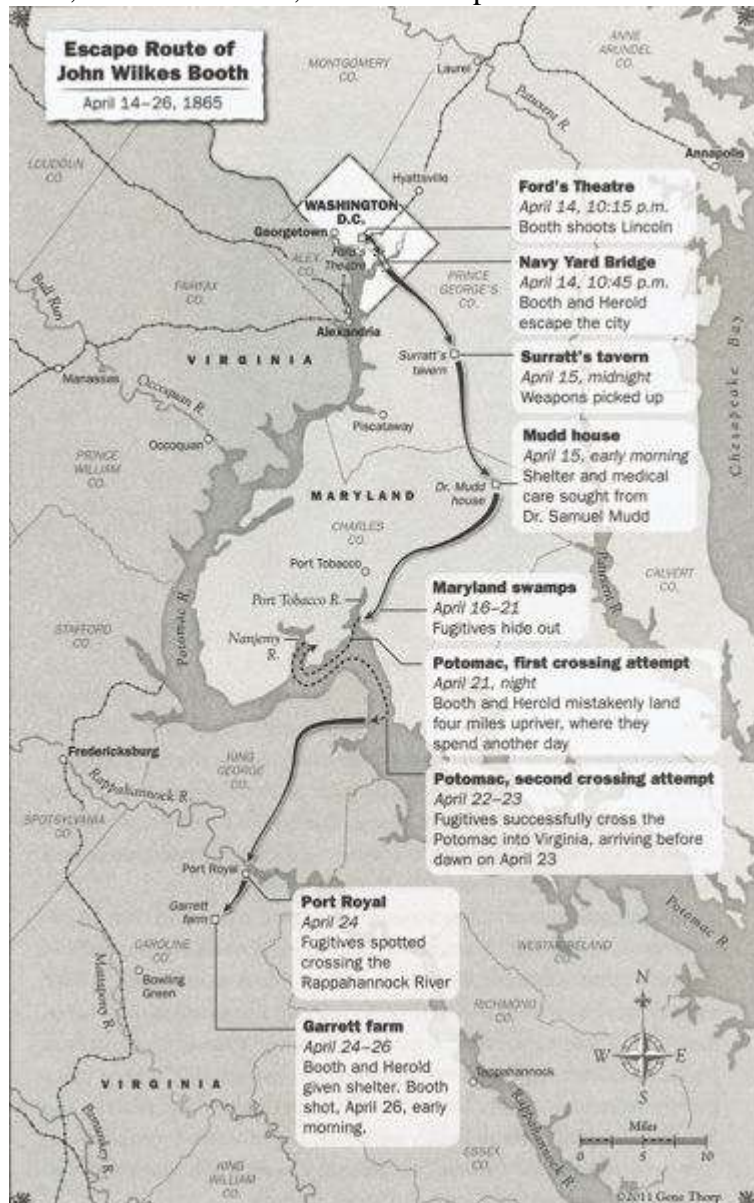
Shit happens, I guess. Maybe they had caught wind of the fact that, a couple weeks before the assassination, Mary Todd Lincoln, who was known to go on extravagant shopping sprees, had purchased some \$25,000 (in today's dollars) worth of mourning clothes. It's always good to be prepared. Even when your husband isn't even ill, let alone dying.

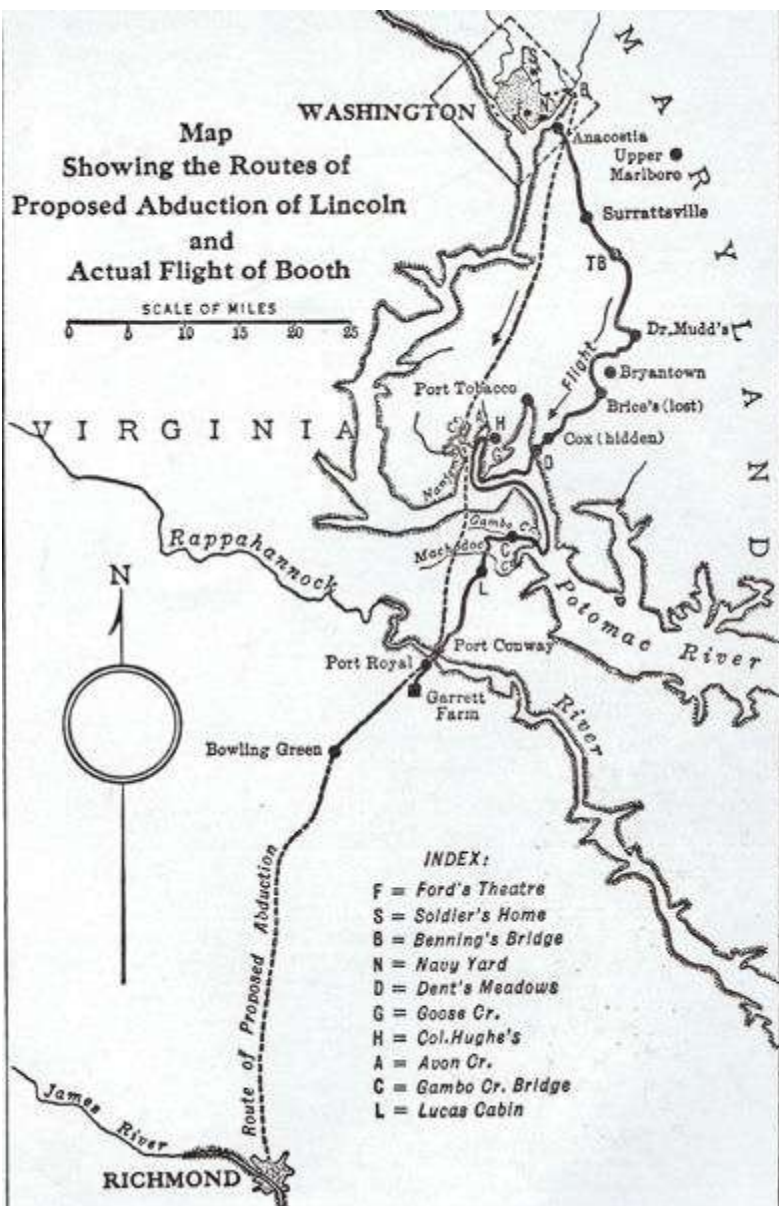
When we left off on the last outing, two men officially identified as John Wilkes Booth and David Herold had just crossed the Navy Yard Bridge from Washington, DC into Maryland. They were the only two people to cross the bridge after curfew that fateful night, so being allowed to do so was quite the lucky break for the pair. Just as it had been a lucky break for Booth that Lincoln's bodyguard for the evening, John Parker, had abandoned his post (as had coachman Francis Burns and presidential aide Charles Forbes, all three of whom went next door to drink in the same bar as John Wilkes Booth), and that General Grant and his military entourage had not accompanied the Lincoln party to the theater.

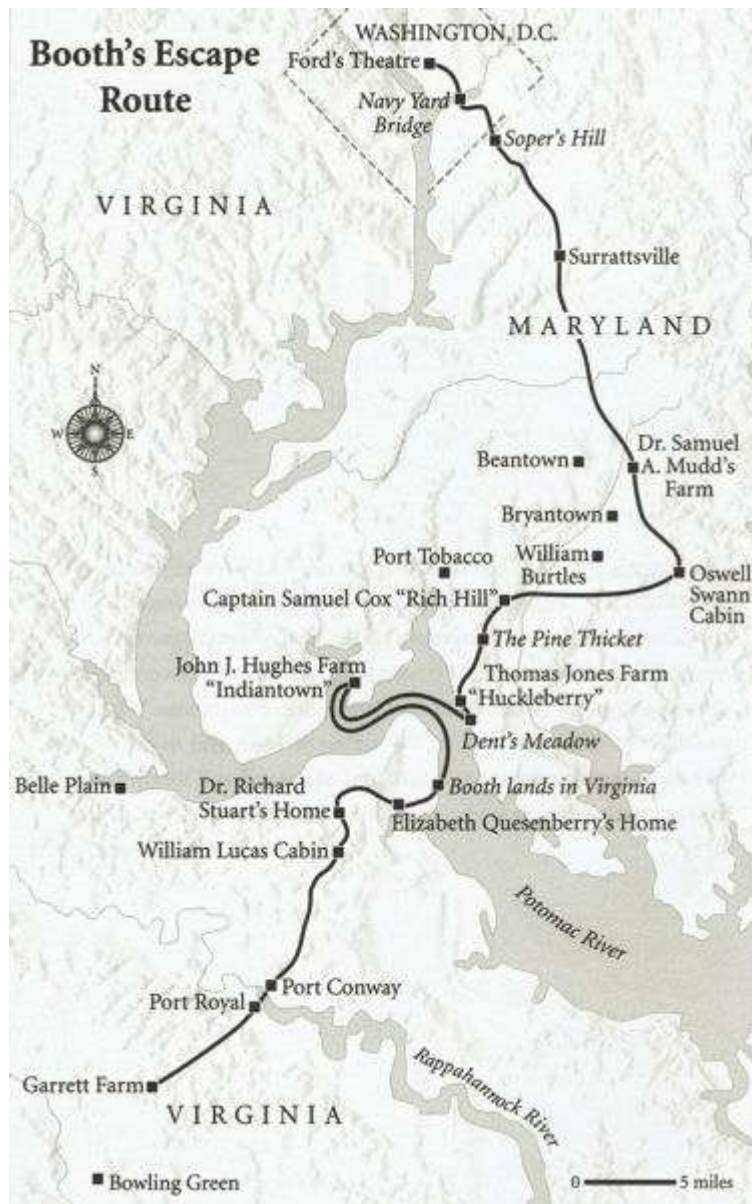
Booth caught numerous 'lucky breaks' that night, like having the telegraph service go down right after the assassination. But as Thomas Eckert later explained to a congressional committee, that

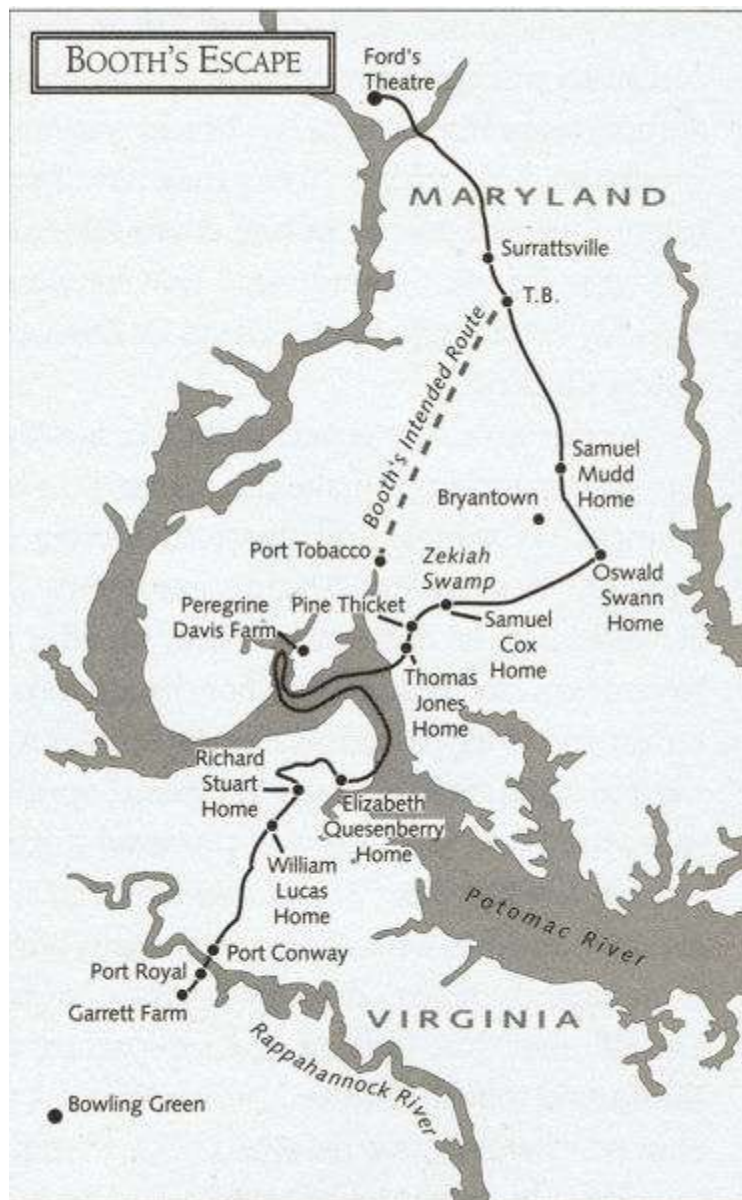
apparently was a trivial matter: “It did not at the time seem sufficiently important, as the interruption only continued about two hours. I was so full of business of almost every character that I could not give it my personal attention ... I could not ascertain with certainty what the facts were without making a personal investigation, and I had not time to do that.”

For those who may have forgotten, Eckert was hired specifically to set up and maintain the telegraph system, which naturally raises the question of what other, more important “business of every character” he had to attend to on a night when keeping the system running should have been, one would think, of utmost importance.









Four versions of Booth's alleged escape route

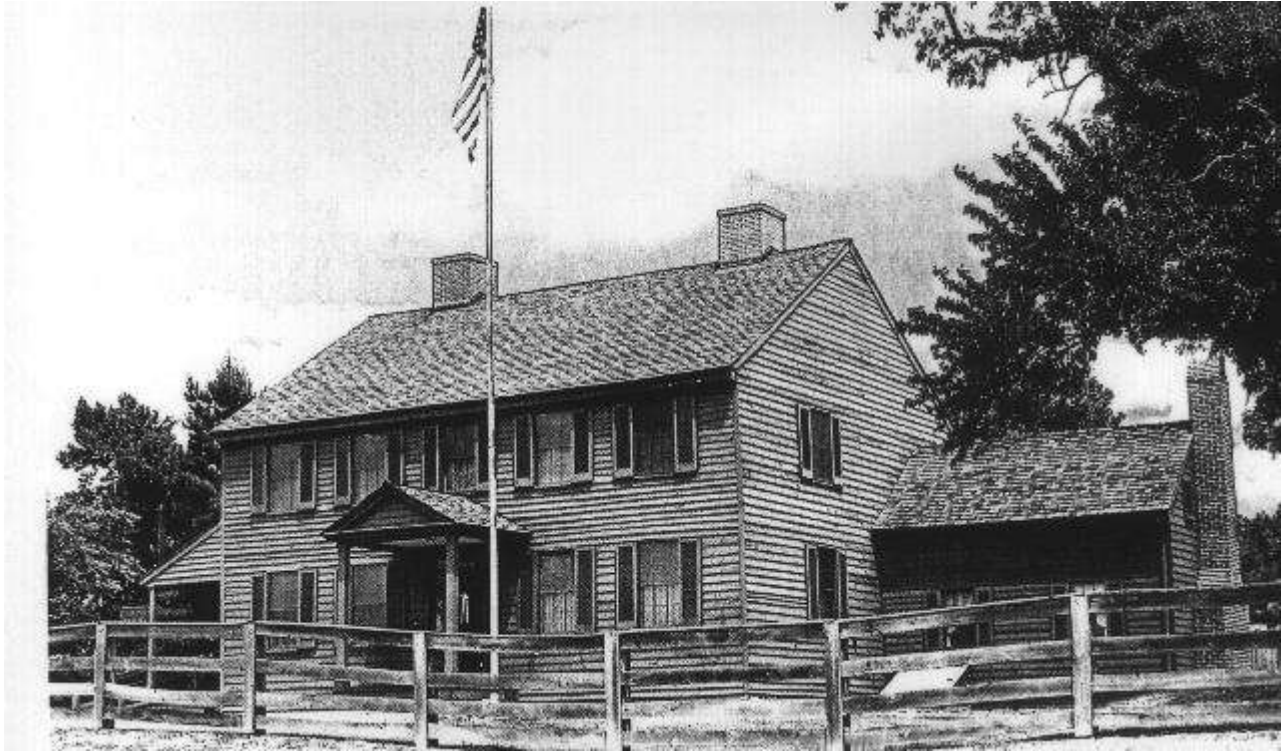
Leonard Guttridge and Ray Neff have written in *Dark Union* that Booth caught another lucky break when, at the same time that the telegraph system mysteriously went down, “someone at the gasworks on Maryland Avenue shut off the gas that fed the lights around the Capitol and westward along Pennsylvania Avenue,” plunging the assassin’s escape route into darkness at a most opportune time. (Leonard Guttridge and Ray Neff *Dark Union: The Secret Web of Profiteers, Politicians, and Booth Conspirators That Led to Lincoln’s Death*, Wiley, 2003) Booth also caught a lucky break when his questionable choice of a firearm turned out to be surprisingly adequate for the job. He took a huge risk, it will be recalled, in bringing a Derringer as his only firearm – a risk that was, as James Swanson noted in *Manhunt*, completely unnecessary: “Booth couldn’t have chosen the Deringer [sic] because he could not obtain a revolver. He had already purchased at least four, and if he did not have any in his hotel room within easy reach, he could have gone out and bought another one. In the war capital of the Union, thousands of guns, including small, lightweight pocket-sized revolvers, were for sale in

the shops of Washington.” (James Swanson *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln’s Killer*, William Morrow, 2006)

Another lucky break for Booth was that the locks on both of the doors leading into the presidential box at Ford’s Theatre were conveniently broken, rendering them useless. And a spy hole had been drilled into one of them at eye level, so that someone approaching could survey the scene inside the booth before entering. Both of those anomalies were apparently unnoticed by Lincoln and his not-very-security-oriented entourage. And, as previously discussed, a heavy piece of lumber precisely long enough to wedge the door shut happened to be on hand. Many historians have claimed that Booth himself had come by earlier in the day and broken the locks, drilled the hole, and fashioned and hidden the wedge for the door, but no evidence to support such claims has ever been presented.

Booth also caught a lucky break in that he was able to successfully execute an unlikely and extremely risky escape from a crowded theater. As no less a scholar than Bill O’Reilly has had written for him, “A less informed man might worry about being trapped in a building with a limited number of exits, no windows, and a crowd of witnesses—many of them able-bodied men just back from the war.” Donald Winkler was a bit more blunt in his assessment: “It sounded like a foolhardy plan with no chance of success. How could one man with a single-shot derringer, a bullet, and a knife walk nonchalantly through a crowded theater, pass unobstructed through two doors into the State Box, stand behind the president without being seen by the two occupants in the box, kill the president with no one hearing the sound of the shot, leap eleven feet to the stage, take time to yell a message to the audience, and escape through a rear exit? Fulfilling this mission required far more than blind luck.” (Bill O’Reilly and Martin Dugard *Killing Lincoln: The Shocking Assassination That Changed America Forever*, Henry Holt, 2011; and H. Donald Winkler *Lincoln and Booth: More Light on the Conspiracy*, Cumberland House, 2003)

Actually, there were obviously more than two occupants in the box and plenty of people heard the shot, but such glaring errors are commonplace in the existing literature on the assassination. So having caught numerous ‘lucky breaks,’ Booth and Herold rode off separately into the Maryland night, with Booth having a lead on Herold. No mention is ever made of why Powell, who had supposedly attacked the Seward family, and Adzerodt, who was supposed to have killed second-in-command Andrew Johnson, were not included in the escape plan. In any event, Booth and Herold supposedly met up eight miles from the city limits. How they did so in the dark and with no communication devices is anyone’s guess. No mention is made in the literature of Booth asking Herold anything about how the alleged attack at the Seward mansion had gone down, or about the attack on Johnson that had supposedly been planned, or about what had become of Powell and Adzerodt.



The Surrat Tavern in Surrattsville

The pair's first stop, so the story goes, was at Mary Surratt's tavern in Surrattsville, run by John Lloyd. They allegedly arrived there around midnight. Lloyd, known as a raging drunkard, allegedly supplied the pair with two carbines, field glasses, and booze. By many accounts, his confession to such high crimes was obtained through torture. And it is never explained why the pair wouldn't have already had those items, and various other provisions, from the outset. Lloyd became a witness for the prosecution at the pseudo-trial of the conspirators. Of course, his other option was certain conviction and probable execution, so he was highly motivated to tell the story the government wanted him to tell.

The pair's next stop – at about 4:30 in the morning on April 15, 1865, with Lincoln still clinging to life – was at the home of Dr. Samuel Mudd, who gained the dubious distinction of being the only person along Booth's alleged escape route to be prosecuted and convicted. "Wanted" posters issued by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton warned that "All persons harboring or secreting the conspirators or aiding their concealment or escape, will be treated as accomplices in the murder of the President and shall be subject to trial before a military commission, and the punishment of death." As we shall see though, various historians have identified at least two dozen people who supposedly provided aid and comfort to the fugitives, and none of them, other than Mudd, were ever prosecuted for their alleged crimes and all of their names are now long forgotten.

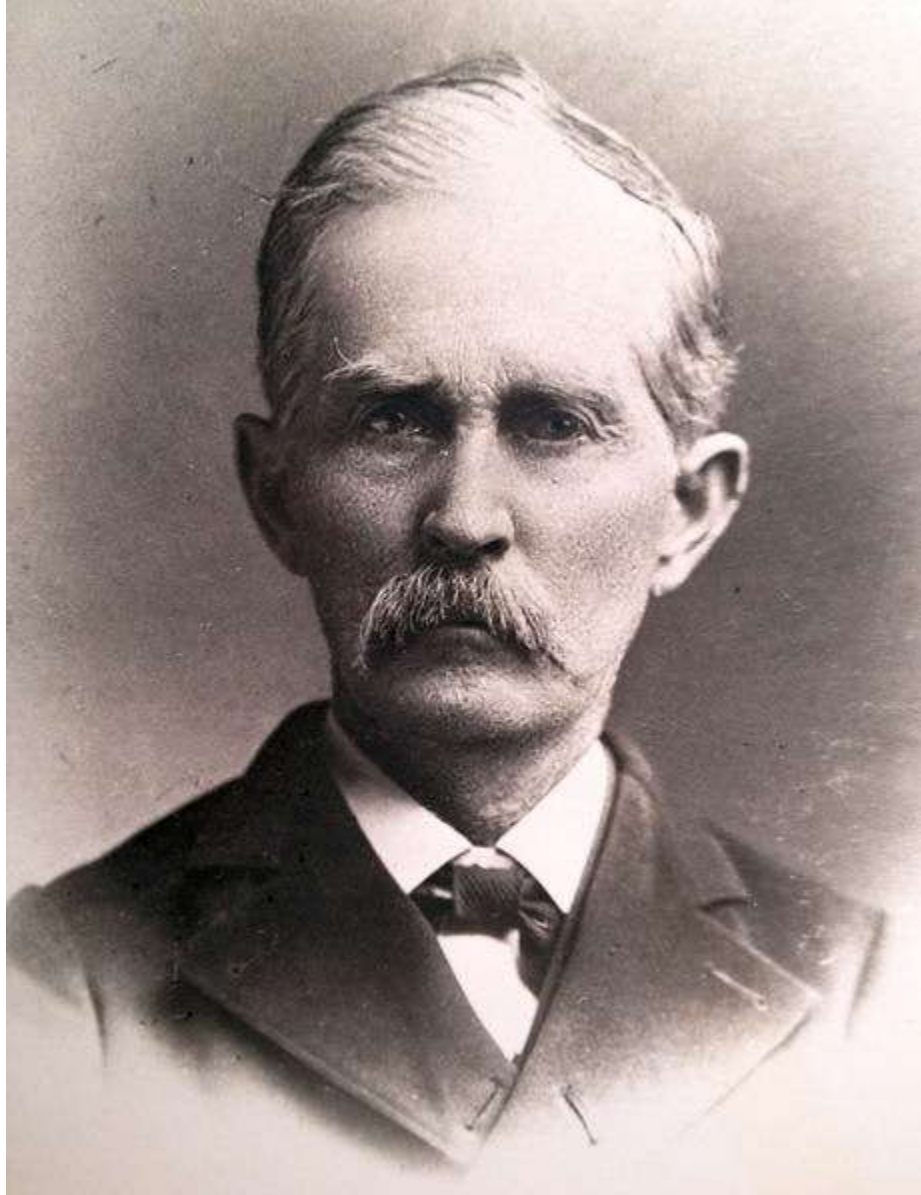


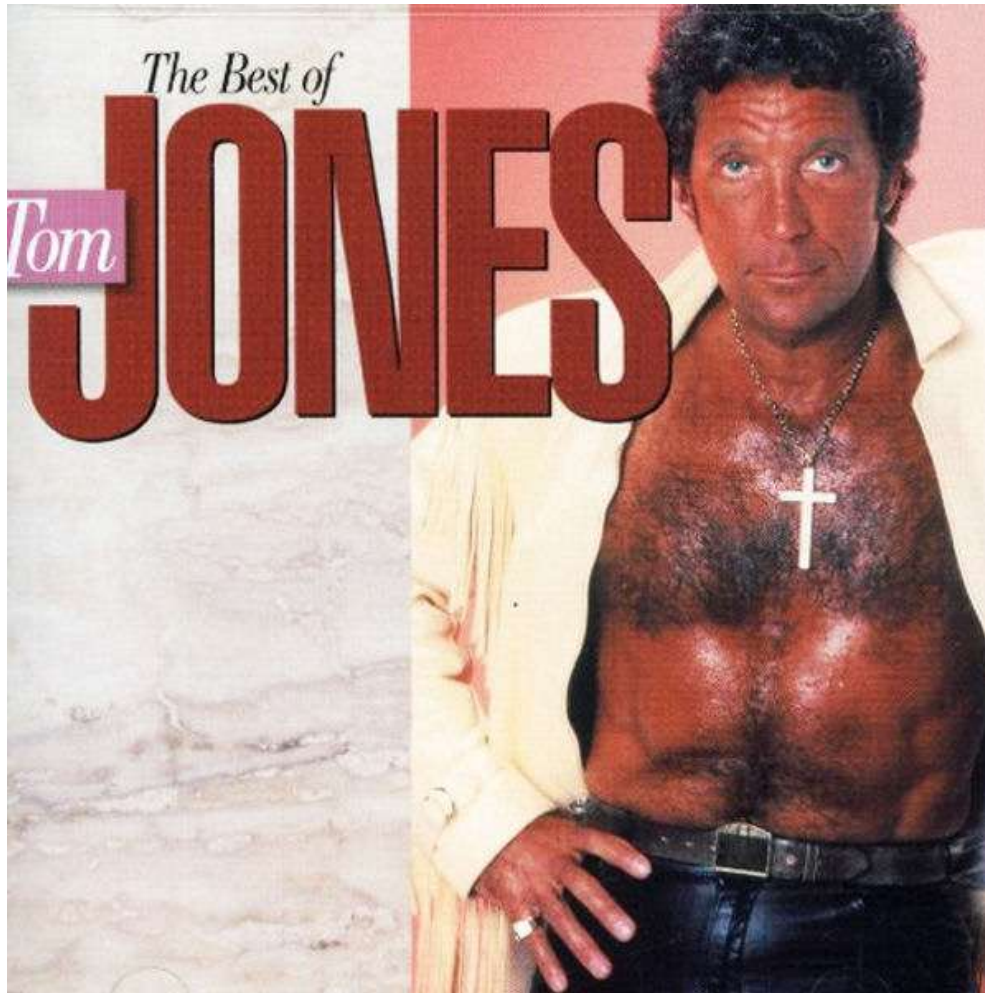
The home of Dr. Mudd and family

Booth and Herold supposedly introduced themselves to Mudd using the aliases of Tyson and Henson, and by some accounts, Booth wore a fake beard – which of course makes perfect sense since Booth had chosen not to don a disguise before committing the crime, and had left his real name scattered about the crime scene and the escape route. And by virtually all accounts, Mudd knew Booth and had had prior dealings with him, so the good doctor would surely have seen through a cheap disguise. For the record, Mudd claimed that he did not recognize the man he treated as John Wilkes Booth, and he could not identify David Herold from a photograph. Herold, meanwhile, maintained that he had crossed the bridge out of Washington on the afternoon of April 14 and was long gone from the city when Lincoln was shot. He also claimed that he had not gone to the Mudd house with Booth or anyone else. And evidence does indeed suggest that Herold spent the afternoon of April 14 on a horseback ride in the Maryland countryside. And he did so with – and I couldn't possibly make this stuff up – a sixteen-year-old kid by the name of Johnny Booth, who was apparently not related to the far more famous John Booth. Herold and the young Booth got drunk and passed out and were found the next morning by Johnny's father. Johnny and his father, of course, were not called upon to testify at the mock trial.

Meanwhile, Mudd repaired the damage to his visitor's leg, which he later described in a statement as a not very serious or painful wound, and fashioned a splint for him. He then offered the exhausted travelers sleeping accommodations. After catching some sleep and paying the good doctor for his services, the pair left later that day. At the infamous trial of the conspirators,

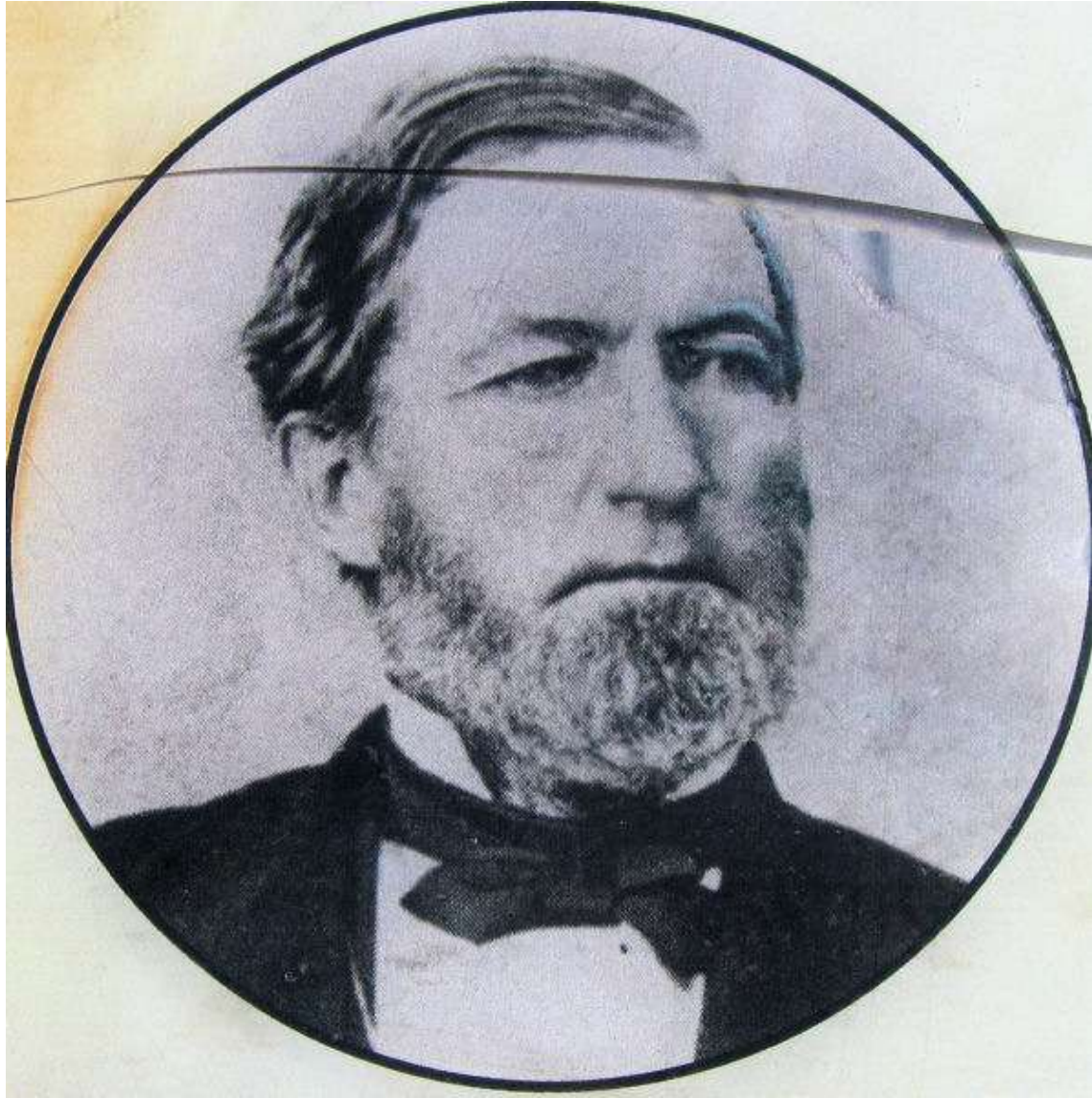
the story did not pick up again until nine days later, on April 24, when the pair allegedly took a ferry across the Rappahannock River. Various historical narratives have filled in those missing nine days, though not necessarily with a story that has much credibility.





Thomas Jones and namesake

According to Lincoln folklore, a guy by the name of Oswald Swann (sometimes identified as Oswald Swann), described as being half black and half Indian, guided the pair to the home of a Samuel Cox at about 1:00 AM on April 16, 1865. Cox allegedly advised Booth and Herold to hide out in a nearby pine thicket, and had his overseer, Franklin Robey, guide them there. He then summoned Thomas Jones to supply them with food, blankets, and newspapers. Needless to say, none of these men were ever prosecuted for their alleged capital offenses.



Samuel Cox

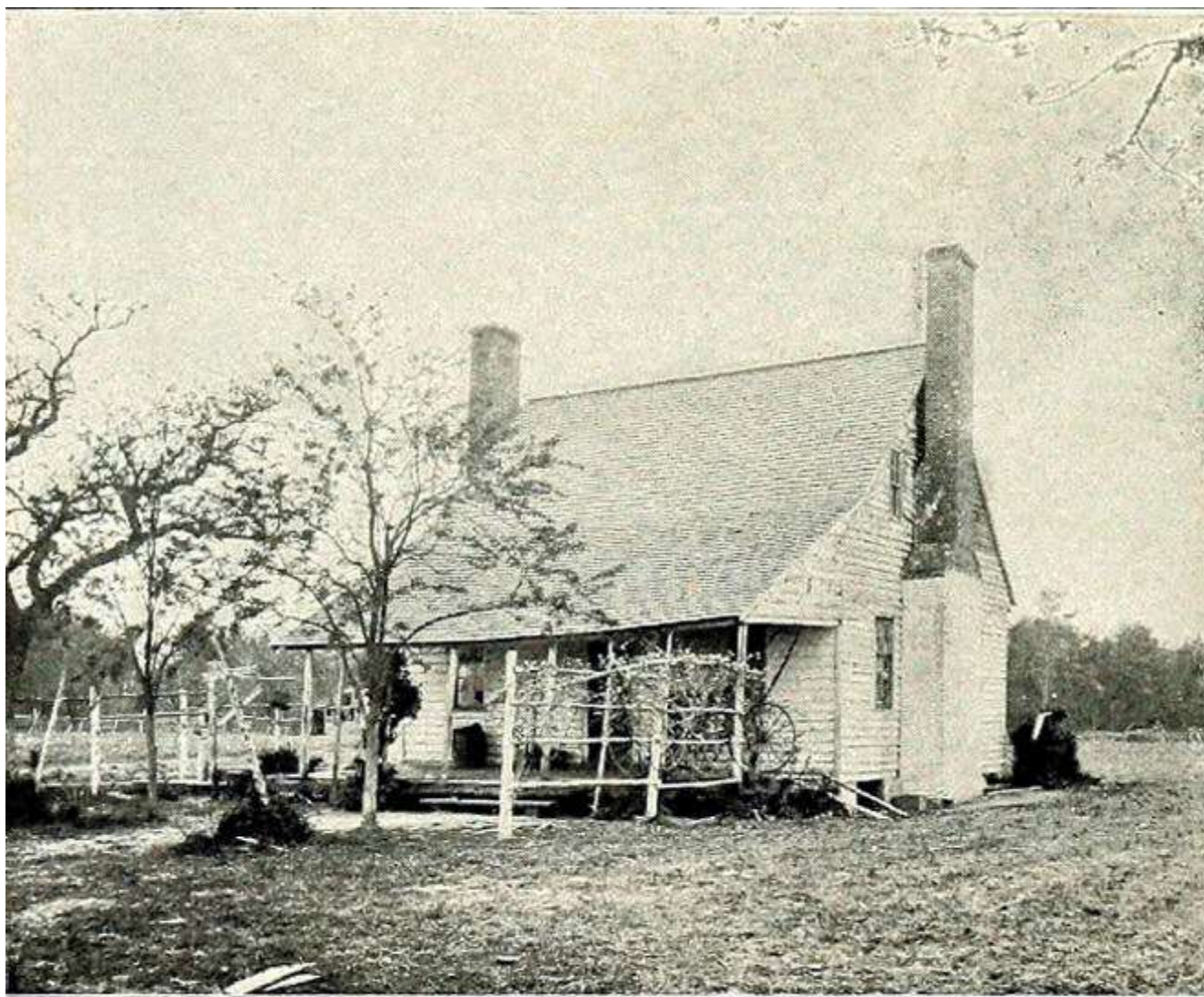
Booth and Herold supposedly spent five long days cooling their heels in that pine thicket. During that time, they had to keep quiet at all times for fear of alerting any nearby patrols to their whereabouts. They couldn't light a fire to keep warm. And Booth is generally described as being immobilized and in considerable pain from his injury (the one that Dr. Mudd described as not particularly painful). According to the best-selling *Manhunt*, for example, "Booth never rose from the ground during the time in the thicket." So the wealthy, accomplished, well-bred actor spent five agonizing days lying hungry and motionless on the cold, unforgiving ground of a Maryland pine thicket. Sounds perfectly reasonable.

One problem with that tall tale though concerns the fate of Booth's and Herold's horses. It is agreed that they surely had horses when they arrived at the pine thicket, and they would have had to get rid of them to avoid giving away their position to any passing patrols. So what happened to them? In *Manhunt*, James Swanson tells the following tale: "Davey [Herold] untied both horses and led them by the reins to a quicksand morass about a mile from the pine thicket. Quickly, he shot each one in the head with a pistol or the carbine, and then sank their bodies, still accoutered

with saddles, bits, bridles, stirrups, and all. There they rest in an unmarked grave, their skeletons undiscovered to this day.”

Here Swanson has acknowledged something that historians agree on: despite one of the world’s most exhaustive manhunts, no trace of the two horses was ever found. According to the guy who actually writes the books that Bill O’Reilly puts his name on, “A combined force of seven hundred Illinois cavalry, six hundred members of the Twenty-second Colored Troops, and one hundred men from the Sixteenth New York Cavalry Regiment now enter the wilderness of Maryland’s vast swamps [on April 18, 1865] ... Incredibly, eighty-seven of these brave men will drown in their painstaking weeklong search for the killers.” No large animal carcasses were found on that search, or on any other searches. O’Reilly doesn’t mention, by the way, how many of those eighty-seven alleged drowning deaths involved members of the Twenty-Second Colored Troops (sorry – I couldn’t resist).

Historians also agree that Booth was far too seriously injured to be of any help to Herold, leaving Herold solely responsible for disposing of the horses. There are, generally speaking, two versions of the ‘story of the disappearing horses,’ both of which are laughably absurd. One commonly told fable holds that Herold led the two horses into quicksand; the other posits that he shot and buried them. Swanson has essentially weaved a new version of the tall tale by combining the two.



HUCKLEBERRY, THE HOME OF THOMAS A. JONES.

Some historians just avoid any mention of the disappearing horses trick, probably out of a desire to not sound like buffoons. But others have no problem with repeating tales that have stood unchallenged for well over a century despite being easily discredited. Because the reality, dear readers, is that there is no rational explanation for how two horses and all the gear accompanying them could have just vanished into thin air. Only in some fantasy world would it be possible for one man, working alone in fairly primitive conditions and with no tools at his disposal, to dig graves deep enough to completely conceal two very large animal carcasses without even leaving mounds for searchers to find. And even if he could somehow dig the holes, how would one man get those very heavy carcasses into those miraculously excavated graves? And wouldn't shooting them be a very risky maneuver, since gunshots tend to attract attention? It seems rather unlikely then that Herold shot the horses and then buried them both with his bare hands.

Equally preposterous is the claim that Herold led the horses into quicksand and let them sink to their deaths. Horses can be rather obedient creatures, to be sure, but they certainly aren't stupid and they won't willingly walk into what they would surely perceive as a deathtrap. And how

exactly would someone go about *leading* them into quicksand? Wouldn't that require that the person doing the leading would have to walk out into the quicksand ahead of the horses? Those are rather moot points though given that *Wikipedia* describes quicksand as "harmless," and notes that "People falling into (and, unrealistically, being submerged in) quicksand or a similar substance is a trope of adventure fiction, notably in movies."

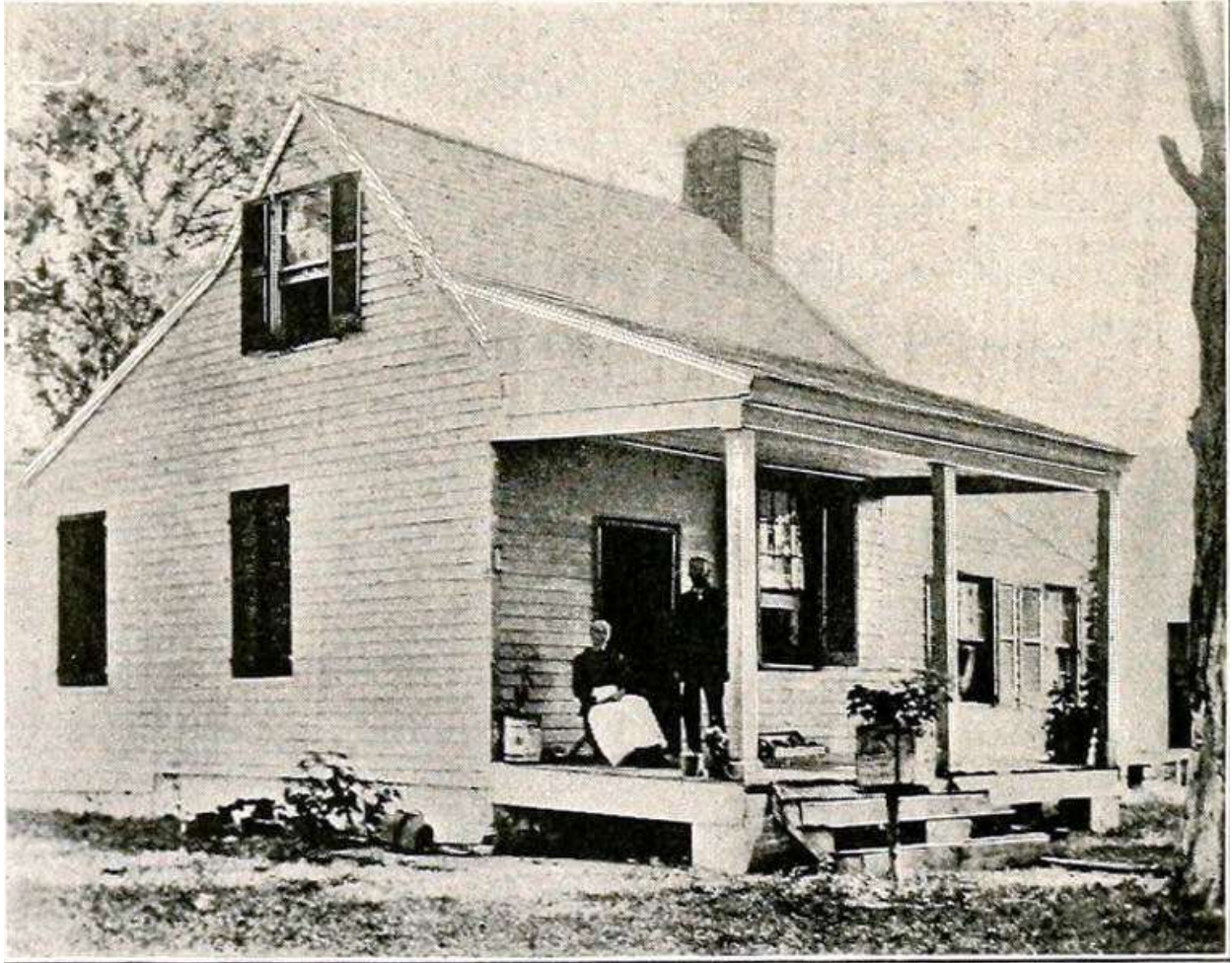
It doesn't actually happen, you see, in real life. But that hasn't stopped mainstream historians and academics from promoting such nonsense for decades.

As previously noted, Swanson has combined the two versions of the 'disappearing horses' fable. No graves needed to be dug because the bodies were disposed of in quicksand, though horse-swallowing quicksand pits only exist in movies and TV shows from the 1960s – and in bestsellers that begin with the words, "This story is true." And in this particular version of the fable, Herold didn't have to lead the horses *into* the mythical quicksand, he just led them *to* it. But what Swanson leaves out is an explanation of how Herold single-handedly drug or pushed those half-ton horse carcasses into a fictional quicksand pit. The only way that could actually happen is in a cartoon.

In any event, after allegedly spending five long days lounging in a Maryland pine thicket, our antiheroes supposedly emerged to attempt a crossing of the Potomac River in a boat supplied by local fisherman Henry Rowland. Their first attempt though failed when the 'pair that couldn't row straight' supposedly paddled the wrong direction and ended up in Nanjemoy Creek, still on the Maryland side of the Potomac. Not to worry though – they went to a farm owned by Peregrine Davis and operated by his son-in-law, John Hughes, who happily put his life on the line by feeding and sheltering the fugitives.

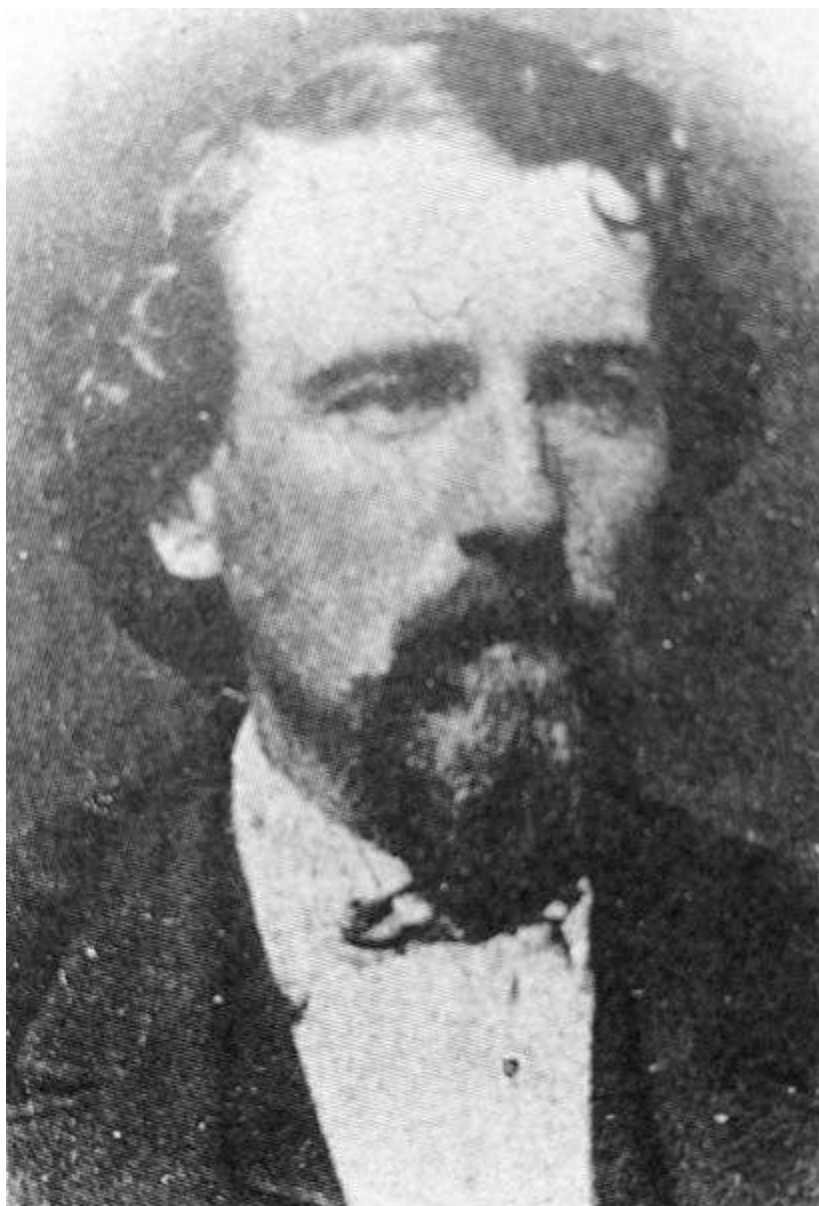
The next night, April 21, Booth and Herold chose not to attempt a second crossing of the Potomac, for reasons never explained by historians. It had been a full week since the assassination and the most wanted men in America had failed to put much distance at all between themselves and Washington, but they apparently weren't in any hurry.





Elizabeth Quesenberry and her home

The dynamic duo allegedly made a second attempt the next night and successfully navigated into Machodoc Creek, near the home of Elizabeth Quesenberry. They arrived at Quesenberry's home at around 1:00 PM on April 23. The lady of the house promptly sent for Thomas Harbin, who was reportedly Thomas Jones' brother-in-law. Harbin arrived at about 3:00 PM with horses and two associates, William Bryant and Joseph Baden. The five men then rode to the home of Dr. Richard Stuart, who was apparently related in some way to General Robert E. Lee.



Thomas Harbin



Dr. Richard Stuart

Stuart directed the party, which arrived at around 8:00 PM, to the cabin of a freed slave by the name of William Lucas – because, you know, freed slaves were highly motivated to assist Lincoln's alleged assassin. From there, Booth and Herold were supposedly transported by son Charley Lucas to Port Conway hidden under a load of straw in a wagon. In Port Conway, the fugitive pair hooked up with three Confederate soldiers by the names of Mortimer Ruggles, Absalom Bainbridge and William Jett, who by some accounts had been under the command of notorious Confederate intelligence operative John S. Mosby (Mosby, by the way, would soon enthusiastically campaign for and serve in the cabinet of Ulysses S. Grant, the man who had defeated his supposedly beloved Confederacy).

Booth, Herold, Ruggles, Jett and Bainbridge, along with a few horses, purportedly took a ferry across the Rappahannock River. At approximately 3:00 PM on April 24, 1865, they arrived at the Garrett home. The gravely injured, or not so gravely injured, John Wilkes Booth stayed at the home while Herold rode on to Bowling Green with his new friends. Booth spent the night with

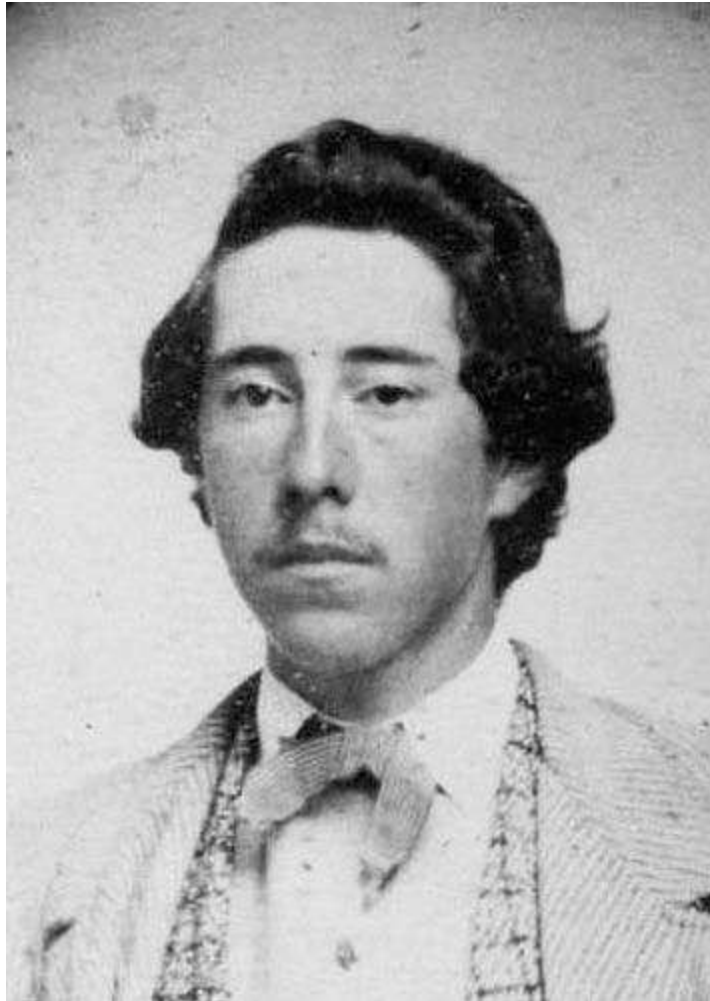
one of the Garrett sons while Herold and Bainbridge slept at the home of Joseph and Elizabeth Clarke. Herold returned the next day with Ruggles and Bainbridge, though Jett stayed behind in Bowling Green, from where he would soon lead a posse to the Garrett farm.



Ruggles



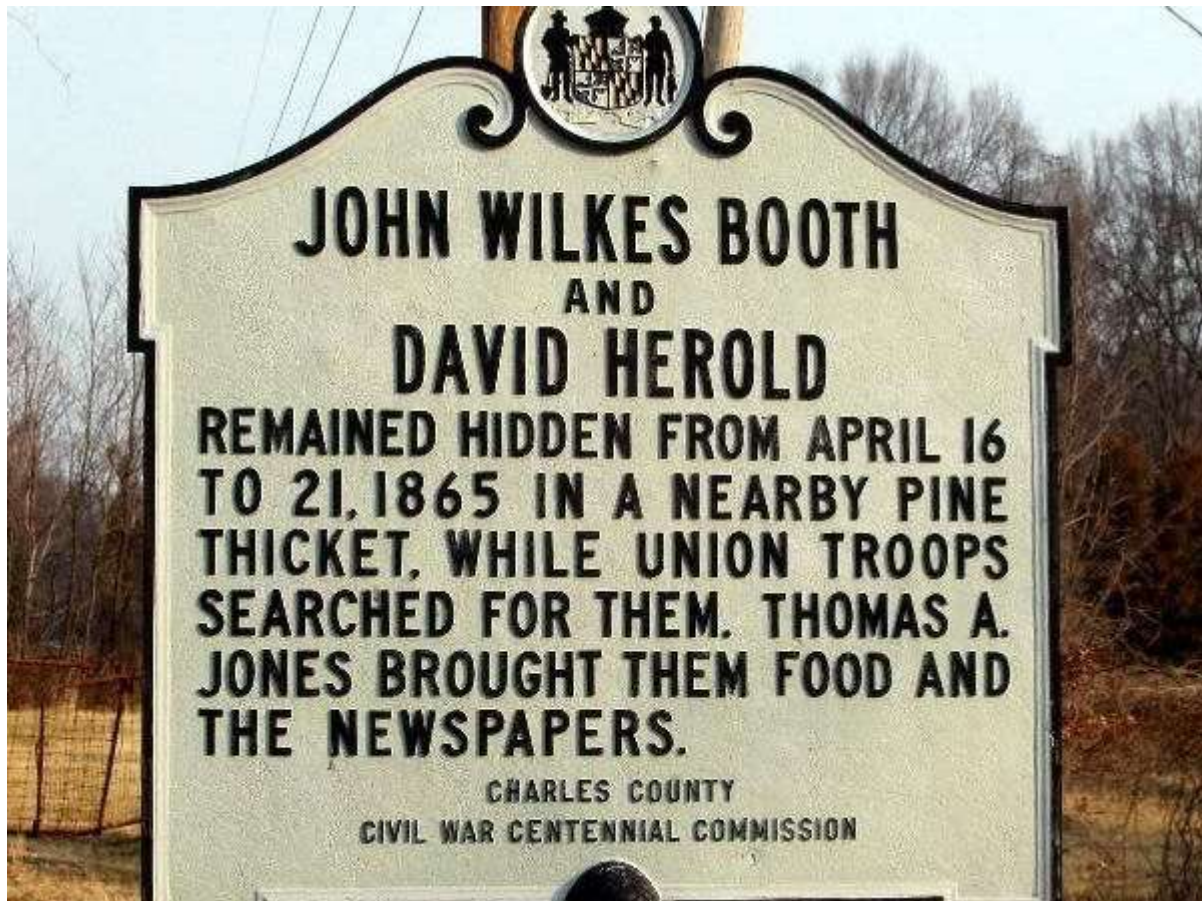
Bainbridge (both circa 1890)



Jett

Booth and Herold spent the next night, April 25, supposedly locked in the Garretts' tobacco barn, making them easy prey for the posse that would soon arrive. The Reverend Richard Garrett, however, who was just eleven at the time of the assassination, would later note that the barn actually had double doors on all four sides and large windows in the upper story. William H. Garrett would add that some of those doors and windows fastened on the inside. There was, therefore, no way to actually lock the fugitives inside, another unfortunate fact that has been swept aside by historians.

The posse that would allegedly end the life of John Wilkes Booth arrived at the Garrett home at around 2:00 AM on April 26, 1865. A few hours later, Booth, or someone playing the part of Booth, had been shot. In due time, Dr. Richard Stuart, William Bryant, Elizabeth Quesenberry, Samuel Cox, Thomas Jones, the Garrett sons, and various others were arrested and taken to the Old Capital Prison. Curiously though, they were all freed without being charged. All but Dr. Mudd.



Sign commemorating fictional historical events

Meanwhile, as Booth and Herold were following their convoluted path to the Garrett farm, a massive manhunt spearheaded by Edwin Stanton was underway. We shall pick up there on the next outing.

Before resuming where we left off, I need to tack on some info here that should have been included in earlier installments. First off, there were, as it turns out, at least three additional suspicious deaths that followed closely on the heels of the Lincoln assassination, so let's take a quick look at those. And as I'm sure it will be recalled, these deaths are in addition to all the other curious deaths and confinements that have previously been discussed.

First up for review is Colonel Levi C. Turner, who was appointed Assistant Judge Advocate for the Army on August 5, 1862, which positioned him to be second-in-command to Judge Advocate Holt during the farcical 'trial of the conspirators.' The colonel also worked closely with notorious NDP chief Lafayette Baker during and after the Civil War to investigate suspected subversive activities. Turner died of unstated causes on March 13, 1867, less than two years after Lincoln was slain and about sixteen months before Baker himself turned up dead.

Also up for review is our old friend Silas Cobb, the guy who was in charge of guarding the Navy Yard Bridge and enforcing the curfew on the night of the assassination. Cobb was the accommodating gent who allegedly allowed both Booth and Herold to escape from Washington and then failed to offer any reasonable explanation for his actions, and of course suffered no

repercussions for those actions. Cobb turned up dead in November 1867, two-and-a-half years after Lincoln was shot. According to reports, he was the victim of a drowning accident. Finally we have Henri Beaumont de Sainte-Marie, the chap who was credited with tipping off authorities to the whereabouts of John Surratt, ultimately leading to Surratt's arrest, extradition, and failed prosecution. De Sainte-Marie died at the relatively young age of forty-one while still awaiting a claims court decision on the hefty reward promised for information leading to Surratt's capture.

I also discussed in a previous post the fact that former British First Lady Cherie Blair is a descendant of the Booth clan, thereby demonstrating that the Booth family has continued to wield political power into the modern era. What I didn't know at the time was that another member of the Booth dynasty wielded considerable power on *this* side of the Atlantic right up until her death at the infamous Watergate Apartments on October 9, 1987.

She was hiding right in plain sight, disguised only by the "e" that her branch of the family had added to the Booth name to mask the association. That wielder of power was none other than Clare Boothe Luce, who, along with her husband Henry Luce – a Skull and Bonesman who became a publishing magnate, launching such influential magazines as *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, and *Sports Illustrated* – was a longtime asset of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Boothe was born on March 10, 1903 to unmarried parents who lived a shadowy life and moved around a lot. Her mother was known to use at least three aliases and her father used at least two. Clare briefly flirted with being an actress before embarking on a career as a journalist, war correspondent, politician and diplomat. Curiously, another woman born in 1903 and also known as Claire Luce also became an actress, creating a good deal of confusion after Clare Boothe became Clare Luce.



Clare Boothe Luce

Clare Boothe Luce had the distinction of being the first American woman named to a key diplomatic post, serving as the US Ambassador to Italy from 1953 to 1956. In 1959, she very briefly served as the US Ambassador to Brazil before resigning. From 1943 to 1947, she had served in the House of Representatives, representing Connecticut. During that time, she served on the House Military Affairs Committee, because she naturally knew a lot about military affairs. During the 1960s, her and her husband busied themselves with sponsoring anti-Castro groups seeking to return Cuba to its former status as a US puppet-state. In 1973, she was appointed to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, because she obviously also knew a lot about foreign intelligence. In 1983, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Boothe Luce was also a Dame of Malta.

It is a strange world indeed when well over a century after the first acknowledged assassination of a sitting US president (historians don't generally have much to say about the untimely deaths of William Harrison, who served for just one month, or Zachary Taylor, who served for some sixteen months), members of the alleged assassin's family were still wielding considerable political power on both sides of the Atlantic. Last time I checked, there weren't any members of the Guiteau, Czolgosz, Oswald or Sirhan families occupying such positions of power.

And now, we return to our regularly scheduled programming

While Booth and Herold were supposedly taking their time getting from Washington to Garrett's farm (traveling a distance of less than 100 miles in a week-and-a-half), the largest manhunt in the young nation's history was underway, coordinated by our old friend, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. From the outset, Stanton's goal seemed to be to avoid actually apprehending John Wilkes Booth and some of the other alleged conspirators.

Stanton had considerable manpower at his disposal, including idle US military forces in Washington, the Metropolitan Police, Lafayette Baker's detective force, US Cavalry forces, and provost marshals. Working closely with Stanton were Metro Police Superintendent A.C. Richards, Washington Provost Marshall Major James O'Beirne, and General Christopher Columbus Augur, commander of US military forces in Washington. To say that Stanton misappropriated the available manpower would be a rather charitable assessment.



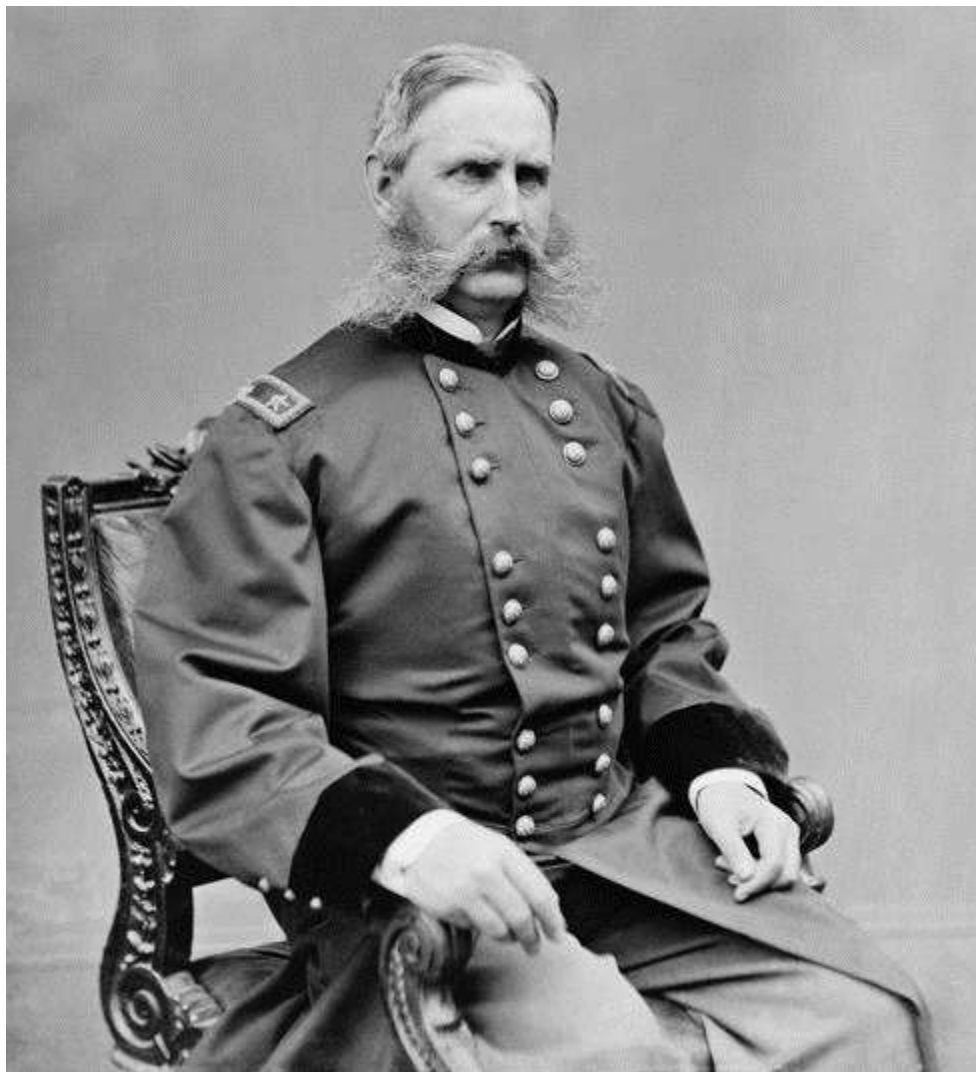
A.C. Richards

According to Bill O'Reilly's error-filled bestseller, *Killing Lincoln*, there were three routes leading out of Washington into Virginia – the Georgetown Aqueduct, Long Bridge, and Benning's Bridge – and just one, the Navy Yard Bridge, leading into Maryland. The

Confederacy-friendly path into Maryland was by far the most likely route for an assassin to take, so it naturally was completely ignored.

The first troops to find themselves accidentally on the correct route were led by a David Dana. Dana just happened to be the brother of Assistant Secretary of War Charles Dana, who served directly under Stanton and who decided that the patrol's presence on the trail of the alleged assassins was pointless and instead sent his brother's troops on a wild goose chase. Major O'Beirne also found himself accidentally on the right trail, so he of course was recalled to Washington.

As previously mentioned, Stanton's first dispatch after the shooting of Lincoln was not written until 1:30 AM and was not sent until 2:15 AM, about four hours after the shot was fired. That dispatch made no mention of John Wilkes Booth, despite the fact that numerous witnesses supposedly (but not actually) immediately identified Booth as the assailant. Booth's name didn't appear in a telegram until 4:15 AM, conveniently too late to make the morning papers. A telegram sent to the police chiefs of northern cities contained no mention of the name Booth. Initial press reports, based on information leaked by Stanton himself, identified John Surratt as the perpetrator of the fictional attack on the Seward family. When it later became known that Surratt was nowhere near Washington at the time of the attack, Lewis Powell/Paine, who bore no physical resemblance whatsoever to John Surratt, was substituted in as the perpetrator of the alleged assassination attempt.



Christopher Columbus Augur



James O'Beirne

The first telegram dispatched by the War Department was a curiously worded message to General Grant, which read: "The President was assassinated tonight at Ford's Theatre at 10:30 tonight & cannot live. The wound is a pistol shot through the head. Secretary Seward & his son Frederick, were also assassinated at their residence & are in a dangerous condition." One would think that it would go without saying that someone who had been "assassinated" would be in "a dangerous condition." Luckily though, neither of the Swards were actually assassinated, although news of their 'deaths' quickly circulated around Washington.

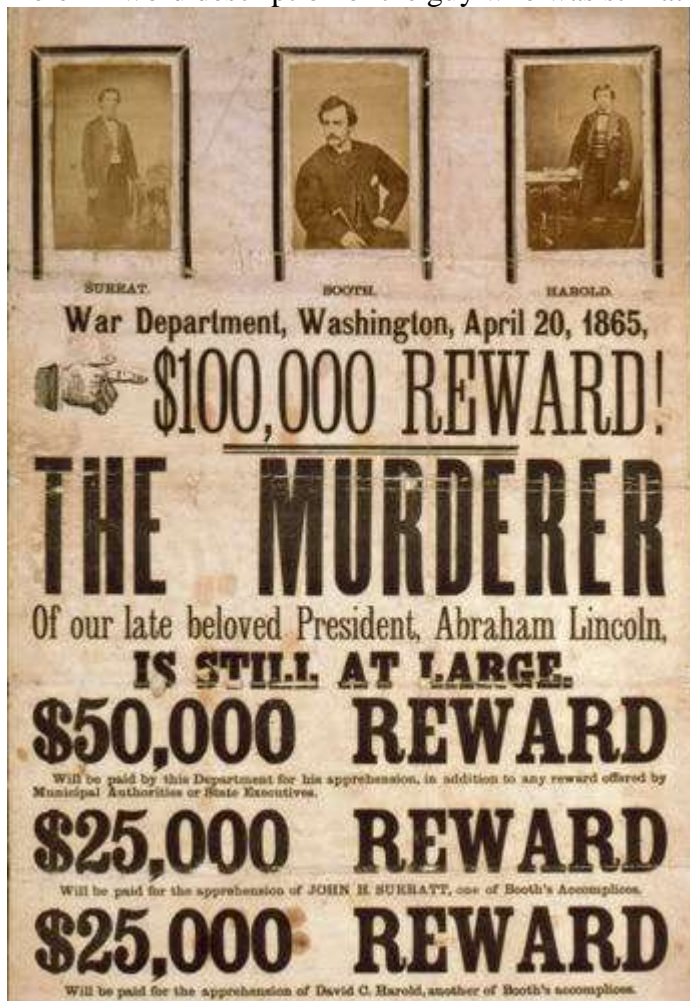
One of the earliest actions taken by investigators was raiding the room at the Kirkwood Hotel allegedly rented by George Atzerodt for the purpose of assassinating Andrew Johnson.

According to Guttridge and Neff, writing in *Dark Union*, "The room was registered as Atzerodt's but had not been slept in. The Kirkwood's day clerk, who had entered Room 126 earlier that morning, found nothing and said so. His testimony was ignored." When detectives entered that very same empty and unused room, they allegedly uncovered a wealth of evidence.

Supposedly recovered from the room were a bankbook issued to John Wilkes Booth, a loaded revolver, three boxes of pistol cartridges, a map of the southern states, a Bowie knife, and a handkerchief with Booth's mother's name embroidered on it. Booth's room at the National

Hotel, Room 228, was similarly raided with additional evidence supposedly recovered, including a business card containing John Surratt's name and a letter from Samuel Arnold conveniently implicating both he and McLaughlin, despite the fact that Arnold and McLaughlin, like Surratt, were nowhere near Washington at the time of the assassination.

"Wanted" posters issued by the War Department were wildly, and probably deliberately, inaccurate. John Surratt's and David Herold's names were both spelled incorrectly, the photo of Herold was of him as a schoolboy, which clearly wasn't an accurate representation of how he looked circa 1865, and the photo of Surratt wasn't John Surratt at all. In a blatant act of historical revisionism, corrected posters were issued much later. One widely circulated poster that was issued *after* Lewis Paine was already in custody inexplicably offered a reward for Paine and contained a richly detailed 160-word description of the already incarcerated suspect, along with a mere 42-word description of the guy who was still at large, John Wilkes Booth.



Original "Wanted" poster



Revised "Wanted" posters

The first alleged conspirator to be arrested was the hapless Ned Spangler, who was taken into custody at Ford's Theatre on the night of the assassination. Samuel Arnold and Michael McLaughlin, implicated through what appears to have been planted evidence, were arrested on April 17, 1865, the former at Fort Monroe and the latter in Baltimore. Later that night, Mary Surratt and Lewis Powell were both arrested at Surratt's boardinghouse. George Adzerodt was taken into custody in the early morning hours of April 20 in Maryland, following – by one account – a tip from his police detective brother. Dr. Mudd was arrested on April 24, four days after Captain William Wood, a close associate of Stanton and the warden of the Old Capitol Prison, had begun watching his home.

Why authorities drug their feet for several days before arresting Mudd even while rounding up some 2,000 other suspects who ultimately were not charged is another of the many unanswered questions surrounding the Lincoln assassination and its aftermath. In any event, that left just two of the alleged conspirators at large, David Herold and John Wilkes Booth. Finding them was going to require a specially assembled team – a team that would uncannily know just where to go.

The elite posse was assembled by NDP chief Lafayette Baker on April 24. The group thereafter all but made a beeline to the area around Garrett's farm. How they knew to go there is a question not often addressed by historians. For the record, Baker claimed that he was tipped off by "an old

Negro,” but said person was never identified and he or she never stepped forward to collect the substantial reward offered. A House Committee noted that, “upon what information Colonel Baker proceeded in sending out the expedition ... is in no manner disclosed or intimated in his official report.”

An 1867 Minority Report of the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives offered what were, by today’s standards, shockingly frank assessments of Baker’s character, such as, “Although examined on oath, time and again, and on various occasions, it is doubtful whether he [Baker] has in any one thing told the truth even by accident,” and “there can be no doubt that of his many previous outrages, entitling him to unenviable immortality, he has added that of willful and deliberate perjury; and we are glad to know that no one member of the committee deems any statement made by him as worthy of the slightest credit. What a blush of shame will tinge the cheek of the American student in future ages, when he reads that this miserable wretch for years held, as it were, in the hollow of his hand, the liberties of the American people.”

The posse assembled by Baker was led by his cousin, Lt. Luther Baker, and Lt. Col. Everton Conger, who had served as an aide to Lafayette Baker. Both had returned to civilian life and were recruited specifically to lead the mission. They were joined by Lt. Edward Doherty and a detachment of twenty-five soldiers. After completing the mission, all involved signed quitclaims and collected a substantial amount of reward money. One of the troopers, as fate would have it, had met Booth previously; some 33 years later, on April 20, 1898, he issued the following published statement: “It was not Booth nor did it resemble him ...” Many Americans had reached that conclusion years earlier.



Edward Doherty



Everton Conger

At the Garrett home, the guy later identified as John Wilkes Booth introduced himself as John W. Boyd. Herold was introduced as his cousin, David Boyd. During the standoff in the barn with the pair's would-be captors, the name "Booth" was never spoken. When Herold surrendered and exited the barn, leaving his companion behind, he insisted that he did not know the other man, who he claimed was named Boyd. Boyd/Booth was wearing a Rebel uniform and did not have on a ring that Booth reportedly always wore.

It was not until he had been shot and lay dying that the suspected assassin was addressed by Luther Baker as "Booth." According to Baker's account, the mortally wounded man "seemed surprised, opened his eyes wide, and looked about," as if he too was looking for the elusive John Wilkes Booth. At 7:15 AM on the morning of April 26, 1865, Booth/Boyd drew his last breath, some two-and-a-half hours after being shot, allegedly by Boston Corbett.

Mainstream authors and historians have labored long and hard to convince readers that Booth's body was positively identified, leaving no doubt in the public mind that justice had been served. James Swanson, for example, has written in *Manhunt* that, "On the *Montauk*, several men who knew Booth in life, including his doctor and dentist, were summoned aboard the ironclad to witness him in death. It was all very official. The War Department even issued an elaborate

receipt to the notary who witnessed the testimony. During a careful autopsy ...” The same James Swanson has also written, in *Lincoln’s Assassins*, that, “When the assassin’s body was brought back to Washington, the government took rigorous steps to confirm the identity of the man killed at Garrett’s farm ... Witnesses who knew Booth in life were summoned to identify him in death.” William Hanchett, in *The Lincoln Murder Conspiracies* (his contemptible attempt to ‘debunk’ so-called ‘conspiracy theories’), has claimed that “Booth’s body was identified beyond any possibility of a mix-up at a coroner’s inquest on April 27, 1865.”

All such proclamations are rather brazen and unconscionable acts of historical revisionism. The reality is that the body was not autopsied and it was processed in-and-out of Washington in record time. A mere forty hours passed between the death of the man at Garrett’s farm and the secret, late night disposal of his body, and that included the time needed to transport the corpse back to Washington. To this day, that initial burial site remains a mystery and several different versions of the disposal of the body have been published.

For reasons never explained in the historical record, the body was not transported back to Washington by the military detachment, but was instead escorted by only three men: Luther Baker, prisoner Willie Jett, and one unnamed soldier. Before reaching Washington, Jett somehow managed to, uhmm, ‘escape.’ The body was carried by steamer up the Potomac River, then transported by tugboat to the Washington Navy Yard and placed aboard the ironclad *Montauk* in the dead of night, at 1:45 AM on April 27, 1865, bypassing normal procedures. Before the day was done, the body would be covertly disposed of. The captain of the *Montauk* would later say that he “was not present at either time (arrival or disposal) or I should have put a stop to it.” The commandant of the Navy Yard would add that, “The removal of the body was entirely without my knowledge, an unusual transaction.”

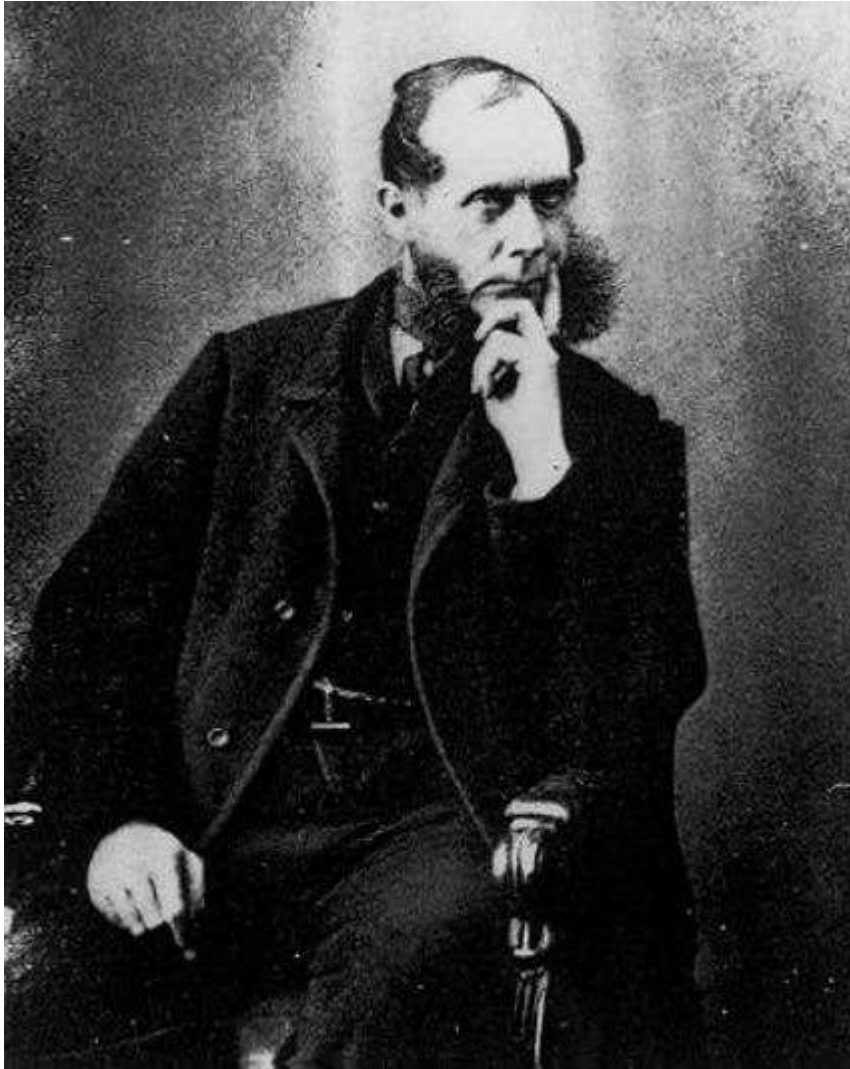


Prosecutor John Bingham (left) and Judge Advocate Joseph Holt (center)

Dispatched to the *Montauk* to oversee the identification of the body were such disreputable characters as Surgeon General Barnes, Judge Advocate Joseph Holt, prosecutor/persecutor John Bingham, Stanton underlings Thomas Eckert and Lafayette Baker, and two of Baker's most trusted men, Luther Baker and Everton Conger. Edwin Stanton had ordered Lafayette Baker and Thomas Eckert to personally intercept the boat carrying the body and clandestinely get it aboard the *Montauk*.

During the alleged inquest, none of Booth's peers in the theater community, many of whom were present in Washington at the time, were brought onboard to ID the body. No members of the Booth family were enlisted to view the body. None of Booth's alleged co-conspirators, many of whom were being held *on the very same ship*, were allowed to ID the body. According to *Dark Union*, "thirteen people were permitted to view the body. All but the war photographer Alexander Gardner, his assistant, and a hotel clerk were connected with the War Department." If we're being honest here, that should read, "all but possibly the hotel clerk were connected with the War Department."

Even within the government's handpicked and limited cast of witnesses, there was disagreement as to whether the body was that of Booth. Dr. John Frederick May, who had previously seen Booth as a patient, noted that "there is no resemblance in that corpse to Booth, nor can I believe it to be him." May added that the corpse "looks to me much older, and in appearance much more freckled than he was. I do not recollect that he was at all freckled." Dr. May would later write that the corpse's "right limb was greatly contused, and perfectly black from a fracture of one of the long bones." Surgeon General Barnes' report to Stanton, however, held that it was "the left leg and foot" that were injured and "encased in an appliance of splints and bandages," thus clouding the waters even on such straightforward issues as which of the corpse's legs was injured.



Dr. John Frederick May

After the hasty identification charade, and without anyone who was actually close to Booth in life having seen the body, and without any public display of the body, and without any photographs of the body that would ever see the light of day, the corpse was quickly disposed of by either Lafayette Baker and Thomas Eckert, or Lafayette and Luther Baker, depending upon who is telling the tale. Following the announcement that the body had been disappeared, shouts of “hoax!” rocked Washington, with many convinced that Booth hadn’t been captured or killed and was still free.

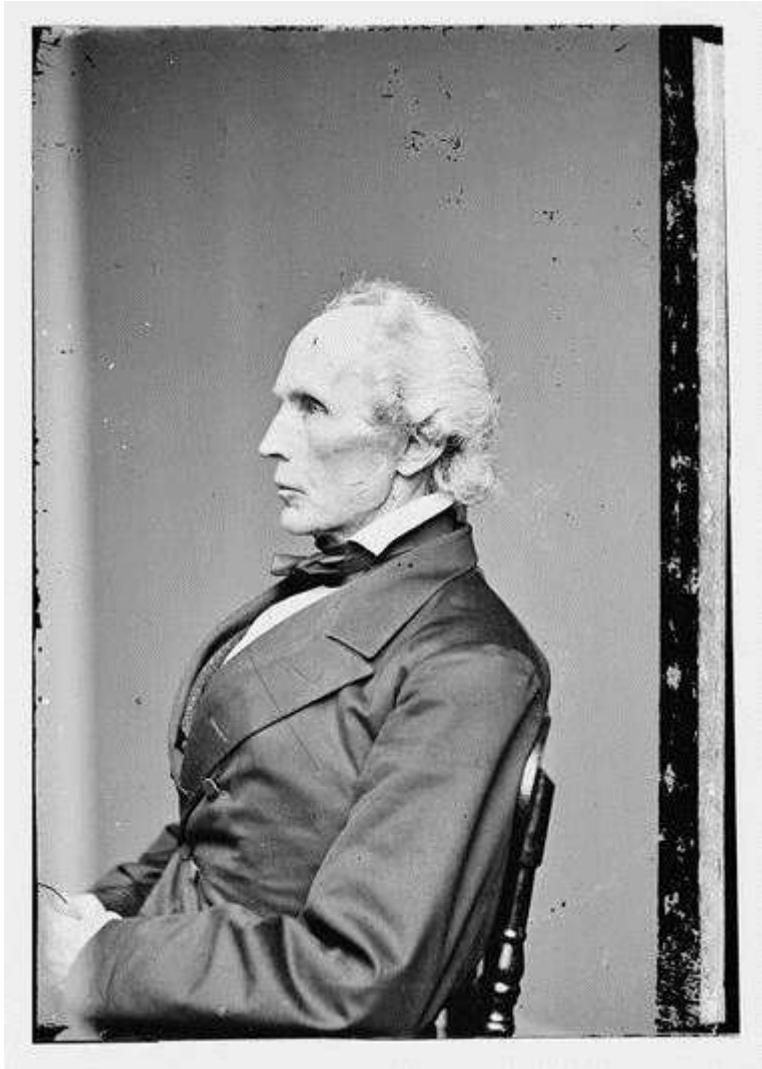
On July 28, 1866, Senator Garrett Davis of Kentucky voiced his doubts about the identification of Booth: “I have never seen any satisfactory evidence that Booth was killed.” Senator Reverdy Johnson of Maryland, who had played a role in the mock trial, came back with: “I submit to my friend from Kentucky that there are some things that we must take judicial notice of, just as well as that Julius Caesar is dead.”

Davis though remained decidedly unconvinced: “I would rather have better testimony of the fact. I want it proved that Booth was in that barn. I cannot conceive, if he was in the barn, why he was not taken alive. I have never seen anybody, or the evidence of anybody, that identified Booth after he is said to have been killed. Why so much secrecy about it? ... There is a mystery and a

most inexplicable mystery to my mind about the whole affair ... [Booth] could have been captured just as well alive as dead. It would have been much more satisfactory to have brought him up here alive and to have inquired of him to reveal the whole transaction ... [or] bring his body up here ... let all who had seen him playing, all who associated with him on the stage or in the green room or at the taverns and other public places, have had access to his body to have identified it.”



Senator Reverdy Johnson



Senator Garrett Davis

There was no way the powers-that-be were going to allow that to happen, of course, since the body clearly wasn't that of John Wilkes Booth. Had it been, the government surely would have taken the actions necessary to convince a skeptical public. But such actions weren't really necessary in 1865, just as they aren't today. The omnipotent ones can tell us, for example, that Osama bin Laden was killed and his body promptly disposed of – and the majority of us will accept it as the gospel truth.

And those malcontents who choose not to accept a proclamation that lacks any objective proof? Well, they don't really matter. Just as the voices of reason didn't really matter 150 years ago.

the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 1)

May 7, 2013

The Boston Marathon bombing incident produced an exceedingly bloody, gore-filled scene. We know that because virtually all avenues of the mainstream media, as was obvious from the very first reports, *wanted* us to know that. Never before can I recall seeing so many blood-soaked images being so prominently displayed. Newspapers and network and cable news broadcasts seemed to be on a mission to bring you the bloodiest, most graphic images they could come up with. The most disturbing of those images, by far, all involved a guy who had reportedly just had both of his legs blown off. The most heavily circulated and iconic of those images are of the legless guy being rolled away from the scene in a wheelchair, his unbelievably graphic wounds uncovered and on full display for the waiting cameras.

How crazy would it sound to suggest that that did not happen by accident -- to suggest that not only were his injuries staged, but that they were specifically designed for that high-profile wheelchair ride? Pretty crazy ... right? After all, I have in the past been rather critical of other researchers who have alleged that the victims of high-profile mass murders are actually actors. Nothing, it seems to me, could possibly serve to better alienate and offend the general public than attacking the victims as being part of the conspiracy. But what if the evidence is so overwhelming that it simply cannot be ignored?

I need to be very clear here in stating that I am not arguing that no one was injured in the attack and that there was no real suffering. That undoubtedly was not the case. But the fact remains that the most high-profile of the victims, who also happened to be by far the most gruesomely injured of the victims, *and* the guy who purportedly provided the tip that allowed authorities to identify the alleged perpetrators, appears to have been a fake. And though we were told that there were numerous people who lost limbs that day, he is the only one the media chose to put in the spotlight that day.

Given his central role in the affair then, we should probably take a much closer look at the wheelchair guy. That means, of course, that this post will necessarily be filled with very graphic images. But there's no need to worry – you've seen plenty of this stuff before on your television and on theater screens. And it doesn't appear to be any more real here than it is in a George Romero movie or an episode of *The Walking Dead*.

Before getting to the images though, a brief review of the official story is in order here so that we can

gauge how closely the photographic evidence conforms to the story that we have been asked to believe. To begin with, the guy's name is supposedly Jeff Bauman. The posted photos of Bauman, however, do not really resemble the wheelchair guy. In addition, the initial identification of Bauman came via an unverifiable Facebook post. In fact, virtually everything that has been reported about Bauman to this day seems to have come from unverified Facebook posts, though the info has been reported as fact. Those posts have largely been credited to Jeff Bauman, Sr., though no reporters, as best I can determine, have actually located and spoken to the senior Bauman. Reports claim that Jeff, Jr. was supposedly waiting at the finish line for his girlfriend to cross, but that girlfriend has never been identified and has not come forward to speak to the press. And Bauman himself, though healthy enough after just 19 days to attend a Boston Bruins hockey match, has not been sought out by or interviewed by anyone in the media.



Some on the Internet have claimed that the guy who allegedly lost his legs was actually Nick Vogt, a former serviceman who had previously lost his legs overseas. But numerous photos of Vogt can be found posted online and none of them really seem to resemble the wheelchair guy all that closely. I don't pretend to know who the no-legs guy actually is, but I do know that the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that he did not lose his legs at the Boston Marathon. For the purposes of this post, we will refer to him as Jeff Bauman, though I am not at all convinced that that is his real name.

According to the official narrative, Bauman was all but straddling backpack bomb #1 when it went off. As reported by *Bloomberg News*, "Bauman was waiting among the crowd for his girlfriend to cross the finish line at the Boston Marathon. A man wearing a cap, sunglasses and a black jacket over a hooded sweatshirt looked at Jeff, 27, and dropped a bag at his feet, his brother, Chris Bauman, said in an interview. Two and a half minutes later, the bag exploded, tearing Jeff's legs apart." Curiously, that alleged brother has not been seen, photographed or spoken to by any other media outlet. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-04-19/boston-bombing-victim-in-iconic-photo-helped-identify-attackers.html>

What we will be viewing here then in the accompanying images is 'ground zero' of the Boston bombing - the very area that the so-called Cowboy Hero, Carlos Arredondo, described as follows: "[there was] blood, blood everywhere, on the floor ... and then all you see was people without limbs. I mean, ripped off limbs everywhere, everywhere ..." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWHHWB3Jr60>

Arredondo has claimed in interviews that he was seated in the bleachers across the street when the first bomb went off, but that he immediately swung into action. *The Daily Mail* reported that, "as most people ran for their lives when the explosions went off in Boston, [Arredondo] vaulted a fence to get to spectators, many of whom had lost limbs, and used his clothes and towels to stanch victims' bleeding." Naturally enough, Arredondo immediately recognized that Bauman was the victim most in need of assistance and he acted accordingly, reaching his side within "moments": "The first time Jeff Bauman Jr. met Carlos Arredondo it was moments after one of the blasts at the Boston Marathon blew him to the ground taking both his legs." <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2315801/Carlos-Arredondo-Boston-victim-Jeff-Bauman-reunited-cowboy-hat-hero-saved-life.htm>

The Daily Beast provided one of the most detailed accounts of Arredondo's heroics: "Carlos Arredondo was in the bleachers by the finish line of the Boston Marathon when the first bomb went off directly across the street ... In the next moment, the 53-year old was vaulting a barricade and racing straight into the acrid cloud ..." He immediately located and rushed to assist Bauman. "A second bomb went off 100 yards away. Arredondo kept his focus on the young man ..." In other words, he had worked his way down from the bleachers, raced across the street, vaulted the barricade, located Bauman amidst the smoke and confusion, and already begun to assist him - all within less than 15 seconds! I think we can all agree that heroes of that magnitude aren't born every day.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/04/16/carlos-arredondo-boston-marathon-hero-in-a-cowboy-hat-on-the-bombs.html>

The ever-heroic Arredondo then quickly lifted Bauman into a nearby wheelchair and without hesitation got him to a medical tent, pinching off Jeff's exposed femoral artery along the way, thus saving the young man's life. From his hospital bed Bauman has reportedly confirmed that account: "When Carlos picked me up and threw me into the wheelchair, then I was like, maybe I am going to make it ... before that, no way. I thought I was done."
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/26/jeff-bauman-cowboy-hat-hero_n_3164370.html

Another guy we will be seeing a lot of in the images that follow is allegedly named Christian Williams, but we will refer to him as "the hoody guy" or just "hoody" because I seriously doubt that that is his real name. Hoody guy was right alongside Bauman at the time of the blast and, like Jeff, he sustained very serious, life-threatening wounds. According to a fundraising page put up by someone claiming to be a friend of hoody guy, he remains in the hospital and has endured numerous surgeries aimed at putting him back together. Here are a few (very poorly written) excerpts from the page: "[Christian] remembers quite vividly that a Boston Marathon runner who is also a surgeon, came to his rescue. He remembers the man was able to get people to help him apply tourniquet to each of his legs, he hollered out 'if we can get this guy out on the next transport he has a chance, otherwise he's going to die.' That's when he realized how serious his injuries were ... Christian is indeed lucky that his legs will not have to be amputated ... Here's the latest update from Christian ... 'today I met a few of my saviors ... Standing before me were the three members of the Boston EMS who were directly responsible for keeping me alive and getting me swiftly to the hospital. Apparently, they had been speculating about my outcome for two weeks and decided to surprise me with a visit, because I was by far the most seriously injured patient they treated that day, and that they had not expected me to make it. They had applied not one, not two, but three tourniquets to my left leg, yet still my blood poured down off the stretcher and onto the floor. Both of my femurs were exposed and they were applying pressure to keep them in place. My right leg was so badly wounded from top to bottom they thought for sure it was gone. My blood pressure was nowhere to be found, and they were calling ahead and alerting the trauma team that I had turned ashen.'" Elsewhere on the page, it says that, "Christian's right hand was also partially 'degloved', meaning he has no skin left on his last three fingers." <http://www.gofundme.com/ChristianCarolineFund/>

Also right alongside Bauman at the time of the blast was a young woman allegedly named Nicole Gross, who was waiting at the finish line with her sister. We will be seeing quite a bit of Nicole as well. Also with her was her husband. According to an account in the *Charlotte Observer*, Nicole and her husband were taken to the hospital together. While her husband sustained only minor wounds, Nicole and her sister were far more gravely injured. Nicole's injuries included two breaks in her left leg, a fracture in her right ankle, torn skin, and a severed Achilles tendon. Her sister fared even worse, losing her left leg below the knee and suffering a compound fracture in her right leg, a broken right ankle, and broken bones in her foot. While I seriously doubt that her name is really Nicole, I will play along and use that name for her in this post.
<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2013/04/16/3985154/some-from-charlotte-are-among.html>

There is one more person we will be seeing a lot of, a black woman dressed in black pants, a white top and a red sweater. She was also in the grouping around Bauman when the first blast occurred, which means that according to the official version of events she was also nearly straddling the supposedly shrapnel-laden bomb. As best I can determine at this time, she has not been identified and so will here be referred to as "Redcoat."

Having now met the cast of characters and having familiarized ourselves with the relevant portions of the official narrative, let's now review the available photo and video evidence to determine if there might be a possibility that some parts of the story might be untrue. Let's begin with some live footage from the *Boston Globe* that depicts the explosions and their immediate aftermath. As can be seen, the explosions took place on the side of the street opposite the bleachers - the side of the street, that is, where there were far fewer spectators gathered. The explosions also took place behind some temporary fencing/scaffolding, requiring would-be rescuers to spend a full two-and-a-half minutes working to dismantle the fencing to get to victims. Arredondo can be seen among the responders and volunteers working to tear down the fencing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myfivKMhqyg>

So already, we have a bit of a problem with the Cowboy Hero's version of events: he clearly did not immediately vault over the fence to get to victims and he just as clearly was not at Bauman's side within "moments." Below is a photo taken from above of the first bombing site just seconds after detonation. Plainly evident is that there were relatively few people at the site of the blast and, with the exception of a small huddled group, all of them are on their feet and quickly moving away from the area. That would tend to indicate that they still had their legs firmly attached.



The fact that there were relatively few witnesses at the blast location, coupled with the fact that would-be rescuers were held at bay for the first few minutes by the temporary fencing, would have provided an ideal window of opportunity to stage the scene, if anyone had been inclined to do so.

Below is the first post-blast image of Bauman, taken from a surveillance video. He can be seen to the left, just in front of Redcoat. Just behind her is the hoody guy. Barely visible to the far left is Nicole Gross. Hoody, Nicole and Redcoat are all three huddled closely around Jeff's freshly mangled legs. The smoke is still pretty thick in this image so we can't discern much, but we can see that from the earliest moments after the explosion, both of Bauman's stumps are at right angles to his body. And the lower leg on the longer stump, though it can't be seen from this angle, is at a near perfect right-angle to the upper leg. Both of his stumps, in other words, are in a sitting position. And they will remain in that very same orientation, without even minor changes, throughout his ordeal. Also worth noting is that the shorter stump looks considerably different here than it does in later images.



Moving on to the second image, we can clearly see that the hoody guy, mere moments after the blast, is primarily concerned with donning his sunglasses. Some web posts and videos have claimed that this

was to send a signal to Redcoat – which seems rather unlikely, I have to say, given that the two are obviously close enough to signal each other verbally. Far more likely is that hoody guy was mostly concerned with concealing his identity. He will remain in the hoody and shades for as long as he is on the set, even while receiving medical attention. We can also see more clearly here that Redcoat, Nicole (now visible) and hoody guy are all within inches of Jeff, with his freshly amputated limbs pointed directly at them. In fact, Jeff's longer stump appears to be wedged in between Redcoat and Nicole. All three accomplices, nevertheless, will emerge from their ordeal without so much as a drop of Johnny's blood on them. Also, none of the three appear to have received any significant injuries despite having been right alongside a guy who supposedly got both his legs blown off.



In this third image, we can now see the right-angle bend in Jeff's remaining knee. We can also see that the bony stump is all but poking Redcoat in the head (which seems, even under the circumstances, kind of rude). And it is clearly pointing directly at both Redcoat and the hoody guy, both of whom remain remarkably blood-free. We can also see that no one else in this scene appears to be nearly as gravely injured as Jeff. Also, Redcoat and hoody guy seem rather calm relative to most of the others in the scene, many of whom are in full panic mode. Lastly, there is no sign of hoody's wife, who was supposedly alongside him, or of Nicole's husband and sister, both of whom were allegedly alongside her.



Moments later, we can see that Jeff and Redcoat seem to both be giving the very same hand signal in the direction of approaching responders while making eye contact with one another. Both stumps continue to be in a sitting position and both continue to point directly at Redcoat. It doesn't seem to have yet occurred to Jeff or anyone else to put pressure on his wounds. Hoody guy looks on passively while making no effort to offer assistance to Jeff. Indeed, neither Redcoat nor hoody guy ever make any effort to staunch the flow of Jeff's blood, which is okay since there doesn't appear to actually be any blood flowing. Meanwhile, Nicole has moved out of the shot.



This next series of images captures the same scene from a slightly different vantage point and at a higher resolution, revealing that hoody guy, demonstrating a considerable amount of manual dexterity for a guy with a 'degloved' hand, began working diligently on Jeff's stumps before the smoke even began to clear. And he did so without getting any blood on his hands.





We now change positions to look at the same scene just moments later from a different perspective, and this is where things really start to get interesting. All five of our key players

(Carlos, Jeff, Hoody, Nicole, and Redcoat) are present and accounted for. Just about everyone else, which is to say all the non-actors, have fled the scene. Jeff is just behind Redcoat, though he is all but impossible to see. Everyone is ignoring him. In fact, with the notable exception of Arredondo, no one on the scene is even looking in his direction. Not a single person.

And speaking of Arredondo, he is, mere moments after the blast and with the smoke still swirling, already inside the temporary fencing, which obviously would have been impossible had he initially been seated across the street in the bleachers. And it's hard not to notice that he isn't actually rushing to help anyone but is instead standing idly by, hat and flag in hand, though he is obviously aware of Jeff and appears to be looking right at him.



Next up is a more detailed view of Arredondo, cropped from a higher resolution version of the above image. He is indeed inside the fencing and leaning casually against it. He also is quite obviously pointing with his right hand while shielding the gesture with his hat, as though covertly sending a signal. And he is, as previously noted, looking at Bauman while doing so.



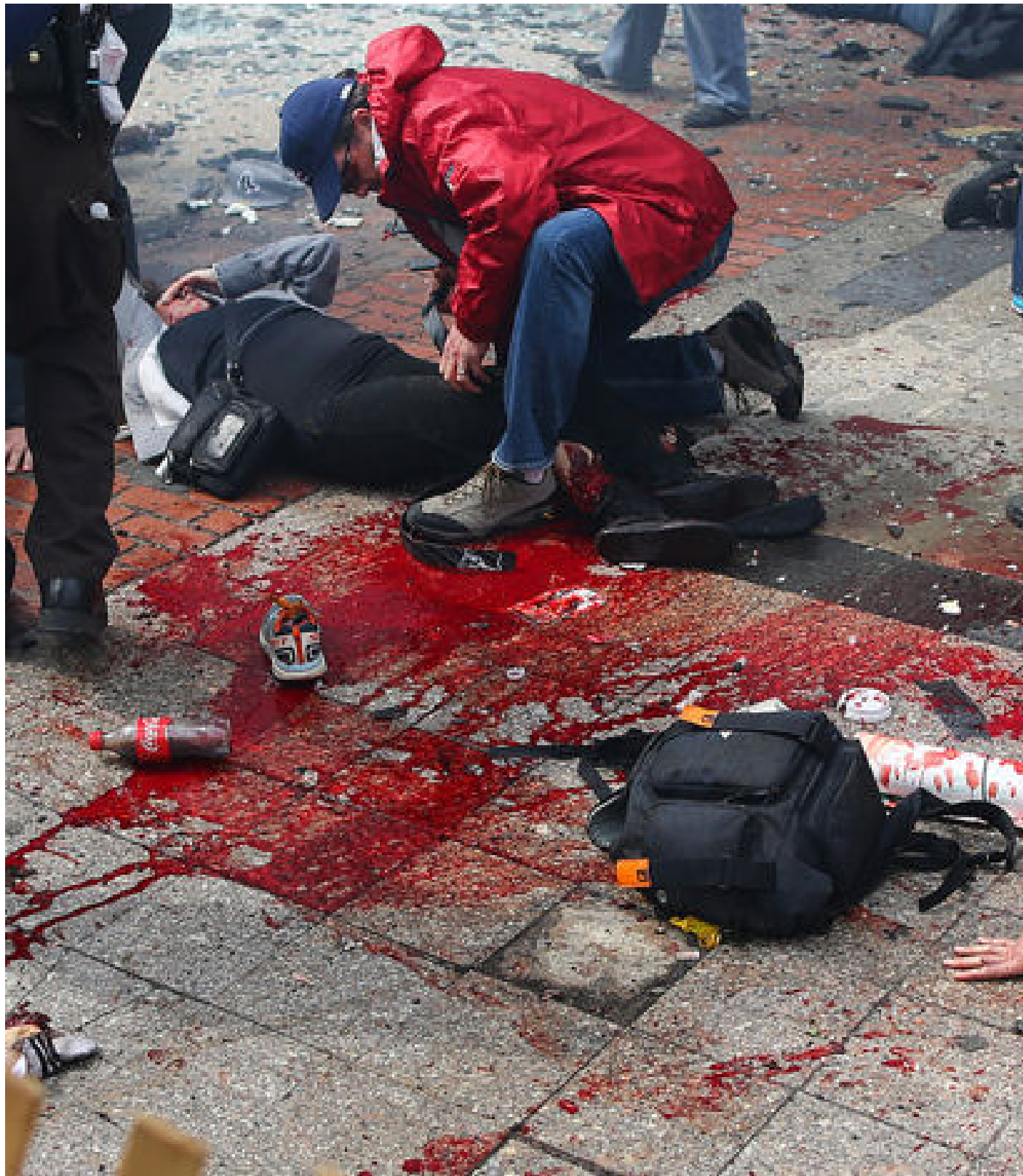
Below is a close-up of hoody guy, cropped from the same high-resolution image. Hoody is clearly knocking on death's door here and we can bear witness to his exposed femurs, shredded and badly bleeding legs, and partially 'degloved' right hand. We can also see that he is very concerned about his missing wife. Oops actually we can't see any of that because none of it really happened. What we actually see is a guy comfortably reclining with a fully intact right hand and two perfectly fine legs. He hardly even has any blood on him, and what is visible was undoubtedly picked up from the pavement.



Next up is a close-up of Recoat, lying in what is supposed to be Bauman's pooled blood. She nevertheless has remarkably little blood on her, though she does have an alien growing out of her midsection. I have no idea if that is supposed to be blood on her otherwise white top, but it certainly doesn't look like any kind of normal blood pattern. Overall, despite laying in a pool of blood and having been directly in the line of fire of Jeff's femoral arteries, she has very little blood on her and doesn't appear to have suffered any significant injuries.



The next image up for review is of Nicole, with her twice-broken left leg, fractured ankle and severed Achilles tendon. Luckily, those injuries haven't hindered her mobility as she has clearly moved from her original position. Those are some excruciatingly painful injuries that she has, but she seems to be toughing it out okay. She has though been abandoned by her husband, who you would think would be tending to and comforting her, and her legless sister is nowhere to be seen. Her right arm got peppered with shrapnel, but luckily for her it was a special kind of shrapnel that shreds clothing fibers but doesn't penetrate flesh. That was a relatively common phenomenon in Boston that day, with the guy in the following image, looking like he just walked off a film set, being a classic example.





To be continued ...

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Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 2)
May 7, 2013

Moving on now to the next image in the sequence of events, we find Arredondo moving quickly to aid Bauman. Just kidding ... what we actually find him doing is beginning to pull the fence down from the inside, seemingly oblivious to the fact that he is bringing it down directly on top of one of the victims, which is probably okay because she was undoubtedly an actress anyway. What is important to note here is that the Cowboy Hero already had access to the victims but rather than assist them he chose to spend the next few minutes helping to tear the fence down, pretending as though he hadn't already been on the other side of it. No medical personnel are yet on the scene and yet almost all of the victims have already left on their own, thoughtfully carting their severed limbs off with them. Jeff, naturally enough, continues to be ignored. As can be seen, the bomb shrapnel all passed cleanly between the fence pickets without breaking a single one.



In the next image we see that Redcoat has moved away to reveal that the spot previously occupied by her and the other accomplices is covered with a pool of very unconvincing blood. The fence is now down and responders are on the scene but Arredondo is nowhere in sight and Jeff is being ignored by everyone. Both of his stumps continue to be at right angles to his body and the knee on the left stump remains bent at a right angle, though he has rolled onto his side to draw attention away from that. He is now also keeping a firm grip on that longer leg/prosthesis and he will

continue to do so for as long as he remains in camera range.

Absurdly enough, hoody guy, while still wearing his shades, is receiving medical attention while Jeff, just a couple of feet away, is apparently invisible. No one has bothered to even fashion a makeshift tourniquet or two to arrest his alleged bleeding. And why, one wonders, has Jeff been abandoned by all his accomplices? Why, after first providing no assistance whatsoever, have all three of them now physically distanced themselves from him? It clearly wasn't to get out of the way and let responders tend to his alleged wounds. And speaking of responders, wouldn't it have been a nice gesture for hoody to say to rescuers something along the lines of, "don't worry about me, guys - the poor motherfucker right there doesn't have any legs!"



Next up is an image in which we again see that the ground is drenched in stage blood that even Roger Corman would have balked at using. We also see that both of Jeff's limbs continue to be locked in a sitting position and that he continues to keep a very tight grip on the left prosthesis. And he continues to suffer alone, with no one at any time offering any assistance whatsoever in any of the recorded images, even though a responder is clearly standing right there in what is supposed to be his pooled

blood, with his back turned to Jeff as though he is guarding him rather than assisting him. Just to the left of Jeff's head can be seen the boot and camo fatigues of a soldier with the national guard, who also has his back to Jeff as though guarding rather than assisting him. Arredondo remains missing in action. Apparently aware of the presence of a photographer (who the girl next to him is looking directly at), Jeff is now grimacing.



In this next image, Jeff is ready for his moment in the spotlight. Ridiculously, he is in a wheelchair rather than strapped to a gurney. And just as ridiculously, his alleged wounds are on full display because, you know, no one thought to throw a coat or a sheet or something over them. It couldn't really be any more obvious, given the laws of gravity, how absurd it is for a bottomless guy to be transported in an upright position. There is no question that under any other circumstances, this guy would have been on a gurney with his wounds covered with a sheet. But that would have ruined the show that his prosthetics were specifically designed for. Also, it would have looked pretty ridiculous to have him in a sitting position while lying on his back on a gurney.



The next two images are not part of the sequence of events revolving around Jeff and his associates,

but are included here as examples of how people on the scene with far less significant leg wounds were handled by responders. This is how, in the real world, people with alleged leg injuries are transported.





Next up is another view of Jeff in the wheelchair. From this angle we can see that his left leg is still bent at the knee at a right angle, even though that is a very unnatural position for it to be in. Without exertion by our victim/hero, his lower leg would be hanging straight down. To maintain it in that position would require physical exertion for the entire time that Bauman remained on the scene, both while on his back and while in the wheelchair. So apparently Jeff not only remained conscious and quite alert throughout his ordeal, he also maintained enough strength to keep his knee locked at a right-angle.

I should also point out here that though we have a clear view of the street, there isn't so much as a drop of blood visible in the wheelchair's path. Note also that Jeff's longer stump looks quite horrifying here, with bloody flaps of skin and all manner of nastiness hanging from it, though none of that was visible when he was waving his stump in his accomplices' faces while avoiding getting blood on them.



This next image is a highly incriminating one of Redcoat, ready for her photo op. It is clearly the same woman – same face, same clothes, same purse. But the last time we saw her, she had miraculously survived the blast without visible injury and had even more miraculously managed to avoid getting drenched in Jeff's blood. But now, as she is about to be rolled out for the waiting cameras, she has suddenly and inexplicably become a bloody mess. Note also that Nicole, who had previously been sitting up and looking around, has once again moved to a different location and is now being treated as though she has a spinal injury. She also has a makeshift tourniquet around her leg which appears to be unnecessary.



Here is yet another dramatic shot of accomplice #1 being rushed to a waiting ambulance. She is now bleeding so profusely that there is a river of blood rushing down towards the bottom of the gurney and her chest is completely drenched. It's a miracle she's still alive. Luckily they had a gurney available for her. And for Nicole as well, as can be seen below. And they also drove the ambulance right up to the site of the blast, rather than wheeling her down the street. But they could probably only do that for people with really serious injuries.







There is one other image that must be discussed here. Among the literally hundreds of posted photos that I have reviewed, it stands out as being the only image in the public domain that comes anywhere close to depicting the level of carnage described by Arredondo and others. It is the only image that depicts anyone other than Bauman with an apparently amputated limb. It also depicts some rather dead-looking women who appear to be being checked for vital signs. And of course Jeff himself makes an appearance with his perpetually bent knee.



There is though a bit of a problem with that particular image: it seems to be at odds with other available images. If we look at it side-by-side with an earlier image, for example, it is pretty clear that the guy with the missing lower leg and the two dead women weren't there initially. And at the risk of sounding insensitive, I have to note here that dead people and/or people with mangled legs generally have pretty limited mobility, so the question naturally arises: how did they get there?



One final piece of evidence concerning Bauman can be found in a YouTube video. As can be seen, as Jeff is belatedly being rolled out, an EMT rushes up to stop the wheelchair processional to make a last-second adjustment before Bauman reaches the waiting cameras. Given that Jeff was at the time allegedly just moments away from death, what kind of adjustment could have possibly been so important?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7l73BxWr0Q>

So what have we learned today? Some conclusions can be drawn with a certainty, such as that the story told by Carlos Arredondo is a complete fabrication. Virtually every aspect of the tale he has told is demonstrably untrue and yet it has been readily accepted and repeated by the mainstream media. It is also irrefutably true that the guy calling himself 'Christian Williams' has also left a reeking pile of bullshit on the table. His phantom injuries, which he has used to

raise some \$100,000 (is that the going rate these days for selling your soul?), were entirely imaginary and his wife is nowhere to be seen in any of the photos. We also know that the image of Redcoat that was presented to waiting photographers was an entirely contrived one, complete with lots of added stage blood. And we know that 'Nicole Gross' didn't really break her leg in two places and wasn't really standing with her husband and sister when the blast occurred.

And what about 'Jeff Bauman'? Did he really have both of his legs blown off? Is it really possible for someone to have both legs blown apart like that while those around him walk away with barely a scratch? And is it really possible that the people who were pressed up against him could somehow avoid being drenched in blood? And is it possible that real blood does sometimes look like red paint? And that with two freshly severed femoral arteries, there wouldn't have been a much, much larger pool of blood? And is it within the realm of possibility that everyone around him, including numerous first responders, could have completely ignored his dire condition for an inordinate amount of time? And that when he was finally 'rescued' it was by being rolled off to who-knows-where in a wheelchair? And should we just ignore the fact that hoodo was manipulating Jeff's stumps immediately after the blast, while shielded by smoke? And should we also ignore the curious fact that Jeff's stumps remain locked in the exact same position throughout his ordeal? And that Carlos can be seen signaling to him very soon after the blast occurred, after which he subsequently ignored him for a considerable amount of time? And that Jeff didn't bother mentioning that while allegedly praising Arredondo from his hospital bed?

None of that, quite frankly, seems very plausible to me. It also seem very unlikely that a guy who really did have his legs blown off would find himself surrounded by people who were obviously there as actors playing roles. I will be the first to admit though that the notion that the government would use amputee actors to portray trauma victims, complete with Hollywood blood and gore, seems a rather bizarre notion. But it is not, strangely enough, wild-eyed conspiracy theorizing to suggest such a thing. To the contrary, as this video clip culled from the mainstream media clearly demonstrates, it is an acknowledged fact that the government does indeed employ amputee actors for training purposes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNsnCVuE2C4>

That doesn't mean, of course, that the government used actors in the Boston bombing operation. It does though mean that there are amputees out there who have experience convincingly portraying victims of severe trauma, and it means that the government is more than happy to employ them during training exercises, and that it does so primarily for shock value. And nothing in recent memory, I have to say, had quite the shock value of the guy at the finish line of the Boston Marathon with the shredded legs.

It's okay though. You can go back to sleep now. I'm sure everything is going to work out just fine. Don't be surprised though if you wake up one day soon to find the streets lined with armored personnel carriers and the skies filled with military helicopters. Because if you accept the implementation of martial law in Boston as a legitimate response to a patently fake 'terrorist' attack, then you have given your seal of approval for far more wide-reaching and far more permanent states of martial law in the not-so-distant future. And it will happen. The only question is when.

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Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down, Part 3
May 14, 2013

There are a number of additional questions raised by the photo evidence that I feel compelled to address here. But first, let's take another look at one image that was presented at the tail end of my last post. You know the one I'm talking about - the one that features two apparently dead people and two guys who have had one or both of their legs blown off.



After further review, I have a number of questions about this shot, beginning with why, given that the media establishment was clearly on a mission to traumatize us with the most graphic images available, do we have only one shot of this particular scene - and an out-of-focus, poorly exposed one at that? And why is this the only view we have of the hollowed-out leg guy, who we can't even recognize from this angle and distance? Given the numerous graphic, very bloody images we have of Jeff, why didn't this guy get equal time? Were his prosthetics and make-up not as convincing as Jeff's? Where are the

close-up shots of him lying in a pool of his own blood? And where is his iconic wheelchair shot?

What is up, by the way, with the strawberry blond gal in the red top? Why is she still there? She doesn't have any visible injuries that would prevent her from leaving, or at least moving, yet she seems very reluctant to give up her position. Even when Carlos pinned her under the fence, she remained unfazed, just as she is unfazed by the two guys just behind her with mutilated legs who are presumably howling in pain, and by the dead woman and the nearly dead woman just behind her, and by the large pools of blood all around her. She also doesn't seem concerned with the fact that she is clearly impeding the progress of the responder trying to work on the girl behind her. And speaking of responders, you gotta love that there is one walking right between Jeff and the hollow-leg guy while offering help to neither of them. I'm guessing that if we had audio with this pic we'd hear him saying, "Anyone here need any help? Anyone? Anyone at all?"

And what are we to make of the two women in the foreground? Are they both dead? If so, how exactly did they die? They don't have a mark on their faces or upper bodies, and as Jeff's saga has taught us, the human body can withstand an incredible amount of trauma to the lower extremities. You can have your legs blown clean off and then bleed out unattended for a considerable amount of time and yet still remain conscious and fully alert and even have enough strength left to sit upright in a wheelchair while holding your stump aloft. So what was it that killed these two women so quickly? Not far away, Jeff is still able to sit up entirely on his own and he doesn't have any legs at all!

The frail old runner who was knocked over by the blast was, as best it can be determined from available videotape, just on the other side of the temporary barricade from these women. And yet, by his own account, he was uninjured and was able to complete the race. So how exactly is it possible that a healthy young woman was hit with lethal force but a guy who looked like he was already half dead was just 10-15 feet further away from the explosion and directly in the line of fire and yet he walked away without a scratch on him? In what alternative reality could that actually happen?

Another very obvious question raised here is: if these women are in fact dead, then why are they not included in the official victim tally? As the story goes, there were only three deaths that day and two of the fallen were an eight-year-old boy and a young Asian woman. That only leaves one spot to fill and yet we have two bodies. Why then are we being shown women who we are clearly supposed to assume are dead when the official story holds that at least one of them can't possibly be?

According to email I have received from a couple of incensed readers, the two women pictured are Krystle Campbell and her friend, Karen Rand. According to the official story, Ms Campbell was killed by the blast but her friend was not, though she was severely injured. Fair enough, I suppose ... except that there are serious problems with the Campbell/Rand story as reported by our illustrious 'free' press. On the left below is a pic of the two women that was supposedly taken just hours before they were struck down. Beside that is a widely circulated photo of Ms Campbell, and beside that is a cropped and rotated version of the previous image.



Given the quality of the image, it is impossible to determine with any certainty whether the two women lying near the finish line are the same women depicted in the 'before' image, though it certainly seems quite possible that they are. Unfortunately though, that 'before' photo is wildly at odds with photos that have been released that purport to depict Ms Rand recuperating in her hospital bed. And while the gal in the image to the left above could conceivably be the woman in black in the crime scene image, the woman below most certainly could not be.



It's amazing how much difference just a few days can make, isn't it? Ms Rand clearly let

herself go while in the hospital. The rather fit, shapely, youthful young lady in the before pic has been replaced by a decidedly heavyset, middle-aged woman. The official narrative holds that Rand is fifty-two years old, which is clearly about twice the apparent age of the woman in the middle photo above. The official story also holds that Campbell was initially listed as injured but alive, with the mix-up being attributed to a case of mistaken identity. For reasons that have never been explained, Rand was supposedly carrying Campbell's identification rather than her own. And doctors, despite having the woman to the left above fully exposed on the operating table, did not realize that she wasn't a rather petite, 29-year-old blond woman. I'm sure that kind of thing happens all the time. And it is also probably fairly common to pose someone cheek-to-cheek with their deceased friend. But since the woman in black clearly isn't the Karen Rand pictured in the hospital bed, then apparently it is actually a stranger posed cheek-to-cheek with the deceased Ms Campbell. And that, I have to say, is pretty bizarre.

In other news, the guy who is a living embodiment of "Boston Strong," Mr. Jeff Bauman, is back in the news with an interesting account of his ordeal. And by "interesting account," I mean a version of events that bears no resemblance at all to either previously published accounts or to the photographic record. In the earlier version of events, it will be recalled, Bauman "woke up under so much drugs, asked for a paper and pen and wrote, 'bag, saw the guy, looked right at me.'" And that drug-addled tip, of course, is what led the FBI to crack the case.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/victim-in-iconic-photo-says-he-saw-bomber/2013/04/19/0de8b100-a8a3-11e2-a8e2-5b98cb59187f_story.html

In the new and improved version of events, Jeff was telling anyone who would listen that he knew who was responsible within moments of the blasts. Swiftly carted off to a waiting ambulance, "Bauman told the man attending to him that he knew who had set off the bomb. Although he was somewhat delirious and in shock, Bauman remembered what he'd seen. When he was unloaded from the ambulance, he told an officer the same thing. But he was rushed into the emergency room and into surgery so quickly that he didn't have time to share the details. When Bauman woke up, FBI agents were outside his door, ready to hear what he had to say. He started talking, and a sketch artist started drawing."

<http://www.concordmonitor.com/news/6042537-95/jeff-bauman-shares-his-boston-marathon-story-including-his-encounter-with-suspect-tamerlan-tsarnaev>

Close enough, I guess. But his account of his encounter with the alleged bomber is completely different as well. When the tale was first told, "Bauman was waiting among the crowd for his girlfriend to cross the finish line at the Boston Marathon. A man wearing a cap, sunglasses and a black jacket over a hooded sweatshirt looked at Jeff, 27, and dropped a bag at his feet ... Two and a half minutes later, the bag exploded, tearing Jeff's legs apart."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/victim-in-iconic-photo-says-he-saw-bomber/2013/04/19/0de8b100-a8a3-11e2-a8e2-5b98cb59187f_story.html

The new story has a few minor variations: "When Jeff Bauman looked Tamerlan Tsarnaev in the face, he knew something wasn't quite right. Tsarnaev, then an anonymous man in a cap, sunglasses and backpack, seemed out of place ... Bauman was at the marathon to watch his girlfriend, along with her two roommates. One of them, Michele Mahoney, was also badly injured and is now recovering in the next room over from Bauman at Spaulding. Just before Bauman saw Tsarnaev, he was looking for Mahoney so they could move farther down, just in case they'd missed his girlfriend crossing the finish line. The weird feeling Tsarnaev gave him made his desire to move more urgent. As he was looking for Mahoney, he saw a black backpack alone on the ground – the same one he'd seen on the suspicious man. Then, that pop."

<http://www.concordmonitor.com/news/6042537-95/jeff-bauman-shares-his-boston-marathon-story-including-his-encounter-with-suspect-tamerlan-tsarnaev>

So, uhmm, the bag wasn't dropped at his feet after all? He just had some kind of superhuman ability to identify one particular black backpack to the exclusion of all other black backpacks? Meaning that, even if we choose to believe Bauman's ever-evolving story, we are left to conclude that he couldn't actually connect Tsarnaev, or anyone else for that matter, to the alleged backpack?

Bauman also provided a new account of the supposedly very brief time that he lay on the ground awaiting help: "Bauman lay on the ground, first thinking someone had lit a firework in the street. He propped himself up and saw people screaming and running amid rubble. At first, he couldn't feel the pain. He remembers lying back, trying to move and touch his legs. He yelled out. He looked for Mahoney, who had been taken away. He felt around grasping for his cell phone. He felt like he'd been lying there forever. 'I was just laying there and I was just like, 'Oh I'm gonna die,' so I was looking for my cell phone to call people, and I couldn't find it,' he said. That's when Carlos Arredondo, the cowboy-hat hero made famous from the now-iconic photograph of the two men together, came to his side. 'He's gotta go!' Arredondo was yelling, and before Bauman knew it Arredondo hoisted him up by his T-shirt, threw him in a wheelchair and took off - over the finish line, through the medical tent and right into the ambulance."

That's a very touching story and all, but it is completely at odds with all the photographic evidence. In the moments after the blast, he didn't prop himself up to see people running and screaming; he was on his back with his attention focused on the people directly in front of him. And where exactly was the "rubble"? I've reviewed a lot of images and I have yet to see anything resembling rubble. As for lying back and attempting to move and touch his legs, they were sticking straight up in the air; he could not only touch them, he could see them! His girlfriend's roommate was apparently whisked away immediately, but by whom? There were no responders on the scene that quickly. It's funny how Jeff, hoody and Nicole all claim to have been waiting with companions when the bomb detonated, but none of those companions can actually be seen in any of the available images.

I could also comment on the claim that Arredondo quickly came to his rescue, but that story has already been so thoroughly discredited that it hardly seems worth the effort.

One question that really needs to be asked here is: what the hell is up with all the leg amputations? Exactly what kind of bomb was this supposed to be? Because the last time I checked, crude pressure-cooker bombs weren't directional. They'll pretty much damage or destroy everything within a given radius. But this appears to have been a very special kind of bomb that only targeted things within 2-3 feet of the ground. I've lost count of how many media stories I've read that have featured amputated

legs, but I have yet to read a story about someone who lost an arm. Or even a hand. How could that be? A post on the *Washington Post* website contains the stories of a sampling of the Boston victims. By my count, this group lost a total of 12 legs that day, plus an additional foot, and a number of other legs were saved only by the heroic efforts of responders and doctors. Not a single person though lost an arm, or a hand, or even a finger. Unless a whole lot of people had formed huddles around the bombs just before they went off, I'm at a loss for any sort of rational explanation for that.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/liveblog/wp/2013/04/23/boston-marathon-bombings-stories-of-the-victims/>

ABC News has boldly proclaimed that more than 25 people lost limbs that day. Some of the explosive amputation stories told by the media have been ridiculously over-the-top in their absurdity. Take, for example, the case of the guy calling himself Jarrod Clowery, who told the *Washington Post* that no fewer than three of his companions had their legs blown off: "Three of Clowery's buddies who were with him each lost limbs in the bombings ... Clowery believes he already was in the air, clearing the metal guardrail, when the explosion hit, which may have saved his legs. His friends still were grounded. 'They're all big guys. I think they spared some other people when they took that impact.'"

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/liveblog/wp/2013/04/23/boston-marathon-bombings-stories-of-the-victims/>

If everyone in the blast zone had been walking on stilts, it appears, there wouldn't have been any injuries at all. The next best thing, I guess, would have been to stand behind some really big guys. Those are important things to remember if you ever find yourself in a crowded public space in the future.

Amazingly enough, Clowery isn't the only one claiming to have had three companions fall victim to the leg-severing bombs. Our old friend Shrapnel Man has made the very same claim. The media would like us to believe that Shrapnel Man, whose name is allegedly James "Bim" Costello, was seriously injured by the bombings, to such an extent that he was initially unsure if he would make it out alive. And that, of course, makes me feel just terrible for having previously mocked the image below.



Costello's body was "so burned that he was left needing pig skin grafts on most of his right arm and right leg. Costello had plucked two rusty roofing nails from his stomach and was trying to walk toward any help he could find following the explosions, his ears ringing, his body pebbled with shrapnel, and his mind reeling from the thought moments earlier that he might be dying ... Three of the friends who were with Costello on race day each lost a leg."

<http://news.yahoo.com/marathon-bombing-survivor-wants-others-remembered-063342868.html>

So he walked away from his three friends who were bleeding out on the pavement? I guess he had a photo shoot to get to. If his body is 'pebbled' with shrapnel, by the way, then why do you suppose it is that he doesn't seem to have so much as a drop of blood on his shirt? Even if he had received no injuries himself, how is it possible to have been alongside three guys who literally had their legs blown off and not be covered with blood? Of course, the same question can be asked of just about everyone who was within the blast zones.

I shouldn't really need to point out here that when a couple dozen legs are blown asunder, all that blood, bone and flesh goes somewhere. Actually, what I should say is that all of that blood and tissue goes *everywhere*. The reality is that, as bloody as some of the pictures we were assaulted with were, they were not actually nearly bloody enough to lend any credence at all to the official story. Below is a fairly high resolution shot taken almost immediately after the first detonation (note that most of the people in the foreground are still holding their ears). Countless legs have just been explosively amputated, covering the scene in hundreds of pounds of blood and gore, as if someone had fed a dozen human legs into an industrial wood chipper. Take a look for yourself.



Did you see all the blood and chunks of meat? On all the people? And all over the ground? And on the flags? And on everything else? You saw it all ... right? Because it has to be there. There's really no way around it. If the official story is true, and if all the media reports of explosively amputated legs are true, and if all the photos we have seen of people recovering in

hospital beds are real, then it has to be there. I personally haven't been able to find it, but maybe you'll have better luck.

Did you also notice, by the way, that while the guy in the center of the scene apparently uses the same ultra-trendy tailor as Shrapnel Man, no one else in the frame has so much as lost a button? Their clothing is fully intact and soot-free - the sole exception being The Running Man, who we will take a closer look at in the next installment. For now, we'll just take note of the fact that this was some very high-tech shrapnel, with the amazing ability to weave through the crowd and selectively target one guy's clothes and several other people's legs while leaving everyone else untouched. I really hope that the FBI is diligently investigating this case to determine how the 'terrorists' obtained such cutting-edge technology.

Let's return now to Shrapnel Man, who we are told is still in the hospital nearly a full month after suffering his injuries. The photo below was purportedly taken on May 10, three-and-a-half weeks after the bombing. Beside it is Shrapnel Man's left leg as of April 15. It only looks slightly worse now than it did then, so I guess his doctors have things under control.





Now let's take a look at some of the overlooked victims of the Boston Marathon bombing. These images haven't been widely distributed so you likely haven't seen them before. Notice that, despite the gravity of their wounds, this seems to be a good-natured group of survivors. But that is because they aren't really injured. And the images weren't captured in Boston. These people are, in reality, actors hired by the Pennsylvania National Guard to portray victims of a fake 'dirty bomb' attack in the fall of 2011. Our government, you see, has been practicing this kind of thing for quite some time now.









Returning now to the topic of severed legs, we all know, of course, that all those legs were taken off by shrapnel. But was there really any shrapnel in that device? Shrapnel ejected with enough force to literally tear someone's legs off would travel a very long way. So was there some kind of special, invisible shrapnel guard between the sidewalk and the street? Or was it all magically held back by that rickety picket fence? Because we know that none of the runners out in the street were injured. Even the old guy who was knocked over, as previously noted, got up, dusted himself off and crossed the finish line. And I don't recall reading about the bleachers across the street getting peppered with shrapnel. But it is perfectly obvious that not all of the ejected shrapnel would have found a nearby target. Much of it would have continued on out into the street and beyond. So where did it go? And how did it avoid hitting any of the runners or spectators?

Shortly after the Boston bombings, the thoughtful folks over at CNN put on a little demonstration of the destructive power of a pressure-cooker bomb. In the linked video, the reporter on the scene explains how, "for safety reasons, we've had to retreat to this mountaintop here. We are now over a quarter of a mile away from where we left that pressure cooker. But that's still not far enough to avoid flying shrapnel, so we're watching from inside a bunker."
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cH5gHS_o_eA

To recap then, a quarter mile is not a safe distance to be from a real pressure-cooker bomb, but people

standing just a few feet away from the Boston bombs walked away without a scratch on them. And no one beyond the flimsy temporary barrier, which was maybe ten yards from the detonation site, was affected at all. Why, by the way, haven't we seen any of the alleged shrapnel (described at various times as consisting of nails, BBs, ball bearings, or rusty roofing nails)? Does anyone remember seeing the police display any shrapnel they recovered at the scene? Or any reporters walking their cameramen over to take a look at the shrapnel embedded in the building facades and in trees? Anyone seen any Facebook photos or Youtube videos of curiosity seekers visiting the site to look for shrapnel? Or the divots that would have definitely been left by real shrapnel?

We will return to the subject of shrapnel in the next installment, after I have had time to sort through and organize all the images I have collected. I'll leave off for now with another painfully obvious question that is begged by the photo evidence: where exactly are all the alleged victims of this attack? Last I heard, the count stood at 267, with three dead and 264 wounded. But even if we take a worst-case scenario approach to analyzing the available images, maybe 10% of those victims can be accounted for. And that is being very generous. So where are all the rest? And why did the count magically grow from the relatively modest numbers that were initially reported, likely based on the number of victims reporters saw being carted away, to the ridiculous final count that we now have?

"But wait a minute," you're probably thinking, "what about the second blast site? Maybe the other 250 or so victims were over there." Maybe ... but that, as it turns out, is impossible to determine.

Wouldn't it be really weird if a bomb went off at a major event in a major American city and afterwards there wasn't a single photograph in the public domain documenting that fact? Not a single photo of the site of the explosion, or of any victims lying on the ground, or of any responders either on the scene or even headed to the scene, or of any of the victims being carried away from the scene? Almost as if the event never even took place at all, except that the explosion itself was captured on video, so it clearly did happen? Wouldn't that seem really bizarre?

That is, nevertheless, exactly what happened, and yet no one seems to find it unusual at all. There were obviously reporters and camera crews on the scene and yet no one appears to have bothered to stroll down the street to take a look at the second bombing site. Why? Was there nothing to see there? The first site was, in fairly short order, swarming with police, military personnel, medical responders, Good Samaritans, news crews, ambulances, etc. Shouldn't there have been a similar scene at the second site? Actually, since the vast majority of the victims necessarily had to come from the second site, shouldn't there have been an even larger and more chaotic scene going on there? But if so, then why did we see none of that? Why did we not even catch a passing glimpse of it?

All I have been able to come up with is a few seconds of video footage which appears to have been clipped from a European newscast. It's difficult to determine much of anything from the very brief clip, and the narration added to it is ridiculous, but there really doesn't appear to have been a whole lot going on and we are shown only a couple of apparent casualties. So we are still well short of accounting for 267 victims. And how about that survival rate? 267 struck down, many with very grave injuries, and yet we lost just three? Nearly a 99% survival rate? That, my friends, is what 'Boston Strong' is all about. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4ms5A6QH60>

One final note (for now at least): I have read in several accounts of the bombings that the explosive charges were placed so as to maximize the amount of damage they would do. That hardly seems to be the case. To the contrary, they seem to have been placed to minimize the damage. And that, I have to say, doesn't really seem like something a 'terrorist' would do.

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Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down, Part 4
May 20, 2013

You didn't think we were done here, did you? Not even close. As it turns out, much to my surprise, I haven't even thrown some of my best punches yet.

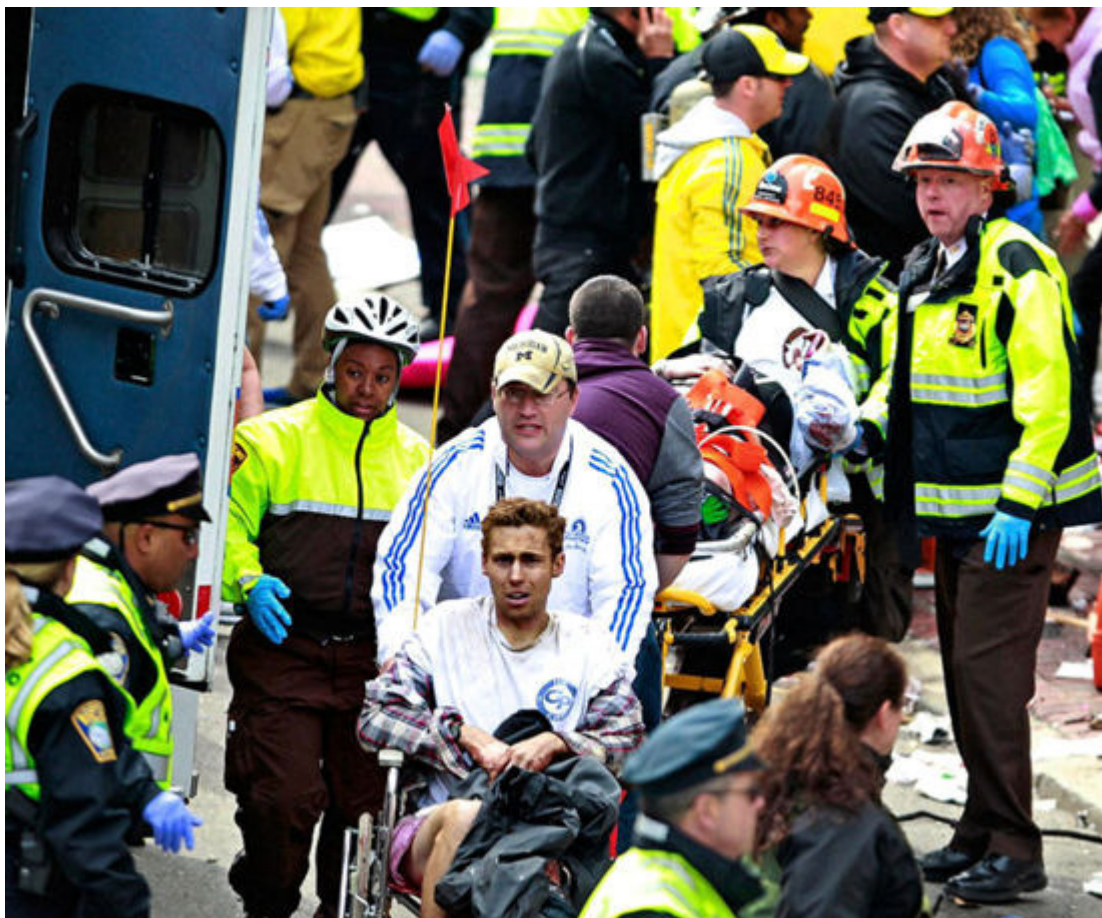
We begin, as we did on the last outing, with that image of the two women we are clearly supposed to believe are dead. After complaining in the last post that there weren't any other views of this scene available, I discovered that there is, in fact, another image in the public domain, presumably taken by the same photographer within moments of when the other image was captured.



The second shot, though technically a much better photograph, has not been widely circulated. But that is probably because it clearly reveals that the above shot was a wholly contrived, posed, stage-managed affair. In the second shot, the two 'dead' actresses don't have their heads pressed together and both have their eyes and mouths open. And maybe it's just me, but the girl who is supposed to be an EMT appears to be smiling at them! Also, we can see that the hollow-leg guy, hereafter referred to as The Other Jeff, still has his lower leg and foot.



Did you notice, by the way, that the responder who was previously in between Jeff and The Other Jeff is now assisting the guy who *didn't* just get both his legs blown off? The Other Jeff, as it turns out, was also hauled away by wheelchair, which seems to have been the preferred method of transport for people with really serious fake injuries. His leg isn't showing though so someone really dropped the ball on that photo-op.



I'm sure you noticed that in the 'dead women' photo, Ms Campbell's legs appear to be thoroughly mangled, bent at impossible angles and quite possibly detached. But they're not. She was just posed to make it look that way. We know that because when she was wheeled off, her legs were still fully attached and they had been magically straightened. Seems kind of weird that the medical personnel didn't straighten them when she was on the ground though, so that her injuries could be evaluated.



Campbell is obviously still alive while being transported, but she allegedly expired upon arrival at the medical tent. Or while she was being treated at the medical tent. The stories vary. More than one

version of the story has been told by the guy in the bloodless yellow shirt who is holding the oxygen mask. Identified as Dr. Allan Panter, he is, like Carlos, one of the heroes of this tall tale. According to legend, it was 'fate' that brought him all the way from Gainesville, Georgia (or Sylva, North Carolina, depending upon whether it is a North Carolina or a Georgia newspaper that is reporting the story) to within 20-30 feet (by his own account) of the site of the first detonation. Luckily though, he didn't get injured and was able to swiftly go to work helping others.

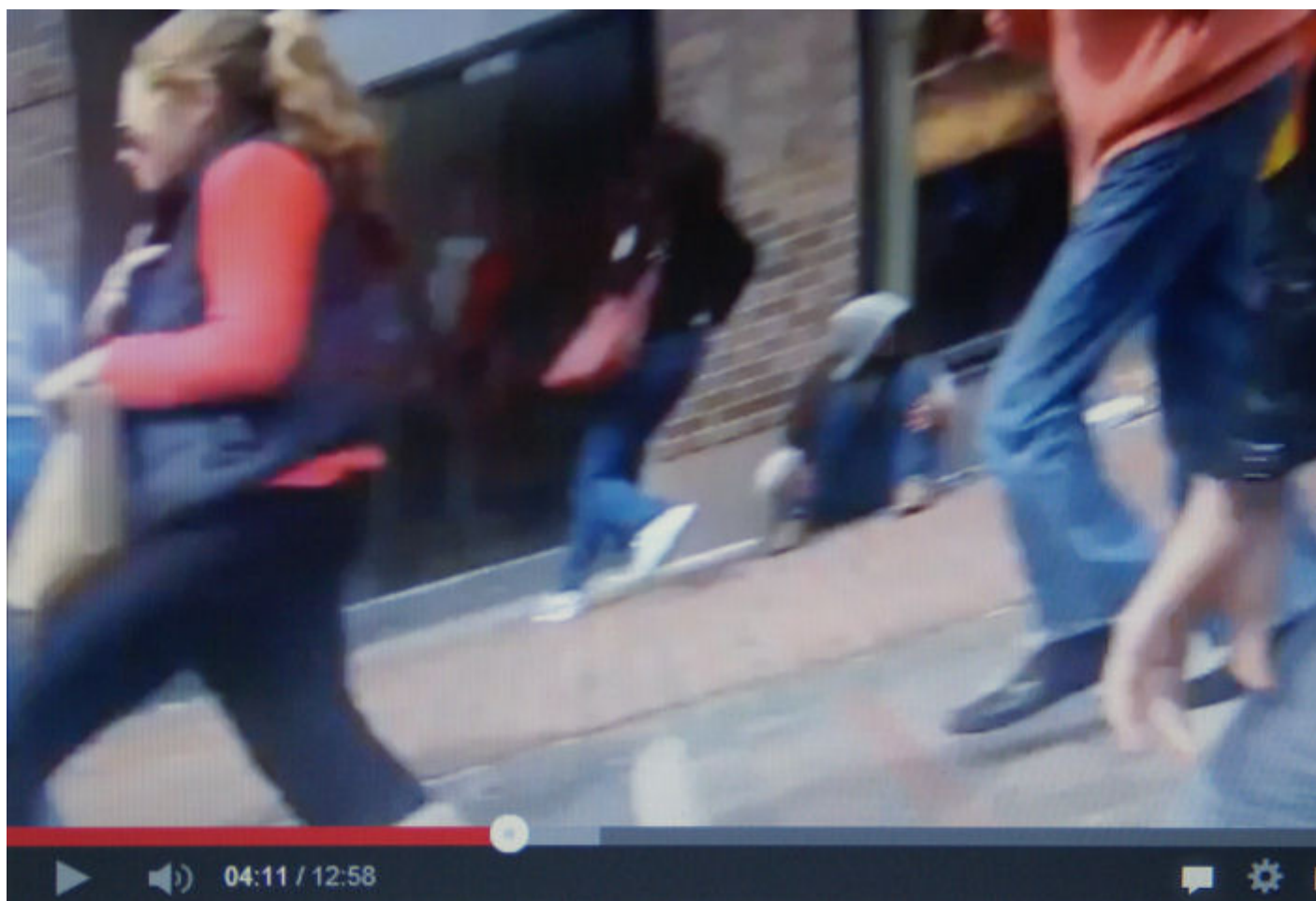
In the next installment we'll take a closer look at the good doctor, while noting here that he can also be seen in the next image, rushing to the scene ... well, not exactly rushing, but kind of casually strolling onto the scene. He can also be seen in the smiling EMT shot; he's the guy sticking his ass in Jeff's face and showing a considerable amount of concern for the two not-really-dead women.

We are, I'm guessing, supposed to believe that Campbell just kind of landed in that bloody heap due to the force of the blast. But as we can see in the next image, she was initially on her side in something of a spooning arrangement with the younger and slimmer version of Karen Rand. But that was before Carlos crushed them under the fence while he was, you know, saving people. Before the dueling corpses pic was taken, Campbell rolled over onto her back and repositioned her right leg. And her sidekick was repositioned as well.



Next up is a fascinating video shot by a spectator who was in the blast zone filming the race when the first device detonated. The post-blast footage is understandably shaky and erratic, consisting basically of a jumbled mass of images, and the conclusions drawn by the guy who put the Youtube video together are overreaching, to say the least, but when the footage is slowed down, one thing becomes very clear: at the time of the explosion, our old friend hoody was not in the position he was later photographed in. To the contrary, he was sitting down in front of Lenscrafters with his back to the wall, calmly waiting to take his place amidst the manufactured carnage. And luckily for him, he was sitting outside the windows that didn't get blown out.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLbbsirVI_k



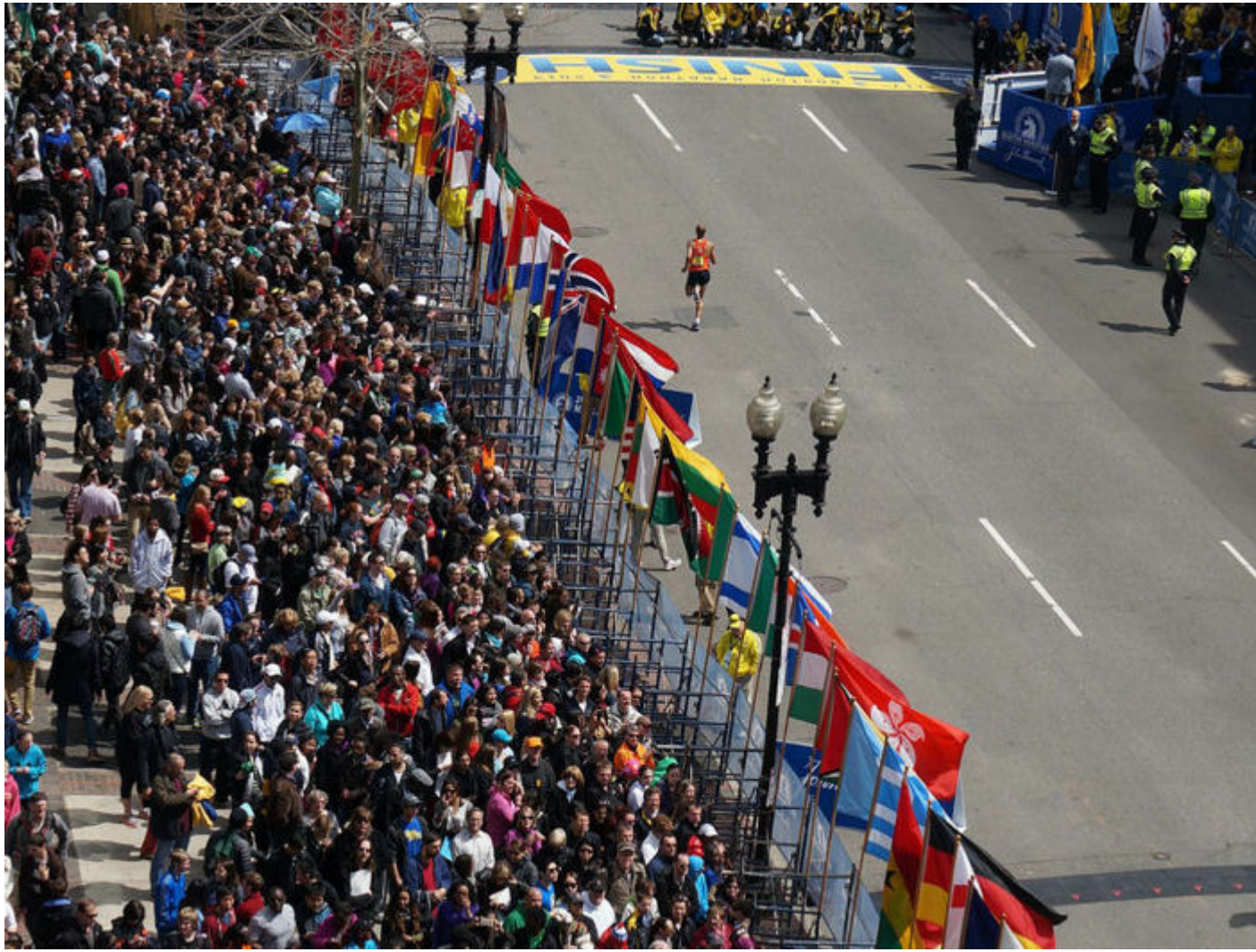
What that means, of course, is that while everyone else was moving quickly away from the scene, hoody plunged right into the midst of the smoke cloud. And as we already know, he didn't do that to offer assistance to victims; he did it to play the role of a victim himself. And amazingly enough, he was able to move himself into position despite having two exposed femurs, shredded legs and a 'degloved' right hand!

While it is impossible to say for sure since we have previously only seen him in a hood and sunglasses, I'm guessing that this is hoody being wheeled off to a waiting ambulance. Notice that they had plenty of sheets and blankets on hand to completely wrap him from neck to toe, but they didn't have anything available to cover Ms Campbell's leg wounds. You don't suppose that could be because they wanted Campbell's graphic wounds on full display while seeking to hide the fact that hoody didn't have a mark on him, do you? Hoody, of course, needed oxygen, though Jeff and The Other Jeff were able to man-up and do without.



Let's change course now and talk for a little bit about what thoroughly inept 'terrorists' those wild and crazy Tsarnaev brothers were. They had the right idea – engineer a mass-casualty incident at a high-profile event in a major American city. That is, after all, what 'terrorists' do, isn't it? And that is what our illustrious Department of Homeland Security trains for. But these two particular 'terrorists' made two major, colossal mistakes, which we will now take a look at.

Error #1: *timing is everything*. A few hours before the devices detonated, there was a huge crowd gathered near the finish line, as can be seen in the next photo. They were there to see the winners from the various divisions cross the finish line. But no one really cares who crosses the finish line a couple hours after the winners have been crowned, so the crowds had dwindled to a considerable degree by the time of the explosions. So a 'terrorist' who had put a little thought into it would most likely have placed and detonated the bombs a couple hours earlier.



Also on hand a couple hours before the blasts was a whole shitload of professional sports photographers. You can see them in the image above, kneeling at the finish line while waiting to get their money shots. And there were many, many more on what is known as the photo-bridge just beyond the finish line. But they of course were long gone as well, depriving us of potentially thousands of high-resolution photos of what really happened that day.

If someone had placed a bomb on the pavement in the midst of the dense finish line crowd we see above, then it seems reasonable to conclude that we would in fact have had the kind of mass-casualty event described by the media, with scores of serious injuries and far more than three dead. But that would only have been true if the ‘terrorists’ had not committed Error #2: *don’t forget to pack some shrapnel in the bomb.*

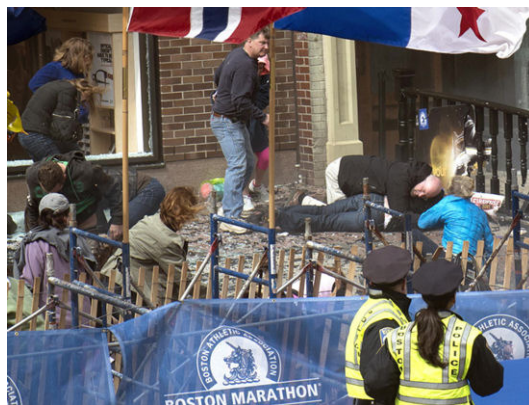
This next image was initially a bit baffling to me. What I was having trouble with was figuring out why the shrapnel shield this victim was standing behind didn’t protect her. As can be seen, the paper shield appears to have successfully stopped all the low-flying shrapnel, with nary a tear or puncture to be seen. So I couldn’t figure out how she had been hit. But then I remembered that this was a special kind of magic shrapnel that had the ability to turn corners to seek out victims.



The next image confused me for the opposite reason; the shrapnel shield is clearly sagging where the blast has occurred, leaving a number of people vulnerable, but yet they all seem to be okay. I guess the shield was still high enough to protect their lower extremities.



Here we see another view of the thin, nylon mesh (I'm guessing here) shrapnel guard, which survived the blast without a single penetration. The wood railing just ten feet or so from the blast site also held up pretty well. And it's not even attached to the ground, by the way. It is a temporary, movable assembly. And it not only wasn't damaged, it's still standing and didn't even move. And the brick façade of the building appears to be shrapnel-proof as well. Even the lowest portions of it.



Given the absurdity of these images, is there really any room left for reasonable debate on the topic of shrapnel? Side-by-side below is essentially the same moment in time captured in two different images. On one side of the temporary barrier is a horrifying scene of bodies along the fence line cut to ribbons by shrapnel. And on the other side there was not a single injury of any magnitude – not to any runners, or to any race officials, or to any spectators, or to any of the workers on the course – despite the undeniable fact that the only additional protection the people on the outside of the barrier had was about ten feet of air.



Unless we choose to hide our heads in the sand, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that there was no shrapnel in what was essentially an oversized version of a Red Devil safe-and-sane smoke bomb. And that necessarily means that none of those graphic injuries were real. Some innocent bystanders were likely injured by flying glass or by being trampled by others, but no one, including Jeff Bauman, lost a leg.

Losing both your legs at such a young age, I have to say, would really suck. But you know what sucks even more than that? Ruining your favorite shirt on the same day you get your legs blown off.



Predictably enough, I have received email berating me for stooping so low as to attack the victims of this tragedy. It should be perfectly clear though by now, to anyone who is paying attention, that I have done no such thing. The people in those graphic, blood-soaked images were not the victims of this attack. You and I were.

That's all for now, but there is more to come. Stay tuned.

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Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 5)

May 22, 2013

I don't think that it is any big secret that I am not much of a fan of *Fox News*. But every once in a while, even Fox lets a little bit of truth slip out, though certainly not intentionally. Take for example a fascinating Youtube clip which features a befuddled Shepard Smith (at least I think it is Smith; he doesn't appear on camera) trying to make sense of the live aerial footage he, along with the audience, is viewing.

The first couple minutes is a ground level view of people rushing back and forth. At about the 2:20 mark is where it starts to get interesting. That is when our old friend Jeff Bauman is wheeled out with his gruesome wounds on display. Smith appears to be genuinely horrified by what his network is splashing across the screen (which is, of course, the reaction we were all supposed to have), after which he begins speculating on what has just happened: "We do not see an enormous amount of structural damage at all. What we see is windows that are blown out and *people who are injured who came from behind those glass walls.*" (emphasis added)

The "glass walls" he is referring to, of course, would be the blown-out glass storefront of the Lenscrafters outlet, which raises a rather provocative question: did Smith actually see footage of the actors emerging from within Lenscrafters to take their places on the pavement? Is that where the prosthetics, make-up and costuming were handled?

Smith then offers up the theory that the explosion was in what he assumes to be a hotel, and that it could possibly have been the result of a gas leak in the kitchen. His confusion is entirely understandable given that there was a noticeable lack of any indication that there had been an explosion out on the pavement, including a serious shortage of visible victims. Smith then listens in as local *Fox* reporter Maria Stephanos talks with the anchor for the local *Fox* affiliate, who is identified only as Mike. Stephanos quickly dismisses the second blast as insignificant. She then goes on to say that the first blast did not occur at ground level, but rather midway up the building. Mike interjects, "So, Maria, again just to make this point, since you were right there, you're saying from what you could see, it didn't seem like the explosion happened on the ground but actually happened in the

building?” To which Maria quickly responds, “Exactly, Mike, in the middle of a building. *I was right there*. I turned around and you saw the plume of smoke in the middle of the building.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0OYvjnZW3A>

So the bomb went off midway up the building, but it blew off everyone’s legs?! That doesn’t sound quite right. What does sound entirely plausible though is that a smoke bomb was detonated over the heads of the crowd, providing cover for the actors, in full wardrobe and make-up, to swiftly emerge from Lenscrafters to take up their positions on the pavement. And if that sounds crazy to you, blame *Fox News*. They’re the ones who reported it.

Below is a shot of the scene of the crime not long after the smoke bomb was detonated. We’ve seen this shot or ones very similar to it before, but our focus has been on the actors in the scene, all of whom are basically within the center triangle. But let’s shift our focus instead to the stragglers on the scene at the bottom of the image who aren’t actors. I’ve enlarged that area for you to make it easier to ascertain what is going on.





Did you notice that pretty much all the people along the fence line who aren't running away, beginning with the bald guy with sunglasses and continuing down to the guy in the red jacket and blue cap, are all looking in the same direction? And it's not at the ground, where the bomb supposedly detonated and where all the alleged victims are laid out. No, they are all looking at a spot about midway up the building, above where all the fake victims are sprawled out. That's a pretty strange coincidence, isn't it?

It would appear then that there were no backpack bombs. And if there were no backpack bombs, then there obviously were no backpack bombers. So it really doesn't matter if the Tsarnaev brothers were among the spectators that day, and it doesn't matter whether they were or were not wearing backpacks, and it doesn't even matter whether Jeff Bauman ever makes up his mind about whether he saw one of the brothers set his pack down, because none of that has anything at all to do with what happened in Boston on April 15.

The Tsarnaev brothers did not detonate smoke bombs above the heads of spectators. The Tsarnaev brothers did not hire a bunch of crisis actors and outfit them with make-up and prosthetics. The Tsarnaev brothers did not ensure that there would be fake responders like Carlos Arredondo on the

scene to rush to the aid of the fake victims. And the Tsarnaev brothers did not see to it that all avenues of the American media would report the story the way Washington wanted it reported.

Let's now return, as promised in the last post, to the tale of the heroic Dr. Allan Panter, who gave Carlos a serious run for his money for the title of 'the most brazen liar to emerge from the Boston debacle.' One breathless account of Panter's heroics (the one that claims that he is an ER doc in North Carolina), reads as follows: "Now, Panter steps into hell ... The bombs, which authorities say were stuffed with ball bearings and nails, have ripped through the bystanders, creating what Panter describes as a 'mangled mess.' One of the first victims Panter (sic) treats is a man dug out from the street-front rubble. His legs now end at the knee. Nearby, a young woman in her mid-20s goes into cardiac arrest. Panter works to keep her airways open. Someone else does CPR. They get a pulse. The victim is loaded on a stretcher and rushed to an impromptu medical tent. Panter later hears that she dies."

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2013/04/16/3986491/fate-puts-doctor-where-he-was.html>

Does anyone recall seeing Jeff Bauman being dug out from under any rubble? Or seeing anything in any of the images that might be characterized as a "mangled mess" of bodies?

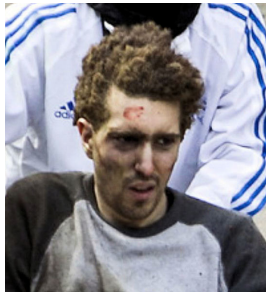
The woman referenced is, of course, Krystle Campbell. In another version of events, Panter is described as an ER doc from Gainesville, Georgia, and the Krystle Campbell tale is told as follows: "Allan Panter spoke with ABC News and he said he and another volunteer worked on a seriously injured woman right after the blast. 'I started trying to control the airway, another gentleman started doing CPR and we worked until we got a stretcher there,' said Panter. 'We had a pulse until we got her to the medical tent and then we lost her.'"

<http://www.accessnorthga.com/detail.php?n=260525>

So I'm a little confused. Did Panter leave her at the tent and then later learn that she had expired, or did she die upon arrival at the tent? Perhaps some of Panter's interviews can clear that up, such as this one where, referring to Jeff Bauman, he boldly claims that, "a lady that we pulled out from under him was in traumatic arrest, basically. And we started working on her in between trying to put tourniquets around the gentleman who was laying right beside of her."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVhrv6JCwqM>

Oh, I see. So Bauman was actually lying on top of Campbell. And so both of them, I suppose, were buried under the rubble. She must have been pretty hard to get to. I guess that's why Panter ignored her for so long. But once he had dug the two of them out, he worked on them side-by-side, which of course is directly contradicted by numerous photos. Panter though has a script to follow, the evidence be damned, so he also claims that, "the gentleman who had his legs blown off had singed facial hair, so he obviously got a lot of the heat from it." Obviously.



In another interview, Panter described how he quickly swung into action “and just started helping with the other bystanders, pulling people actually apart, because they were laying in a pile basically, with mangled limbs.” Once again, Panter is describing exactly what we have seen in the available photos, so there is no reason to suspect that he is anything other than a great American hero. Of that other great American hero, Jeff Bauman, Panter has said that, “He was pretty much as you’d describe, in shock. He was mumbling words, but not coherently.”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wI7_lBm4d2A

Not coherently? Really? Then how did he manage to notify two different people that he knew who was responsible for the bombings, resulting in the FBI pacing the hospital floor like an expectant father while Jeff was in surgery? Not only is everyone involved in this incident lying, they can’t even manage to all tell the same lies. And amazingly enough, despite not taking the time to roll up his sleeves before rushing into action, and despite allegedly performing triage on the two bloodiest and most seriously injured victims (Bauman and Campbell), Dr. Cleansleeves nevertheless managed to keep his shirt almost completely blood-free.



Dr. Cleansleeves also didn't bother with slipping on the official blue responder gloves. Many of the other emergency personnel didn't either. And *none* of the medical personnel on the scene, without exception, bothered with surgical masks or eye protection either. And that, dear readers, is another clear giveaway that this entire incident was staged.

There was supposedly blood on the scene everywhere, flowing from scores of victims. A good number of those victims allegedly had explosively amputated limbs and were thus necessarily spurting blood everywhere. And yet none of the trained medical personnel on the job – not the doctors, not the nurses, not the EMTs – all of whom should have been well-versed on the dangers of blood-borne pathogens, bothered to don a surgical mask or eye protection. We live in an era when the family dentist will not take a peek in your mouth without a mask and eye protection and yet we are supposed to believe that all these

unprotected medical professionals fearlessly waded through rivers of blood to perform triage on patients whose femoral arteries were spraying blood like garden hoses?

And it certainly cannot be argued that supply was a problem. As has been noted in numerous media reports, the medical tent set up just beyond the finish line was essentially a 100-bed field hospital. Masks and eye protection should have been just as easy to come by as those ubiquitous blue gloves. And yet after reviewing more images from that day than I care to remember, I have not seen a single medical responder wearing a mask or eye protection. Not one.

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Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 6)

May 27, 2013

If the official story of what occurred in Boston on April 15 is true, then there should be no compelling reason for the various victims and responders who have spoken to the media to not be telling the truth. Human memory is, of course, not infallible, so we should expect to find some discrepancies here and there, but overall the stories that have been told should be in compliance with (1) the official story, (2) the photographic record, and (3) the stories told by other victims and survivors.

But we already know that that is not the case because we have already heard Dr. Allan Panter, Carlos Arredondo, Jeff Bauman, and Hoody all weigh in with a variety of lies. And they are not the only members of the Boston Marathon Liars Club. There are plenty more. In fact, it appears to be all but impossible to find anyone who played a high-profile role that day who isn't lying. Take, for example, Dr. Panter's wife, Theresa, who posted the following fanciful note on Facebook.



I'm having a hard time figuring out who the unidentified deceased male might be. There are no dead men in any of the photographs and according to the official story, the only male to die was an eight-year-old boy who was at the second bomb site, which Panter wasn't working at. So we're going to need some clarification on that. Also, as we saw in the last post, the photos do not in any way support her ridiculous claim that the good doctor was "covered in blood."

Let's check in now with Dr. Martin Levine, who also just happened to be on hand to serve as a first responder: "When we got there we saw that one of the initial individuals had lost both of his legs. I saw multiple people with only the upper part of their leg left ... These are devastating, horrendous injuries ... I saw such horrendous things that I don't know how they could have saved any of the limbs .." Wow! That sounds just horrifying. But where did he see all of that? It certainly wasn't in front of the Lenscrafters outlet. Below is a shot of Dr. Levine in action.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZeLqxxNPlo>



Like Dr. Panter, Dr. Spielberg went to work without rolling up his sleeves, and yet he somehow managed to keep that white jacket absolutely spotless. I wonder if Dr. Spielberg can answer a couple of questions for us? Like why, if there were numerous people bleeding out from explosively amputated limbs, as you claim in your interview, did you abandon them to help transport someone who still has both her legs attached? Were the other four people unable to carry that stretcher without you? Do you think that was the best possible use of your time given that you are, you know, a doctor and all?

Let's now meet Dr. Albert Pendleton, identified as an orthopedic surgeon who was – wouldn't you know it? – hanging around the finish line. Dr. Pendleton has told some real whoppers as well. Speaking about Bauman - because everyone likes to comment on Bauman, he being the only apparent amputee that anyone actually saw that day – Pendleton claimed that he saw “two people carrying a guy with blood just coming, spurting out of his legs.” Really? So those photos and videos of him being pushed in a wheelchair while leaving no blood trail are all fake? Pendleton has also claimed that, “there was (sic) tons of mangled extremities on the ground.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IeZCQNSx3A>

Yes, doctor, we have seen them in the photos. Severed, mangled legs lying in piles everywhere. So many that, from what I hear, doctors accidentally reattached a number of them onto the wrong bodies.

As with most things though, so long as you don't end up with any leftover parts, it's safe to assume that everything has been assembled more-or-less correctly, so it's all good.

Dr. Chad Beattie was also loitering around the medical tent at the finish line when the fake bombs went off. His account of what he saw and what he did goes something like this: "Beattie ran toward the area where the first bomb exploded on Boylston Street. 'I was running through a cloud of smoke,' Beattie says. 'When the smoke cleared, there was a pile of bodies. The first victim I saw was a traumatic amputee. I took my belt off and made a tourniquet.' While the doctor didn't learn the fate of the first victim he encountered, the memory of the woman's deep blue eyes is etched upon his memory. After hearing news reports, Beattie now believes the victim was Krystle Campbell, who grew up in Medford. As Beattie rushed to aid victims, he saw medical personnel place a white sheet over the body of 8 year-old Martin Richard. He also watched as Lu Lingzi, a graduate student from China, was pronounced dead when efforts to revive the young woman were unsuccessful. 'I am glad I was there to help,' the doctor says, adding he also made several splints for broken bones out of wooden fence slats and cardboard congratulatory signs he found scattered in the debris."

<http://www.southcoasttoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130516/LIFE/305160323>

Dr. Beattie sure was a busy guy. Like everyone else on the scene, he of course worked on Campbell, though while doing so he failed to notice that she wasn't actually a traumatic amputee. And amazingly enough, he saw all three of the alleged fatalities, which I guess means that he was at both bomb sites simultaneously. I'm curious though to know how well those cardboard splints worked out. I'm also curious as to why we didn't see any of the alleged victims wearing any of those improvised splints he fashioned for them.

Dr. Sushrut Jangi was on the scene as well, and he also experienced the horror of that day: "Through the haze, the stretchers arrived; when I saw the first of the wounded, I was overwhelmed with nausea. An injured woman — I couldn't tell whether she was conscious — lay on the stretcher, her legs entirely blown off. Blood poured out of the arteries of her torso; I saw shredded arteries, veins, ragged tissue and muscle ... More victims followed: someone whose legs had been charred black, another man with a foot full of metal shrapnel, a third with white bone shining through the thigh. I watched in shock as the victims were rushed down the center aisle to ambulances at the far end of the tent."

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1305299>

I wonder who the woman was who had had both legs blown completely off and was spraying blood everywhere? You would think that she wouldn't be that hard to spot in some of the photos taken that day. I'm also wondering who the person was whose legs were charred black, because this is the first I have heard about someone suffering such injuries.

Dr. Richard Guynes came all the way from Jackson, Mississippi to hang out at the medical tent. And he, of course, also worked to save Krystle Campbell: "I did have the opportunity to try to help a lady. Krystle Campbell, I believe is her name, who did ultimately pass away, unfortunately. She was already in shock and had bled a great deal before she made it into the tent. Her face, I've seen it on television.

She looks completely different than when I saw her in the tent,' said Guynes." It's really a shame that with all those doctors making heroic efforts to save her, Ms Campbell still didn't pull through.

<http://www.msnewsnow.com/story/22008891/jackson-doctor-details-working-at-boston-marathon-medical-tent>

Dr. Gregory Antoine claims to have treated Jeff Bauman in the medical tent, which I guess he did very quickly while Bauman was being rolled through: "Of dozens Antoine helped treat, two stand out: One was a man who had both his legs blown off. As Antoine worked on him, drapes concealed everything but the man's mangled limbs. A couple of days later, Antoine realized it was the person in the iconic photo — Jeff Bauman being wheeled to a makeshift medical tent."

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/05/19/boston-marathon-doctor-mississippi/2324305/>

The drapes are a nice touch. Now let's check in with Jim Asaiante, a former Army nurse, and his sidekick, Stephen Segatore: "Asaiante and Segatore rushed from the medical tent to the finish line to tend to the wounded. The stench of burning flesh hung in the air. Blood pooled on the sidewalk. People bleeding from lost limbs were already being carried toward the tent, so the two nurses stopped and headed back."

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/22/health/boston-first-responders/index.html>

The stench of burning flesh? That's a new one. And somehow the photographers and camera operators missed all those people with lost limbs being carried to the tent immediately after the blast. Here's some more from the same article: "Segatore had just worked to save a man who had lost both his legs when a woman [identified in the report as Campbell] arrived in critical condition, struggling to breathe ... Along with a doctor and emergency medical technician, Segatore scanned her wounds, mostly on the left side of her body. One leg was twisted backwards, and she had a wound near her left hip. She had black markings on her head, possibly residue from being so close to the blast."

So he too worked on Jeff in the medical tent? And Campbell as well? Weren't we initially sold the story that Bauman was rushed straight through the tent and into a waiting ambulance? And what's with Campbell's leg being twisted backwards? It was straight on the gurney, so how did it get twisted backwards again? And I'm having trouble seeing those black markings on her head in the image below, which I'm guessing was taken while Dr. Panter was working on Jeff and Krystle side-by-side, after she had been pulled out from under him.



In another report, Segatore had more to say about his alleged experiences that day: "I ran out and saw people who were missing legs and part of their face and part of their abdomen," he said Monday evening. 'My training prepared me for what to do, but nothing can ever really prepare you for what you see.'" Elsewhere in the same report we find this: "One of his first patients was a young woman, he thinks maybe 20 or 22 years old, whose abdomen was torn open. Her left leg was broken and facing the wrong way and she wasn't breathing." And this: "Working alongside Segatore in Tent A was Jim Asaiante, a nurse in the emergency room at the UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, Massachusetts. Asaiante didn't run out after the explosion."

<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/16/us/boston-bombings-nurses>

Now I'm getting really confused. So Campbell's abdomen was torn open? Was that airbrushed out in the pics of her where it can clearly be seen that there is no damage to her abdomen? Just like the black spots on her head were apparently airbrushed out? And why did Segatore claim in one report that Campbell was struggling to breathe while in another he says that she wasn't breathing at all? Also, why does one report claim that Asaiante rushed to the scene while another claims that he stayed at the tent? And where exactly in the available photos might we find those people who had part of their faces and abdomens blown off?

Is it common practice, by the way, for a woman who is allegedly in traumatic arrest and just minutes away from death to be passed around like a hot potato to every doctor and nurse in the greater Boston area?

Nurse Alix Coletta saw "Three people carr[y] in a woman. One of her legs was blown off. Someone was holding it. The woman was 'dripping blood all over' and 'wailing in pain.'" So now we know why there were no severed limbs at the crime scene – people apparently picked them up and carried them to the medical tent, where they were probably running a 'cash for legs' program.

<http://beyond.phablettrend.com/marathon-nurse-tells-of-gore-beyond-anything-shed-seen-usa-today/>

A *New York Daily News* report published the day of the marathon is filled with what appear to be completely fraudulent 'witness' accounts, such as the claim by a John Ross that "Somebody's leg flew by my head." And the claim by a Tim Davey that he was in the medical tent when "They just started bringing people in with no limbs." No limbs at all? So they were just torsos? Then there is the tale told by a Lance Svendsen, who saw "one lady who looked like she didn't make it. Another gentlemen, he was a runner, and he was missing both of his legs below the knee. He was oddly calm, but his family all around him were freaking out."

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/explosions-dozen-injured-boston-marathon-article-1.1317296>

No clue who that might be. Jeff Bauman wasn't a runner and he didn't have his family all around him. And no runners were actually injured at all that day. These appear to be completely manufactured statements from people who likely don't actually exist.

Who else might have an interesting story to tell? Finish line coordinator Tom Meagher boldly claimed that he "actually saw bodies flying." Then there is Rhode Island State Trooper Roupen Bastajian, who "started running toward the blast. And there were people all over the floor ... We started grabbing tourniquets and started tying legs. A lot of people amputated. ... At least 25 to 30 people have at least one leg missing, or an ankle missing, or two legs missing."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rErM32jQjU>

<http://news.providencejournal.com/breaking-news/2013/04/2-killed-as-2-bombs-explode-at-boston-marathon.html>

No shit, Roupen? 25 to 30 people with amputated limbs all in one place? Someone should have gotten a photo of that! I'm wondering, by the way, if the people who were missing an ankle were also missing a foot, or if it was just the ankles that were blown off? And were there any people who were missing knees but still had their lower legs? Just curious.

As absurd accounts go, you'd have to search pretty thoroughly to find one that tops this: "Bruce Mendelsohn, 44, was in an office above the finish line, celebrating the successful marathon of his brother, an assistant U.S. Attorney in Newark, when the blast threw him off the couch, he said." So a blast that didn't knock people over who were standing 15-20 feet away knocked him right off his couch? I hope he wasn't seriously injured.

http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2013/04/boston_marathon_explosions_sta.html

We haven't heard from Cowboy Carlos for a while now, so let's check in with him. In reference to Bauman's favorite shirt, Arredondo has said that, "this dark area was on fire" when he got to Jeff. Really? So not only was the poor guy bleeding out from both legs, but he was actually on fire as well,

and still no one came to his assistance for several minutes? What does a guy have to do to get a helping hand in Boston these days?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK7VXjeHoNA&NR=1>

Speaking of Carlos, he recently revised his story via a Facebook post. Actually, it's probably more accurate to say that his handlers had him revise his story in an effort to explain away some major discrepancies. His new story goes a little something like this: "This is Carlos. I want you all to hear my version of what happened at the Boston Marathon because though many journalists did do a good job, there were several stories that I have read recently that had some errors ... I was at street level and Mel was in the stands ... As soon as I heard the bombings, I jumped fences and began tearing the barricade fences out of the way so rescuers could get to the injured. Once on the other side, I took several pictures with my camera. Then I saw many injured, tried to comfort some and then went to Jeff who was alert but terribly wounded. I ripped clothing to give to an MD who applied tourniquets to Jeff Bauman. An Asian women was nearby with an empty wheelchair. I helped to lift Jeff onto the chair. Everyone went running but one of the tourniquets was caught in the wheelchair so we stopped. I ripped off the extra fabric and held the bandage (what many people thought was an artery) until we reached an ambulance. I stayed with Jeff until the ambulance where again I lifted him into the ambulance. The personnel asked for his name so I asked Jeff his name. He said Jeff Bauman and began spelling his last name and then he left for the hospital."

<https://www.facebook.com/supportjeffandfamily/posts/153609801488043>

So Carlos wasn't pinching his femoral artery shut? Then why did he even need to be there? What purpose was he actually serving? Oh yeah ... that's right ... I almost forgot that that 'iconic' wheelchair shot wouldn't have been nearly so iconic without the cowboy hero.

It's good to know that, before offering help to any of the victims, Carlos paused first to grab his camera and take some shots as keepsakes. You don't see that kind of thing everyday, I suppose. And it's also good to know that the procession was stopped to free one of the tourniquets that was caught in the wheelchair, except that in the money shots taken after the adjustment the tourniquet can still be seen tangled in the right front wheel. We've also learned that Carlos only *helped* lift Jeff into the wheelchair, even though Jeff has given Carlos sole credit for doing so. And we've learned that Bauman not only gave his name to Carlos but also spelled it for him, and yet Carlos couldn't remember it when interviewed not long after.

Some of Carlos' earlier accounts, like this one, were a bit more colorful: "I jumped the fence after the first explosions and all I saw was a puddle of blood and people with lost limbs. I saw adults, much younger than myself -- ladies, men, pretty much everyone was knocked out ... It broke everybody's legs. Two ladies at my left side were knocked unconscious. They lost their legs. I was putting pieces of clothing on their legs to stop the bleeding and called for assistance. Someone came and we helped get them in wheelchairs."

http://abcnews.go.com/Health/cowboy-hat-hero-boston-marathon-watches-carnage-losing/story?id=18963955#.UaJL7Jxj_tI

So everyone was out cold? All the photos make it appear as if none of the victims, not even Krystle Campbell, were unconscious, but I suppose it is best if we trust what Carlos has to say rather than relying on our own eyes. Carlos did though forget to mention that he had an accomplice that day, a certain John Mixon. As far as I know, Arredondo has never really mentioned Mixon's heroic deeds, but Mixon hasn't been shy about praising his cowboy buddy. The two were supposedly there to support the Run for the Fallen organization, which, given that it has these two poseurs as members, probably isn't what it is supposed to be.

The first blast, according to Mixon, "knocked me right out of the bleachers." The blast was so strong that it knocked Mixon out of the bleachers, threw Bruce Mendelsohn off his office couch, and knocked over a runner who was about 100 years old. According to one account, "Mixon and Carlos Arredondo ... charged across the street to help the spectators who had lined up behind a snow fence four and five deep to watch the finish. What they encountered was worse than anything Mixon, a Vietnam veteran, had seen overseas. 'When we got over there, it was just a pile of bodies – people with legs missing,' Mixon said Monday evening. 'It was absolutely like a war scene. This was worse, because it was all innocent people, just defenseless. They were just lying in a pile, gunpowder all over them, burnt.'"

http://www.pressherald.com/news/it-was-absolutely-like-a-war-scene-it-was-all-innocent-people-defenseless_2013-04-16.html

Worse even than Vietnam? That's kind of hard to believe. And what's with the victims being covered with gunpowder? Doesn't that usually burn up in the blast? Isn't the instantaneous combustion of the gunpowder what propels all the shrapnel? Was one of the 'terrorists' walking around sprinkling gunpowder on people so that they could then light them on fire?

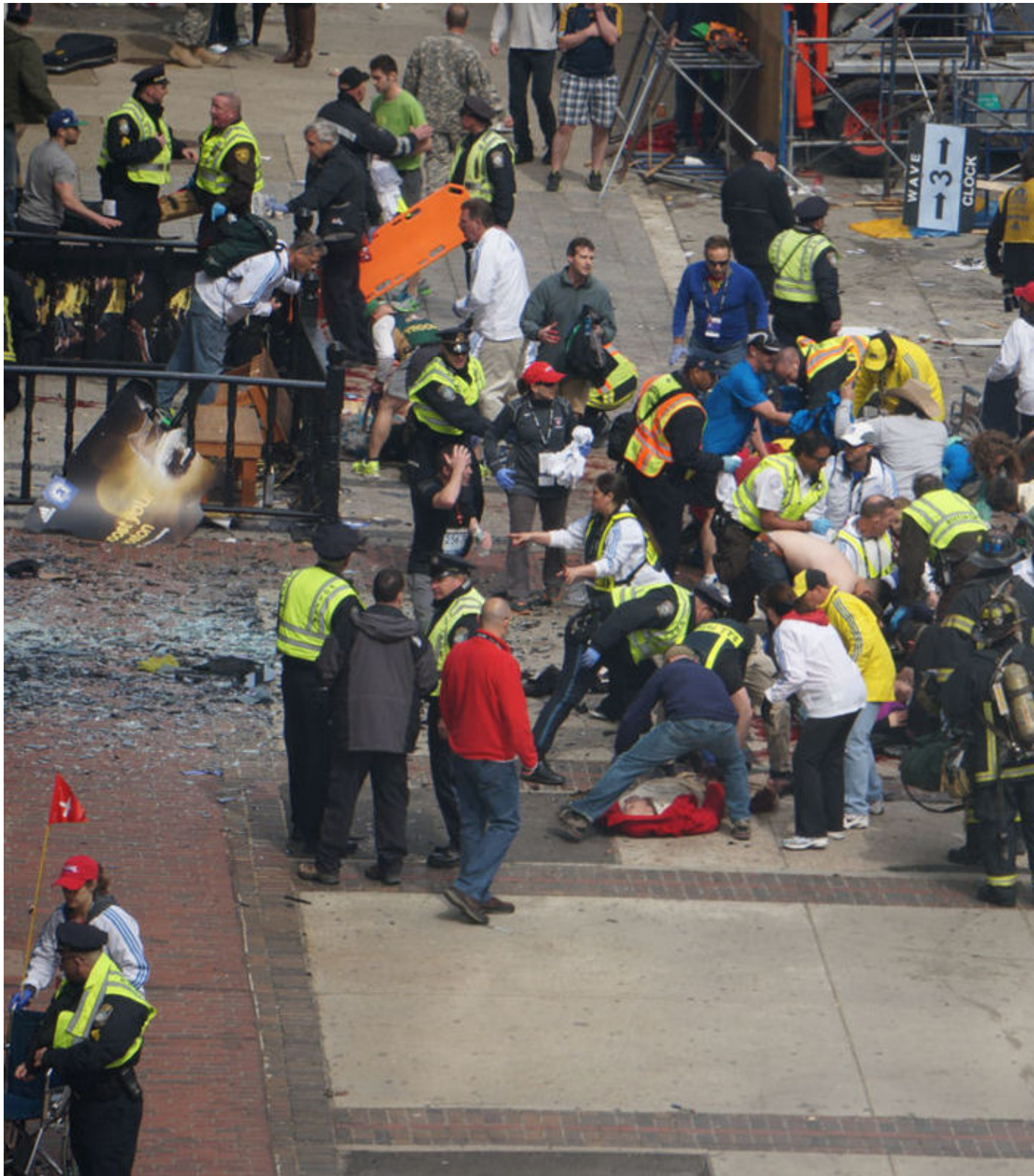
In another account, Mixon "caught up to Arredondo, who had vaulted the fence and was kneeling beside a man whose legs had been blown off. 'Carlos was putting a tourniquet on him made from a flag,' Mixon said. 'He was a real hero.' Mixon said he and Arredondo helped lift the man into a wheelchair and then the two men lost each other. 'I lost Carlos in the crowd,' Mixon said. 'When he made it back to me later, he was covered in blood.'"

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20130418-NEWS-304180335>

So Mixon helped out with Bauman as well? Jeff sure had a lot of guardian angels that day. But what, I'm naturally wondering, happened to that flag tourniquet? I've been thinking that there was something missing from that 'iconic' wheelchair shot and now I know exactly what it was. How ballsy is it, by the way, to claim that Carlos was "covered in blood" when we can see for ourselves in the widely circulated images that he clearly isn't? But that didn't stop Theresa Panter from telling the very same lie about her husband, so why should it stop Mixon?

The reality is that none of the responders on the scene that day came anywhere close to being "covered in blood." In fact, the vast majority of them didn't get so much as a single drop of blood on their clothes, or even on their hands. In the scene below, for example, you'd be hard-pressed to pick out a

single responder with any blood on them at all. You might also notice that neither Dr. Spielberg nor Carlos are actually helping anyone.



Returning now to Mixon, he has also said that what he experienced was “was like a war zone ... It was like 9/11 with a front-row seat.”

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/articles/20130418-NEWS-304180335>

Yes, it was exactly like 9-11 ... except that there were allegedly three people dead rather than 3,000, and instead of billions of dollars in property damage, there were a few broken windows. But other than that, it was exactly like 9-11 all over again.

Yet another report holds that “Mixon said Arredondo, a Costa Rica native, went to a man who lost both his legs in the explosion and fashioned a tourniquet out of a T-shirt. When a woman brought around a wheelchair, Mixon and Arredondo helped get the man on and Arredondo and a medic led him to an ambulance. In some images, Arredondo appears to be pinching the victim’s severed artery shut.”

<http://bangordailynews.com/2013/04/16/news/bangor/boston-rescuer-in-cowboy-hat-has-ties-to-bangor/>

So the tourniquet wasn’t fashioned out of a flag? Uncle Sam obviously hired some really bad liars to take part in this operation. Can’t you people just choose a lie and stick with it? I know it’s kind of hard when all the photographic evidence contradicts you, but the newer lies aren’t any better than the older ones so you may as well stick to your original lies.

Mixon has told at least one other wholly original lie, which goes like this: “All the bodies were there and people were struggling, like, to climb over it -- they were kind of trapped with nowhere to go.”

http://abcnews.go.com/Health/boston-marathon-heroes-combine-risk-generosity/story?id=18969913#.UaJMTZxj_tK

So the temporary fencing was hastily torn down to free the victims? Because they were trapped behind it with nowhere to go? All the non-actors on the scene, of course, had no trouble at all getting the hell out of Dodge, but all the people Mixon saw were clawing their way through the fencing.

Let’s move along now to Mery Daniel, who has a rather tragic story to tell: “‘And I was on the floor and I still didn’t understand what was happening,’ she recalled. ‘When I looked next to me there was a woman, with the arms were gone. And that’s when I understood something very tragic had just happened.’ Mery lost her left leg and much of the back of her right leg was blown away. Unconscious, she was rushed to Massachusetts General Hospital. It was two days before she woke and discovered the extent of her injuries.”

<http://www.wbur.org/2013/05/14/bombing-victim-daniel> <http://merydaniel.com/>

You all already know Mery, but you know her as Redcoat and you undoubtedly had no idea she had suffered such terrible injuries. I'm really starting to wonder when all the medical malpractice lawsuits are going to be filed. Because if I were transported to the hospital in the same condition as Mery in the image below, and I didn't wake up for two days and when I did, I was missing a leg, I don't know that I'd be too happy about that. I think I might have asked the doctors if maybe we could just try a few stitches rather than going straight for the bone saw.



By the way, what do you suppose happened to that woman who was next to Mery who had both her arms blown off? We haven't heard much about her. She doesn't appear to be in any of the available images and the media has never mentioned her. She most likely died, because if shrapnel ripped off both her arms, it must have shredded her torso as well. Or did it just hit both her arms but not between them? This was pretty selective shrapnel, after all, so I suppose that is possible.

I'm guessing that she probably met Jeff Bauman in the hospital and the two quickly began a torrid, passionate affair. When asked later about their budding relationship, they will undoubtedly tell everyone that they complete one another.

No? A little too far with that one? Maybe so, but as far as I can see, these are people who have sold their souls and sold out their country. They are beneath contempt and nothing I have to say about them should really offend anyone.

Before wrapping up, we also have an update on Nicole, who when last seen had suffered two breaks in her left leg, a fracture in her right ankle, torn skin, and a severed Achilles tendon. Now, says Gross, she is recovering from "a compound fracture of one leg, a nearly severed Achilles tendon, and hearing damage." Do these people just make this shit up as they go along?

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/05/17/emotional-meeting-for-marathon-bombing-victim-globe-photographer/IPtb21SEnxkZyL5WX30NXL/story.html>

Like everyone else in this sordid affair, Nicole has a fundraising page up and is raking in quite a load of cash. One of the most appalling aspects of this story is that not only are the fake victims of this attack getting large payoffs for their service, but they are getting those payoffs from the American people, the very people they so cravenly betrayed.

<http://www.bestrongstaystrong.net/>

Everyone who has had a microphone stuck in their face has, virtually without exception, lied about what they saw, what they experienced and what they did. And these have not been random lies, but rather lies specifically crafted to describe a scene far more horrifying than what actually existed - bodies piled up in bloody heaps, disembodied legs littering the scene, the stench of burning flesh, bodies being pulled out from beneath the rubble of buildings, gushing wounds spurting blood everywhere, etc. Not one of these people though can point to a single photograph that actually depicts what they claim to have witnessed.

But they don't have to because the entire media establishment is happily playing along and no one is going to call them on their bullshit. And people like me? Well, we're just fucking crazy ... right?

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the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 7)

June 1, 2013

Having reviewed the tales told by many of the most prominent of the victims and responders, I was going to reboot this series and start over from the beginning with the assistance of a set of photos that I previously did not have access to, but I have accumulated a lot of clutter that I need to clear out first.

Let's begin, for no particular reason, with a radio interview with Jeff Bauman that was aired on April 26, just eleven days after the marathon. At that time, Bauman had already been released from the hospital after a near miraculous recovery. To say that his demeanor was amazingly upbeat for a guy who had just lost both his legs a mere week-and-a-half earlier would be something of an understatement. At the tail end of the interview, one of the two hosts actually has to prompt him to show some kind of real emotion, which he still fails to do.

The exchange goes something like this: "Jeff, I'm going to try – this is not meant to be an insensitive question, but I'm, but I'm listening to your voice and you don't sound angry, you don't sound pissed off. Can I ask you what your feelings are toward the men who did this to you and so many other people?" To which Bauman responds, rather unconvincingly, "Yeah, well, I'm – I'm pissed, obviously, but, I mean ...," after which he mumbles something about looking to the future rather than at the past.

But that's not my favorite part of the interview. No, my favorite part is when he tells the show's hosts that his "hearing is shot ... I can't hear anything." That would be an injury that would be expected for someone who had been in the midst of a bombing, of course, but what makes it a rather bizarre claim is that he says it while participating in a telephone interview during which he consistently responds to the hosts' questions without hesitation or confusion.

<http://audio.weei.com/a/74019257/boston-bombing-hero-jeff-bauman-he-s-dead-and-i-m-still-here.htm>

Curiously, an interview that Dr. Panter did with the repugnant Bill O'Reilly ended the very same way – with the doctor prompted to talk about how “pissed off” he must be. Even more curiously, O'Reilly introduced him as “an emergency room physician who works in South Carolina.” Another report described Panter as “a Florida emergency room physician.” This guy must be the busiest ER doc in the entire country, apparently dividing his time between facilities in at least four different states.

<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2013/04/16/17780108-amid-the-chaos-and-carnage-in-boston-heroes-emerge?lite>

Anyway, in the O'Reilly interview, Panter tells yet another version of his tall tale, which goes a little something like this: “We pulled a gentleman out from under [Campbell], and then we began working on her too. Uhh, she was basically in arrest at the time. We thought we had a faint pulse. We started CPR, uhh, because we weren't sure of the pulse or not.” Panter later identifies that “gentleman” as Jeff Bauman, apparently forgetting that he had told another interviewer that he had pulled Campbell out from under Bauman.

<http://ca.shine.yahoo.com/video/human-toll-terrorism-010248368.html>

Panter also repeats a claim that he made in other interviews: that he made it through the blast without injury only because the people between him and the bomb, who were all mowed down, served as a human shield: “The people next to me went down ... The people to my left absorbed the impact and I basically – they went down and I stood there unscathed.” We've actually already reviewed a photo of the good doctor in the position he was in when the blast occurred, but let's take another look to see if Dr. Panter is accurately describing the situation. Panter is the guy in the yellow shirt with the black jacket tied over his shoulders. The people behind him, who were to his left when he was facing the street, don't really look like they “absorbed the impact.”

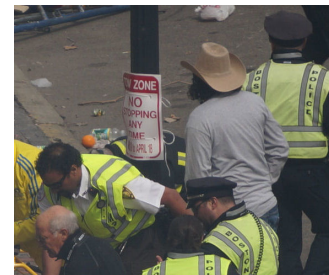


With that out of the way, let's take another look at The Other Jeff as he is wheeled off the scene. You would have thought that someone would have done him a solid and flipped down the foot rest for him to rest his bad leg on so that his toes weren't practically dragging on the ground, wouldn't you? He doesn't really look very happy, but the two responders with him seem to be taking a pretty lighthearted approach to the carnage. That's a pretty clean bandage, by the way, on the guy behind them.

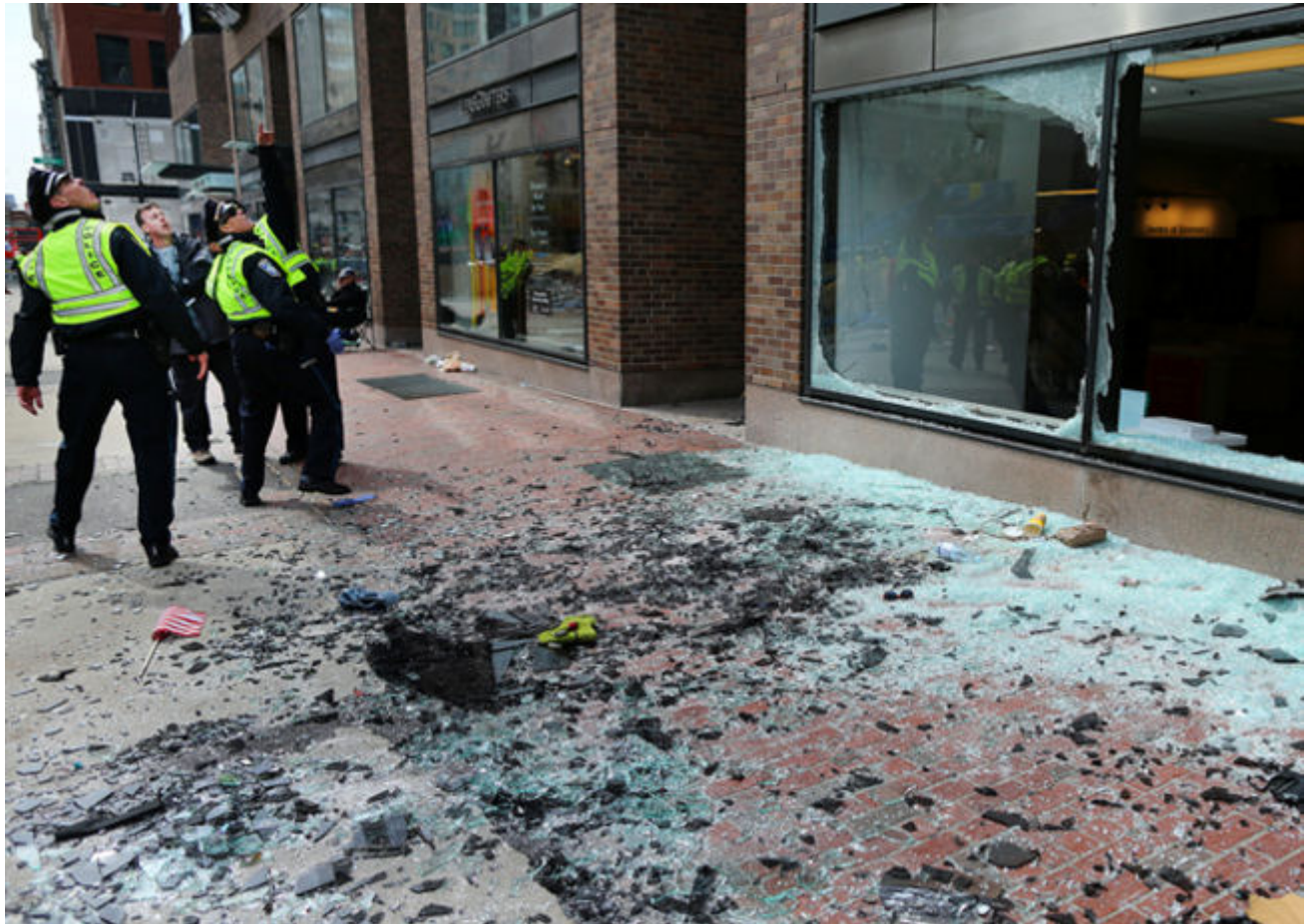


Let's now turn our attention to what I like to call the 'indestructible temporary sign.' As can be seen in the first image, the sign was affixed to a pole that was in the immediate vicinity of all the victims we have come to know and love, like Krystle, Jeff, Hoody, Mery and Nicole – all of whom, as we know, received very serious, life-threatening injuries. As the second image makes clear, the paper/cardboard/foamboard sign was very firmly attached to the pole with twine. And as the third image reveals, that amazing sign survived the blast without so much as a scratch on it – no rips, tears, punctures, or singeing whatsoever. Nothing strange about that, I suppose. The sign was, after all, above crotch level. But there was that singeing of Campbell's head that we learned about in the last post ...





Did you notice, by the way, that in all three of those images, Carlos can be seen heroically assisting victims? Moving on, we find that the onlookers in the image above weren't the only ones on the scene to direct their attention to the upper floors of the Lenscrafters building. In the images below, we can see that a group of cops seemed to take a keen interest in that area as well. So too did Dr. Spielberg and a guy in a blue shirt and sunglasses. And Carlos seemed to think that something might have happened up there as well (as do possibly the cops in the background, though it is difficult to tell given that they are obscured by the tree).



Next up is another iconic “victim in a wheelchair” shot that I’m sure you’ve all seen before. At the risk of sounding like a contrarian, I really have to ask: do those leg injuries look real? Take a closer look in the second image. What the hell is that supposed to be? A cut? A gash? A burn? Is that the kind of wound that shrapnel would cause? A long, clean cut extending vertically down the length of the lower

leg? And why were the front of her legs injured when the official story holds that the victims were lined up at the fence watching the race when the bomb went off behind them?





Speaking of leg injuries, we saw in the last post that there were a number of reports of disembodied legs littering the scene – legs flying past people’s heads, legs strewn on the ground, legs being carted off to the medical tent. But this wasn’t an attack by a gang of machete-wielding terrorists who maniacally hacked off innocent spectators’ legs. And shrapnel, as far as I know, doesn’t generally cleanly sever limbs, a fact that was supposed to be illustrated by the alleged injuries suffered by Jeff. So even if there had been a number of people who had suffered explosively amputated limbs, the notion that the scene would have been littered with more-or-less intact legs is fundamentally absurd. What it would have been littered with, as I noted previously, is meat, bone shards, and lots and lots of blood.

By the way, has anyone heard about the fisherman in Belarus who was killed recently by a beaver? It was the weirdest thing – the dude got bit on the leg by a crazed beaver and bled to death despite efforts by friends to save him, including the application of an improvised tourniquet: “His friends desperately tried to staunch the blood welling up from the wound but the animal’s bite had severed a major artery and his life could not be saved.” You can see his wound in the morgue shot below. The guy obviously wasn’t ‘Boston Strong.’ He only severed one major artery while dozens of people in Boston had their entire leg blown off and didn’t even have friends standing by to immediately offer assistance, yet they all live on while this wimpy guy died.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2332422/Beaver-kills-man-Belarus-Shocking-wound-caused-fisherman-bleed-death-attack.html>

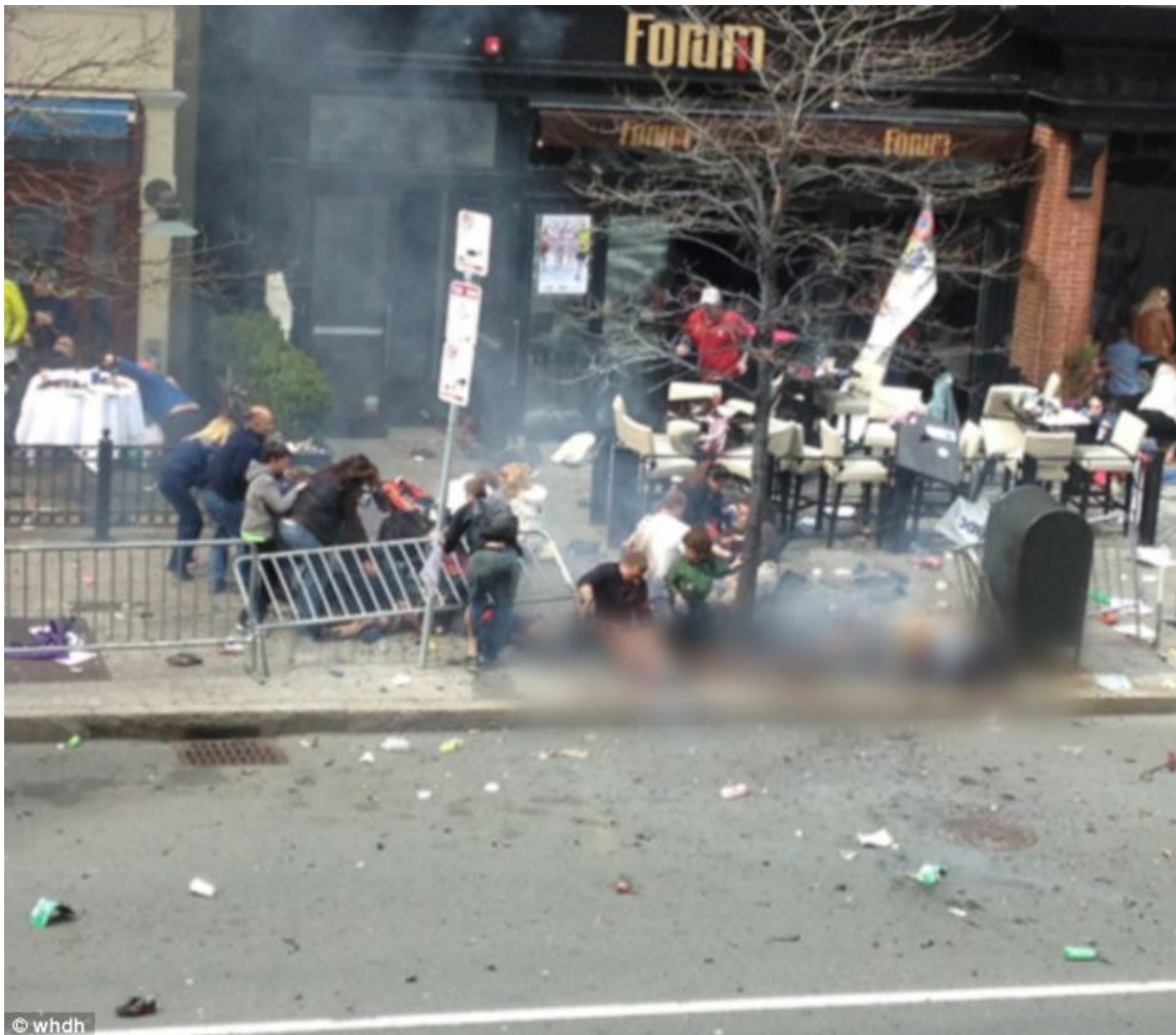


Let’s just hope that in future attacks, the ‘terrorists’ stick with bombs rather than unleashing a horde of angry beavers. Unlike bombs, which hardly kill anyone, those things are dangerous! In other news, there are, as it turns out, some images of the second bombsite in the public domain, though not very many. One of the two below is partially blurred, though I have no idea why since the scene is considerably less bloody than the first site. There are a handful of additional images of the site at each of the links below. There really wasn’t much to see there though, with virtually no property damage and not many apparent victims on display. And yet that is where two of the three alleged deaths were supposed to have occurred.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/kenshinokubo/sets/72157633255956194>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/brianjdamico/sets/72157633259135348>

Actually, that may or may not be true. It is all but impossible to determine where Lingzi Lu supposedly died because there are no detailed media reports to be found. We don't know which site she was supposed to be at, where at that site she was supposed to have been standing, or whether she died where she fell or in the medical tent or at one of the area hospitals. We also don't know what injuries she sustained that caused her alleged death. And there don't appear to be any photos of her either sprawled out on the scene or being transported away from the scene. So we're just supposed to take it on faith that she died somewhere and in some manner as a result of the explosions at the Boston Marathon.





It is though officially the site where eight-year-old Martin Richard supposedly died and where other members of the Richard family suffered grave injuries, and where numerous people lost limbs. But there is little in the available images that lends support to such claims. If we are being very generous, there were maybe two-dozen victims at the first site and there were obviously even fewer at the second site. So even if we give the government and media every benefit of the doubt and accept that all the victims in the photos suffered real injuries, we are still woefully short of accounting for the official victim tally, which continues to rise and now stands at 282.

We seem to be roughly 250 bodies short. Boston.com has kept a running tally of the known victims which they initially pledged to “continue to update,” but more than six weeks later they have only been able to come up with about 50 named victims, and the details on many of them are quite sketchy. Don’t Boston hospitals and the police and FBI keep records of such things? How hard should it be for a local reporter to call around and verify the official tally? Why are we only honoring 50 victims while ignoring the other 232?

http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/specials/boston_marathon_bombing_victim_list/

Of course, in the aftermath of the explosions, Boston hospitals were off-limits to pretty much everyone, with heavily armed SWAT teams menacingly guarding the entrances. There were –

wouldn't you know it? – very convenient bomb threats supposedly called in, which necessitated the heavy police presence. As one report held, “Among the uncertainty, a SWAT team stood guard here at the entrance to Brigham and Women's Hospital – family and visitors asked to leave, only the injured allowed.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoTJtIXESkU>

I'm not entirely sure what to make of the information that is to follow, but it is a part of this story so I feel an obligation to report it. The facts are beyond dispute, but determining their meaning is another matter altogether.

Let's begin on February 2, 2013. That was the day that Chris Kyle, former Navy SEAL and author of *American Sniper*, was shot and killed on a Texas shooting range by a US Marine veteran. Kyle was widely hailed as a hero by both the mainstream and alternative media, but this scribe didn't shed too many tears. Kyle was credited with 160 confirmed kills and claimed nearly 100 more. He was, simply put, a hit man for Uncle Sam. By any reasonable definition of the term, he was a serial killer – and a very prolific one at that, putting rivals like Jeffrey Dahmer and Richard Ramirez to shame.

He followed that up by founding and running Craft International, an entity devoted to providing paramilitary training to government and corporate clients. It is companies like his that we have to thank in part for the wholesale militarization of the nation's police forces. How any of that qualified him as a hero is anyone's guess. But though I tend to think that he got exactly what he deserved (live by the sword and all ...), it still must be stated that the circumstances of his death were a bit odd.

Two-and-a-half months after Kyle's death, at least six guys appearing to be Craft International personnel showed up at the Boston Marathon. It is impossible to say whether they were in fact operatives from Craft, but their apparel makes it appear that they are. Of course, it doesn't really seem to make sense that they would be flying their colors, so to speak, but it also doesn't really make sense that six guys would show up attired as if they were Craft people when they actually weren't.

It seems almost as if the powers-that-be wanted them to be seen, but also wanted there to be a certain amount of ambiguity about who they really were. No one in Washington or in the media wants to talk about them at all, yet the photos of them on the scene have been freely circulated since day one. One of those photos is reproduced below.



So we know that some mercenary thugs appearing to be Craft personnel were on the scene, and we also know that actor Bradley Cooper made a high-profile appearance at the bedside of Jeff “I can’t hear anything” Bauman, inserting himself into this storyline. And of course we know that another guy who was on the scene in a rather high-profile way looked, in many of the images, uncannily like director Steven Spielberg, though he was actually Dr. Levine.



What makes all of that rather bizarre is that, just a couple weeks after the Boston Marathon incident, it was announced that Mr. Spielberg's next film project will be directing the celluloid version of *American Sniper*. Producing the film and starring as Kyle will be, of course, Bradley Cooper.

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/steven-spielbergs-next-movie-american-451011>

Is all of that just a very strange set of coincidences? It doesn't really seem very likely that it is. What we appear to be seeing here is a campaign aimed at erasing the line between reality and fantasy – between what is objectively real and what is make-believe. For many years now we have seen a blurring of the line between news and entertainment, as well as, through 'reality' television, a blurring of the line between what is 'real' and what is scripted. We are now entering an age when there will be no dividing line at all between news, scripted entertainment and 'reality' TV. It will all be one and the same.

In the new 'reality' we will be living in, nothing will be real and everything will be true.

[HOME](#)

the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 8)

June 5, 2013

So a lot of people on the internet have been working very diligently to steer all of you away from this website. Fintan Dunne over at breakfornews.com, for example, has opened up an entire discussion thread aimed at disparaging anyone who promotes the “theory” that the Boston bombings were staged events, with my site in particular singled out for ridicule.

<http://breakfornews.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=7037>

Dunne freely tosses the word Cointelpro around, as he has long been fond of doing. He also feebly attempts to link me to Alex Jones, implying that I am following the lead of the Jonestown crowd. Nothing though could be further from the truth. The reality is that one of the first things that inspired me to look closely at the notion that there were actors involved was hearing Jones quickly shut down a caller who brought up the subject. Truth be told, Alex Jones and Fintan Dunne are marching in lockstep on this issue. And when Jones and Dunne are both telling you not to look at something, then that is probably exactly where your attention should be focused

Jones and Dunne aren't the only internet blowhards out there who are actively working to discourage you from looking at what is clearly the Achilles heel of this operation. The gang over at SOTT has been busy as well, putting out a lengthy radio show and at least one post devoted exclusively to attacking ‘crisis actor theories.’ And again, my rather low-profile, not-so-well-traveled website is singled out for scorn.

<http://www.sott.net/article/262242-Its-all-a-hoax-Boston-Bombings-and-Crazy-Conspiracy-Theories>

<http://www.sott.net/article/262361-Why-there-were-no-actors-at-the-Boston-Marathon-bombings>

All of the attacks on my site have conveniently avoided virtually all the evidence I have brought to the table in my ongoing series, pretending as though the ‘actors theory’ begins and ends with Jeff Bauman, a handful of cropped images, and the parade of hack youtube videos that have been thrown out there to muddy the waters. The sad reality is that, contrary to what Dunne and others imply, there are very few people trying to take an honest look at the photographic evidence and present it for what

it is, which is why my website appears to be such a threat to them. The case that I have argued has obviously resonated with enough people that they now feel the need to go on the attack.

To which I say: bring it on! The guy over at SOTT claims that he is considering penning a point-by-point rebuttal. I am eagerly awaiting that. And I am readily available to debate what really happened at the Boston Marathon with anyone who questions my motivations and integrity. You have your own radio shows readily available, so let me know when you're ready to rumble. Or we could do it in any other venue of your choosing, at any time of your choosing. I'll bring the evidence and you can, I guess, bring your loud mouths.

In addition to those directly attacking the 'actors theory,' there are numerous other people out there working diligently to discredit the notion that the Boston Bombings were staged with the use of crisis actors. No one perhaps is doing a better job of that than the asshat who calls himself Dallas Goldbug. In case you're not familiar with him, he's the guy who basically claims that every prominent figure throughout history has been played by the same half-dozen actors. It's hard to imagine anything doing more harm than the absurd photo montages that this guy routinely posts, most of them featuring the grammar and spelling skills of a first-grader.

<http://www.wellaware1.com/>

Also doing serious damage, though in a much different way, is a gang of pseudonymed miscreants over at a September Clues forum. The battle cry among them is that all of the photos are fake, having been produced before the event, and all of the people in the photos are CGI creations referred to as "sims." There is, therefore, no point in analyzing the images for content because the images themselves are entirely fake. Everyone posting there apparently has to toe the party line or face bullying, ridicule and/or outright banning. It is hard to imagine anything more counterproductive than actively steering people away from the smoking gun of this psy-op, which is clearly the photographic record. My website, once again, gets a dishonorable mention.

<http://www.cluesforum.info/viewtopic.php?f=24&t=1602>

I am, by the way, aware of the fact that there are serious irregularities in the official stories of the arrest/killing of the Tsarnaev brothers. And I am also aware of the fact that the brothers had various shadowy connections to US intelligence agencies. And I am aware that the FBI executed a kid in his own home, tossed a couple of agents out of a helicopter, and took down an officer in a 'friendly fire' incident, all as part of the cover-up. I know all of that. And I'm pretty sure that you can read all about it on numerous other websites, if you haven't already. But what you won't really find elsewhere is any kind of serious analysis of the photographic record.

In every false-flag 'terrorist' incident that I can remember, evidence has quickly surfaced indicating that the designated patsy/alleged perpetrator had intelligence ties. But has that ever before led to any kind of large-scale political awakening by the American people? Not that I can recall. And it won't this time either. But this time we have something we have never had before – a body of photographic evidence that irrefutably proves that we have been lied to on a massive scale.

We need really look no further than the two images presented below to see that. One of them we have seen before and the other is cropped from one of Tang's images. Both depict the first bombing site just before responders started arriving on the scene. According to the official narrative and the accounts of various heroes and victims, what we should be looking at here is scores of victims with very serious injuries, including as many as three-dozen with traumatically amputated limbs. Those severed limbs should be littering the scene. We should also see people who have been charred and in some cases are still smoldering. We should see victims partially buried under the rubble of the buildings. We should see people with their faces partially blown off. We should see Carlos Arredondo heroically rescuing Jeff Bauman and Dr. Panter heroically trying to save Krystle Campbell. We should see bodies piled up in bloody mounds. We should see a dead man and an armless woman. We should see Jeff's friend and Hoody's wife and Nicole's sister and husband. What we shouldn't see though is a bunch of glass blown out onto the pavement rather than into the building. Or civilians policing the area to keep other civilians away.





What is happening here very much reminds me of the post-911 days when a certain troglodyte by the name of Mike Ruppert was running around telling people to ignore the physical evidence because physical evidence never convinced anyone of anything, so it was much better to focus on the kinds of things that others are now focused on with regards to the Boston bombings. But guess what? That was complete bullshit then and it is still bullshit now.

And that, dear readers, is why I am going to continue to build a case around the photographic record, with the help of two collections of high-resolution images that are available on the web (though the owner of the larger and more useful collection has dickishly disabled downloading, but where there is a will, there is a way). Both of these collections are problematic in various ways, though they are nevertheless quite revealing.

Both sets were taken by guys who were in their offices overlooking the finish line who just happened to have digital SLRs handy. That's the official story anyway, but I have serious doubts as to whether it was fate that put these two guys in ideal positions to photograph the first bombing site. One of them was Benjamin Thorndike, who had been sporadically photographing the marathon from his office window. Prior to the blast, Thorndike had snapped 263 entirely boring shots, including the winners and various others crossing the finish line. After the blast though, he did something very curious – he fired off 27 frames in about 15 seconds, shooting at a rate of about 2 frames per second, and then abruptly stopped just as things were getting interesting. In interviews, he has claimed that he stopped shooting because he and co-workers had to evacuate the building, a rather bizarre claim given that many on the scene sought the safety of nearby buildings.

Thorndike has stated that he quickly turned his images over to the FBI as possible evidence, so we know that his shots have been thoroughly vetted by the guardians of truth. So too have the photos taken by Aaron Tang, who was also uniquely positioned to capture the action.

Unlike Thorndike, Tang continued shooting until well after all the victims had been removed from the scene, but there are problems with his images as well. First of all, there is virtually no chance that the images he has released represent the complete collection. The released images represent an average shooting rate of something like 10 frames per minute for the first few minutes, compared to Thorndike's rate of roughly 120 frames per minute. It is inconceivable to me that someone who happened to be in exactly the right place at exactly the right time with a digital SLR in hand would have shot at such a leisurely pace. What was he waiting for – better lighting?

So I'm assuming that the images that Tang chose to release were undoubtedly carefully culled from a much larger set of images. And virtually all of the publicly available shots have one thing in common – all of our all-star victims remain concealed from view. In almost every image, human shields strategically block the camera's view of what is going on down on the ground. I find it very hard to believe that that happened purely by chance.

Tang employs other tricks as well, such as cutting away at key moments to completely pointless shots of, for example, people haphazardly tearing down fencing that wasn't even in anyone's way. And when all else fails, he appears to resort to a little Photoshopping. You can judge for yourself when we get to the images in question. In some of his exposures, you see, there are gaps in the human shield that should allow us at least a glimpse of what was happening on the ground. But in pretty much every case, those gaps appear, to my eyes at least, to have been shopped.

Before beginning what will necessarily be a rather lengthy, multi-part presentation and analysis of the Thorndike and Tang images, I need to first clarify a couple things, beginning with the acknowledgement that what I will be using here are reduced-resolution versions of the original images. But that is not to hide anything from anyone; it is simply because my website does not have the bandwidth to accommodate hosting all of the original image files. We will also be looking at close-ups of key people and events.

I also wanted to note here that I did make a couple of errors in the earliest posts in this series with regards to the sequence of some of the images. They were honest mistakes though which I blame primarily on two factors: the rather bizarre actions of Carlos Arredondo and several of the assembled spectators (including the guy I like to call The Running Man), and the equally bizarre fact that the concentration of smoke on the scene at various times seems to defy any rational explanation.

From when I first began to study the available images, not long after the running of the marathon, my brain has been trying to impose some kind of logic on all of them. And that logic has taken the form of a persistent belief that if there was in fact just one explosive device detonated, and if that device was detonated on the ground, at the feet of victims, then the smoke resulting from that explosion should have been the thickest right after detonation, with it gradually dissipating thereafter. But that is not what actually happened. Not at all.

It would seem only logical that an image that is heavily obscured by smoke would necessarily depict things that happened earlier in the sequence of events than images that are crystal clear and almost entirely smoke-free ... right? But that was definitely not the case here, as we will see as we work through the images. The earliest images are obscured by a thick cloud of smoke that dissipates pretty quickly, leaving the scene temporarily smoke-free, but a much larger cloud of smoke quickly settles in, once again obscuring the action. That cloud doesn't dissipate quite as quickly and it inexplicably leaves behind a lingering column of smoke that just happens to be centered around our favorite victims, as though there were a fire smoldering right in the center of the action that all of the responders chose to ignore.

I am not at all sure at this time whether the unusual smoke patterns are the result of secondary sources of smoke, a whole lot of Photoshopping, or a combination of the two.

The actions of some of the actors on the scene also caused me a considerable amount of initial confusion. If, for example, one image depicts someone quickly running away from the scene, and a second image shows that same person still on the scene, one would naturally conclude that the second image must have been captured before the first. But logic doesn't really apply here. Along those same lines, if one image appears to show someone just arriving on the scene, and other images show that same person positioned on the scene, your brain tends to sequence those images accordingly. But again, logic and rationality don't really apply here.

When one image of Carlos shows him leaning up against the inside of the fence surveying the 'victims,' and another shows him appearing to start tearing down that fence from the inside, it isn't really logical to conclude that the first shot was actually taken after the second, but that is nevertheless the actual sequence of events. One wouldn't really expect Carlos to jump over the fence backwards, bringing part of it down in the process, only to then quickly restore the fence, turn around, and lean back against it. One wouldn't expect it because Carlos was the big hero of this story, selflessly rushing to the aid of strangers in need. His purpose in crashing the party was supposedly twofold: to get at victims himself and offer assistance, and to open up a path for other responders to follow. The last thing then we would expect him to do would be to not just stand idly by, but to actively work to slow down the progress of other responders. And yet that is exactly what he did.

Ironically enough then, the mistakes I have made in this series have been largely due to my having at least subconsciously accepted some aspects of the official story. And now without further adieu, let's get on with the show, beginning with the first batch of images from Mr. Thorndike's camera, which are dominated by 'The Flight of The Running Man.' Actually, if you look closely you will see that there were actually two running men who began from different starting points but converged on the same exit corridor, which happened to be in the opposite direction that almost everyone else fled. But that's because they weren't really fleeing the scene, as will become apparent.

A number of websites and various mainstream media sources initially claimed that The Running Man was being sought by authorities as a possible 'person of interest,' based on his hasty exit from the scene of the crime. But such claims don't hold much water given that he never actually left the scene; he soon took up a position as one of the prone victims, and then later, showing considerable versatility, filled in as a concerned spectator.

Running Man and his cohort appear to have been site #1's version of Shrapnel Man. I'm guessing that his initial task was, probably through both his words and physical appearance, to discourage any outsiders from rushing onto the scene. As can be seen in the images (once the smoke starts to clear), there was a large human blockade that created only a relatively narrow exit/entrance corridor in that direction. And yet Running Man, presumably in shock and running amid the smoke and confusion, immediately knew exactly where that corridor was. And he slowed down to a walk as soon as he got to it.

Because the Thorndike images were snapped so quickly, there isn't much change from one image to the next. To conserve bandwidth then, I'm only going to present the even numbered images. You can view the full collection, along with all the pre-blast photos, at this link:

imgur.com/a/Cza6V











I was going to continue on with the Thorndike images but I rambled on for much longer than intended so I guess I'll wrap up for now. One final note: a few readers seem to think that the injury to the gal in the wheelchair in my last post was a puncture wound with a blood trail running down her leg. A logical enough assumption – except that before she was wheeled off, she had been lying on the ground, as can be seen above. Why then would the blood trail run straight down her leg?

I guess that wasn't the final note because I have one more thing to add here: the people who run the show in Washington are obviously aware of the fact that there is an abundance of evidence that reveals the truth about this operation. And they know that it is hiding in plain sight. But they aren't too concerned about it because they know that everyone in the media is going to toe the line. Any number of mainstream media sources have the power to bring the truth to a wide audience, but that hasn't happened and it isn't going to happen. And the hopelessly fake organs of the 'alternative' media have fallen into their assigned roles as well.

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the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 9)

June 8, 2013

Joe Quinn, editor over at [sott.net](http://www.sott.net), has chosen to pen another attack on this website, and this one is a particularly cowardly one in that he conspicuously avoids identifying who it is that he is attacking. Quinn tries to play it off as though he is attacking the ‘crisis actors theory’ in general, though it is perfectly obvious that he is critiquing my series without naming it. Well ... not all of my series, actually ... just a few things here and there that he chose to cherry-pick.

<http://www.sott.net/article/262463-Ink-Blot-Tests-and-actors-at-the-Boston-bombings>

By not identifying my site, of course, he avoids having to supply a link to it, depriving his readers of the opportunity to judge for themselves whether my arguments are valid. And that, I have to say, is a seriously chicken-shit approach. What do you suppose it is that Quinn is afraid of? If it only took him three minutes to figure out that the crisis actors theory was bogus, as he says in his post, then why is he so scared to let his readers judge for themselves?

Here’s a classic example of Quinn’s cowardice: “Some bloggers have claimed that the use of ‘crisis actors’ at the Boston bombings is an attempt to further blur the lines between what is real and what is false, between fantasy and reality, and usher us all into a ‘reality TV’ world.” Ummm, no, actually, *some bloggers* haven’t claimed that; one specific blogger has claimed that, but spineless Quinn would obviously rather attack an anonymous target.

His entire post is based on a curious bit of Orwellian logic. He claims that crisis actor theorists essentially work backwards, drawing conclusions first and then working “to make the evidence fit what appears to be a pre-established theory.” But yet he candidly admits that that is in fact *how he works*: “Before I begin though, I should explain how and why my approach differs from the approach that the ‘actors’ advocates have taken. When trying to decide whether a particular conspiracy theory, or particular angle on a conspiracy theory, is likely to be true or false, my approach is to first look at the plausibility of the theory in question.”

In this case, he notes, “it took me about 3 minutes of rumination before it began to make no logical sense whatsoever.”

To recap then, Quinn gave the actors theory a solid three minutes of thought, decided that it didn’t make any sense to him, and since it didn’t make any sense to him it obviously could not have happened, so he then set about trying to make the evidence fit his hastily drawn conclusion. I, on the other hand, studied literally hundreds of photographs and scores of videos while drawing my conclusions, and yet I am the one who supposedly approached this investigation in entirely the wrong way. You can imagine my embarrassment.

As far as ‘debunking’ specific arguments that I have made, Quinn doesn’t have a whole lot to offer. He appears to dismiss my entire post detailing the lies spun by victims and responders with this brush-off: “it is the media’s job to hype national crisis situations, and therefore exaggeration and dodgy reporting cannot, in isolation, be construed as evidence of a grand conspiracy involving ‘actors’.” Deliberately overlooked is that it wasn’t compromised media assets who were spinning the tall tales – it was the alleged victims and rescuers, the supposed heroes of this story. It was, in other words (and as I have already stated), people who should not have had a vested interest in “hyp[ing] national crisis situations.”

Quinn naturally feels compelled to weigh in on Jeff Bauman, but he does so in a way that is not too far removed from the pathetic arguments offered up by the last would-be ‘debunker’: “The fact that Bauman was transported in a wheelchair can be explained by the fact that, at that point in time (about 6 minutes after the first bomb exploded) no ambulances had yet arrived, and gurneys were therefore scarce. There were however many wheelchairs available as part of the marathon entourage and these were used to evacuate several people before ambulances arrived.”

I guess Quinn missed the part about how Bauman and Arredondo have both claimed that Jeff was wheeled directly to a waiting ambulance, which would have been hard to do “before ambulances arrived.” Ambulances had not pulled up to the site yet, because that would have ruined the whole spectacle of wheeling the victims out for the waiting cameras, but ambulances were in attendance well before the blasts. Quinn surely knows that, just as he knows that Bauman was not hastily rushed off the scene, even though he implies that he was.

As for the notion that gurneys were scarce, Quinn is either willfully ignorant of the facts or he is just a really inept liar. It is an incontestable fact that the woman identified in the media as Mery Daniel was rolled out on a gurney while Bauman lay on the ground just a few feet away, allegedly bleeding out. And it is also an incontestable fact, because I happen to have the photo right here to prove it, that Mery Daniel was rolled out alongside another woman who was also on a gurney. So the reality is that there were at least two gurneys available simultaneously and yet responders chose not to use either one to rescue the guy who had supposedly just had both of his legs blown off and who was clearly visible to everyone on the scene.



Word on the street is that all of the alleged victims from the first bombing site who are pictured below actually had to bring their own gurneys from home due to the scarcity problem. Luckily for them, they were thinking ahead that day.







Quinn repeatedly asserts that the victims should not be judged on their apparent actions after the blast because they were all in severe shock from being so close to the alleged device. Indeed, he seems to know precisely where that device was located, allowing him to make authoritative statements like, “these people were pictured seconds after a bomb had just detonated right beside them,” and, “A bomb went off 5 seconds before this photo was taken, about 3 feet from where the people in question were standing,” and, “The women in the above image were mere feet from the blast,” and, “a bomb had exploded right beside her just minutes before.”

Of course, Quinn offers no evidence whatsoever to support even the contention that a bomb exploded on the ground, let alone that it detonated in some specific location that he seems to be able to pinpoint. But the government and the media have said that that is what happened, and I guess that is good enough for him.

Quinn also tackles the question of why no one outside the temporary barricade was injured, but his argument is so fundamentally ridiculous that it is impossible to really take it seriously: “The women in the above image were mere feet from the blast. The runners were 10-15 yards from the explosion and were protected from its effects by metal and wooden barriers and the material that made up the advertising sign that was draped over the barriers.”

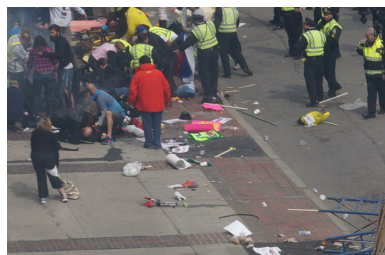
Seriously?! When I referred to what he calls “the advertising sign” as a shrapnel shield, I was obviously being facetious. But I assume that this guy wants to be taken seriously. I’m not even sure what to say here, except maybe to ask if it might be just slightly misleading to describe scaffolding as a “metal barrier”? Here’s an experiment Quinn might want to try out: stand behind some scaffolding and have a friend fire a 12-gauge load of buckshot at your ass. Then let all your readers know how well that “metal barrier” worked out for you.

Weighing in on Krystle Campbell, Quinn has this to say: “For the ‘actors’ theorists, it seems that when two images are taken of the same scene just a few seconds apart, the people in the images are not allowed to move. The idea that the worker was checking for a pulse and would likely have had her hands in that position for up to a minute is apparently irrelevant.” I have no clue what point he is trying to make here, but since he brought up the subject of what the EMT was doing and how long she was there, let’s take a look and see what the photographic record has to say about that.

This first image is cropped from one of the Tang photos. In the full-sized original, the race clock reads 4:12:06, which was two minutes and twenty-three seconds after the first blast. I guess I should first point out the obvious – that there is a gurney already on the scene, even though Quinn just informed us that there still were none available a full six minutes after the device detonated. Carlos, America’s newest superhero, is standing idly by, not doing much of anything. The blond EMT is working her way past Dr. Panter and Dr. Levine, neither of whom are showing the slightest concern for the plight of Ms Campbell. Or the plight of Mr. Bauman.



In the next image in the series, Carlos, barely visible, still isn't doing much of anything. Dr. Levine is still standing by. Out of the camera's view, Jeff is on the ground bleeding out, but no one really cares. The gurney can still be seen on the scene. Jeff is probably considering trying to climb onto it by himself. The blond EMT has reached the two women and is bent over, partially blocked from view.



Continuing on, the EMT now cannot be seen but she is presumably doing something with the two women. Dr. Panter and Dr. Levine are both guiding the gurney that won't be used for either Jeff Bauman or Krystle Campbell. Carlos is still standing by on the sidelines. The photographer, just behind that curiously indestructible Tow Zone sign, is approaching the scene to get his 'dead girls' shot. There are several people blocking his view but he seems to know exactly where he is going and what he needs to do.



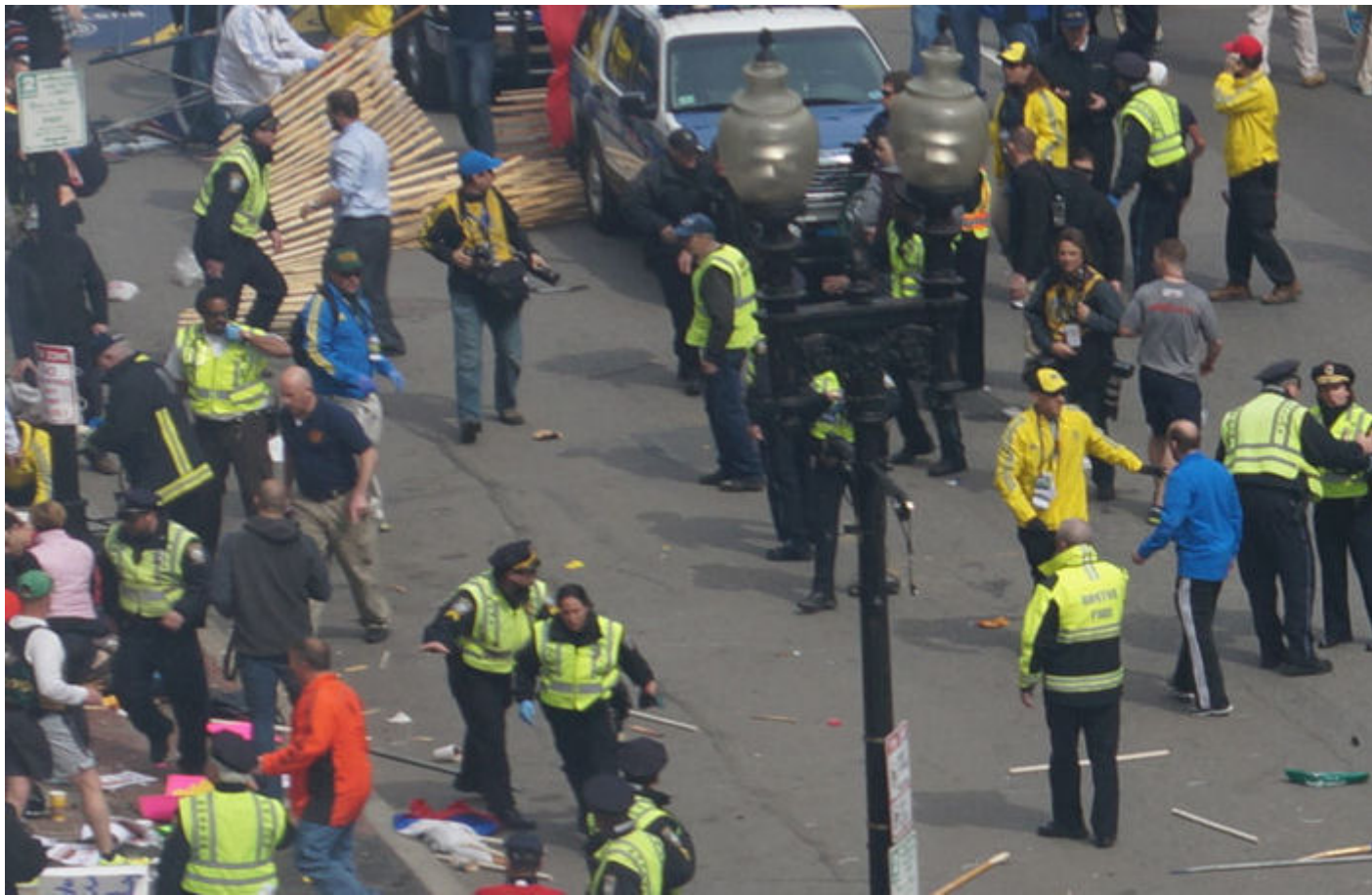
Continuing on with the next shot in the series, we find Carlos and Dr. Levine still not doing much to help anyone, though Dr. Panter is now bent over, presumably working on Mery Daniel. The EMT is in position but the photographer is not quite ready yet. We also see that a number of people, police and civilians alike, are aggressively working to keep outsiders off the scene, though no one seems to care that there are clearly a lot of people already on the scene who don't have any business being there.



By this time, the EMT has had time to check the girls' vital signs. According to Dr. Panter and others, what she should have found was that Campbell was in full traumatic arrest, barely had a pulse, and was literally just a few minutes away from death. Dr. Panter and Dr. Levine are both less than ten feet away but she hasn't notified either of them of her patient's precarious condition. Of course, she shouldn't have had to since Dr. Panter has already told us that he immediately recognized that Campbell and Bauman were the most critically injured of the victims and, after pulling one of them

out from under the other, he quickly got to work on both of them. But we already know that virtually everything that Panter has said is a lie.

Anyway, in the next image we see that Tang has cut away from the action to give us a not-very-informative view of the street. We can't see the race clock or much of anything else of importance. We can though see that the photographer has gotten his shots and, apparently uninterested in any of the other victims, has walked away from the scene.



This next shot is almost completely worthless, clueing us in only to the fact that the race clock now reads 4:12:50.



We now return to the scene of the crime. The race clock reads 4:12:54. Exactly 48 seconds have elapsed since the blond EMT was first seen working her way toward Campbell. She therefore spent, at most, maybe 40 seconds checking on Campbell and Rand, who have now been left unattended. And again, Campbell is allegedly just a few breaths away from death. Which is why the EMT has walked away from her. And why Dr. Panter and Dr. Levine both have more important things to do. And why Mery Daniel has been loaded onto the gurney rather than Campbell. Or Bauman.



The EMT was there just long enough to set up the scene and pose for her photo-op. The photographer, a man on a mission, was there just long enough to grab the shot he was destined to take. No one on the scene is acting as though there are at least two people in critical condition. No one, in other words, is acting as if this is a real crisis situation. Dr. Levine doesn't even really try to pretend as though he is offering any kind of medical assistance to anyone. At one point, he will appear to be primarily concerned with checking out the hot chick. I know you think I'm joking, but I'm not. You can also see in the preceding images, by the way, the bizarre residual smokiness that only affected the small area where the alleged victims were gathered.



Anyway, it appears that Quinn is way off the mark on both Campbell and Bauman. He probably should have actually reviewed the photographic evidence rather than deciding in three minutes that he already knew the truth. It's seems pretty clear though that Quinn doesn't actually have much interest in the truth. He demonstrates that when he has this to say about the Fox reporter who was on the scene: "Additional evidence for this claim is provided by a Fox News reporter on the day of the bombing who stated that while she wasn't exactly near the first bomb, when she looked around, she thought that the bomb came from inside a building."

So when a reporter states live on the air that she "was right there," Quinn reports it as, "she wasn't exactly near the first bomb." And when she states emphatically on more than one occasion that the blast occurred midway up the building, Quinn reports it as, "she thought that the bomb came from inside a building." And this is the guy who in the very same post complains about "dodgy" reporting by the mainstream media?

Quinn wraps things up with this little show of cockiness – cockiness which, I have to say, seems a bit unwarranted: "If anyone has any piece of 'evidence' that I haven't covered here that they'd like me to opine on, feel free to send it to me. But be warned, I've looked at a lot of 'evidence of 'actors' at the Boston bombings, and all of it fits into this same profile of mild to wild conjecture and supposition in an effort to make the case."

Seeing as how Quinn obviously cherry-picked his way through my series of posts, he is very well aware of the fact that there is a considerable amount of hard evidence that he has chosen to ignore. Perhaps though his time would be better spent channeling aliens through a Ouija board with his boss. I hear she has quite a passion for that sort of thing.

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Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 10)

June 11, 2013

Before I got distracted, which I will try not to do again, we had left off with the first batch of images from the Thorndike collection. In those images, we could see that there was initially a very dense but very localized cloud of smoke surrounding the small pool of supposed victims. It had begun to clear though within seconds, allowing us a pretty clear view of the scene.

If you go back and review those first five images, you will also see that, from the second photo on, you can see various people looking up towards the upper floors of the Lenscrafters building. And you will see, in the foreground of the fourth and fifth frames, our favorite multi-state emergency room physician, Dr. Panter. Since we won't be able to track what is going on with the victims, we will primarily be tracking the movements and activities of some of the all-star responders, like Dr. Panter, Dr. Levine, and, of course, Carlos Arredondo.

We will also be keeping an eye on a few women I like to call the Scream Queens, including the plus-size gal in the brown sweatshirt who is initially standing against the temporary fencing just across from Jeff Bauman and Associates. Then there's the older woman in the pink vest and the gal in the black-and-white checkered coat. All three were apparently at what was supposed to be 'ground zero' of the blast, yet none of the three appear to have been injured. Unlike others who were uninjured, however, they lingered on the scene until the bitter end, wandering freely about and acting appropriately horrified by what they were seeing.

Also of interest will be a guy in a bright yellow hat who we will refer to as The Director, though I obviously don't know what his true role was. As before, we will be looking at only every other image in the Thorndike set. And we will be alternating between full-frame images and crops that will bring us closer to the action. In this first shot, we basically pick up where we left off. One of our Scream Queens is bent over in the area where Campbell is allegedly in critical condition. Our view of another is blocked by the window mullion. Panter, at the bottom right, is turning away from the blast site.



In the next image, little has changed. We can see two of our Scream Queens. We can also see that Dr. Panter has started to walk away from the scene. We've barely gotten started on this journey and already he is contradicting his oft-told tale of heroism.



Now we move in for a closer look and find a curious assemblage of people: the purported victims are arranged in an almost perfect circle, with a human barricade assembled just behind them. The Scream Queen against the fence appears to be doing her job. The other is still doing whatever it is that she is doing. The Director can be seen within the human barricade. Nicole is sitting back-to-back with Hoody, but she will soon move away. There are no victims visible along the temporary railing to the left, but that will change soon.



In the next full-frame image, we see that Panter is continuing to walk away from the scene. We also see that the initial smoke cloud around the victim's circle has completely cleared, but there is a much bigger smoke cloud rolling in. Some of the spectators continue to look up toward the presumed source of that smoke. We can also clearly see here that the victim's circle is flanked on both sides by immobile clusters of people.



Shifting back to close-up mode, we can see that while a number of people in the human barricade look suitably horrified by the apparent carnage, none of them have moved out of position to offer any help. If we are supposed to believe that the 'bomb' exploded in the middle of the victim's circle, by the way, there is no indication of that in any of these images. Paper and other lightweight debris that should have been blown well clear of the area still litters the ground, and there is no indication of scorching or other damage to the pavement and no sign of the remains of a backpack, which authorities claim to have recovered from at least one of the two sites.



In the next shot, the Scream Queen in pink is still bent over, working diligently to do whatever it is she is doing. Notice also the three older people in the center foreground. The woman in red, as we have already seen, will be paraded out in a wheelchair with her legs, hand and face bloodied. She is now with an older guy in a red jacket and another older guy in a yellow jacket, who we saw in my last post being carted off on a gurney. All three are sitting up here and looking like they are in pretty good shape.



Next up we see that the Scream Queens are still in place, and the one in the pink vest is still preoccupied with whatever task is at hand. The Director is now beginning to approach the scene. Also approaching the scene, to the left, is a guy with a shaved head, sunglasses and a dark hooded sweatshirt. He will also loiter about the scene while not appearing to offer any help to anyone.



Pulling back again, we see that a much larger smoke cloud is now settling over the scene. The Scream Queen in the brown sweatshirt is finally moving away from the fence. The one in the pink vest is still working away at something. The third Scream Queen is now visible in the lower right portion of the image.



The Thorndike images wrap up with the scene once again obscured by smoke, offering us little indication of what is happening on the ground.



Conveniently enough, the Tang photos appear to pick up just seconds after the Thorndike pics wrap up. There is no overlap of images, depriving us of the ability to compare images of the same scene taken with two different cameras. Having that ability, of course, would have made it much easier to detect any manipulation of the images. Anyway, in the first post-blast Tang pic, the victim's circle is completely engulfed in smoke. We can though see that Dr. Panter is, along with the rest of the spectators who were standing near him, continuing to walk away from the scene.



In the next image, Panter is still walking away while stealing a look back at the same location everyone else seems fascinated with. The guy standing along the fence by himself in the black jacket, roughly in the center of the frame, seems to be interested in something up there as well. The Director, barely visible, is moving along the rail towards the victim's circle.



Moving on to Tang's third image, we already encounter a significant problem: though Tang has indicated that this shot was captured just four seconds after the previous one, he has clearly moved to a different position. The camera is now at a lower elevation and the viewing angle has obviously changed as well. We couldn't see around the corner of the building before, but now we can. I have no clue how Mr. Tang could have substantially changed his viewing position without missing a beat.

Dr. Panter can be seen employing a classic move that we have all seen before when someone wants to break away from a group unnoticed; he is deliberately lingering behind until everyone has passed him. But since he is purportedly an emergency room doctor, and since there is clearly a medical emergency in progress, why would he need to be so sneaky about

approaching the scene? Why didn't he just rush over there immediately, as he has claimed in interviews? Perhaps if we continue to monitor him we'll discover the answer to that question.

Elsewhere in the scene, the Scream Queen in the brown sweatshirt is approaching The Director. The Scream Queen in the checkered coat is, as would be expected, being a Scream Queen. And the bald guy in the dark sweatshirt is approaching the Nicole/Hoody/Jeff/Mery cluster. Do most of the people in the foreground of this shot, by the way, look as though they are frantically fleeing a life-threatening situation?



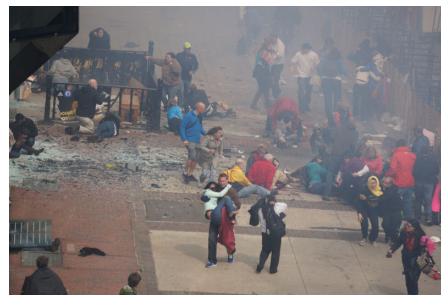
Going in now for a closer look, we see that The Director is calmly surveying the scene. One of the Scream Queens is right behind him, doing what Scream Queens do. Another of the Scream Queens is in the center of the image, also doing what Scream Queens do. The third is still hovering near Campbell's location. Meanwhile, the guy in the dark hoody is running across the scene, carrying something in his right hand. And Dr. Panter is currently out of the frame.



Pulling back, we can now see why Dr. Panter was so sneaky about circling back; he isn't actually heading towards the victim circle; he is walking towards the buildings. We can also see, as the smoke has begun to clear, that most of the participants in the human barricade slipped away under cover of the smoke cloud. Our three Scream Queens remain though, doing what they do best.



Moving in again, we are treated to the spectacle of two of the Scream Queens running around screaming for no apparent reason. They will continue to do that for several more minutes. We also catch a glimpse of Dr. Panter eyeing the scene just before he ducks into the Lenscrafters building. The Director continues to aloofly survey the scene, seemingly oblivious to the fact that there are alleged victims lying right at his feet.



In the next image, we get more of the same, though without Panter in the frame. As these shots make clear, Tang was actually shooting pretty quickly, at a rate of one frame every two to three seconds. The problem though is that his *average* rate is much lower than that, primarily because there are some very large gaps in the photo sequence, as we will see as we move along. It seems more than a little odd to me that a guy who was at times shooting at 20-30 frames per minute, as would be expected, would suddenly decide to give us almost nothing for almost a full minute, but we'll get to that later.



In the final image for this post, we see Panter's foot and lower leg as he slips into the Lenscrafters building. Nothing suspicious about that, I suppose. I'm sure he had important business in there. Maybe he had an appointment to get fitted for some new glasses. Or maybe there were some really seriously injured people in there. Or maybe he wanted to see if they were taking bids yet to replace the storefront glass. Elsewhere on the scene, bodies are now lined up along the railing, The Director is moving to center stage, our cowboy hero is climbing over the scaffolding, and the guy in blue doesn't seem to want any outsiders on the scene.



That's all for now. I'll be back soon with the next installment as we continue to work our way through the completely ridiculous scene that played out at the first blast site. All of these images though, even in reduced form, are going to cause me some serious bandwidth problems, and my site, as you may have noticed, isn't very well financed. So though I usually don't ask, it would be very much appreciated if a couple of you could toss a little change in the tip jar on my home page. Thanks in advance if you feel so inclined. And thanks to all of my readers for supporting and defending my work.

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Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 11)

June 13, 2013

It appears that nearly all of my working assumptions concerning what happened in Boston on April 15, 2013 have been proven wrong. Before beginning this journey, I had thought that recent claims that crisis actors have been involved in these type of incidents were pretty far-fetched, to say the least. But I was wrong (which I can occasionally force myself to admit).

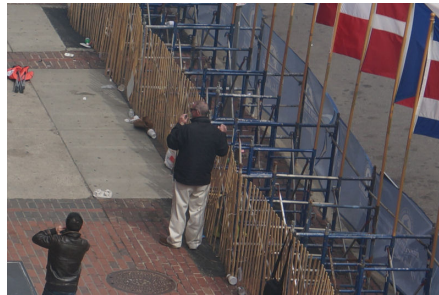
My next assumption, in the early days of my investigation, was that there were only a few actors planted in the crowd, specifically the Jeff Bauman and Associates grouping (hence the title and initial focus of this series), who were there to inflict maximum trauma on the American people through the display of unbelievably graphic disfigurement. But I was wrong again.

My thinking next evolved into the belief that the Boston incident had been run as a drill/training exercise which was sold to the American people, and the world, as a real attack. But I appear to have been wrong about that as well, because it has become perfectly obvious that this crime scene was in no way handled like a real crisis situation should be handled. And if it was, then we're in a lot of trouble if there ever is a real attack on these shores.

Since 9-11, this country has spent untold billions of dollars conducting disaster-training exercises so that first responders will be equipped to deal with real mass-casualty events. If what happened in Boston is an accurate representation of what all that money has bought, then we have a serious problem here. It's not very reassuring to learn that, if I happen to find myself a victim of such an attack, and if I have the misfortune of having both my legs blown off, I will likely be allowed to bleed out unattended on the pavement while dozens of responders stand idly by. And if I happen to find myself in traumatic arrest, fighting for my last breaths, I will likely be ignored for even longer – though a cute girl may stop by for a photo-op.

As will become increasingly obvious over the course of the next couple posts, the 'responders' on the scene were not real first-responders being trained and tested for disaster preparedness. No, they were in fact every bit as fake as the purported victims. No one on the scene seems to have known how to respond to or react to a real mass-casualty event. The scene that played out was, I have to say, pretty comical at times.

Let's now get back to where we left off. As will be recalled, Dr. Panter had just slipped into the Lenscrafters building and Carlos was beginning to climb over the scaffolding. The next view that Tang gives us is an almost completely worthless foreground shot, which I have cropped to highlight the only elements that seem to be of any interest. First of all, can that temporary fencing really be considered a "metal and wood barrier"? Does anyone honestly believe that it would offer any protection at all if a real bomb were to be detonated? Also, the only guy who had been in that area who did not leave the scene fairly quickly looks seriously sketchy.



Tang's next image is an infinitely fascinating one. We see that Dr. Panter has now made his way over to the victim's circle but he still has his jacket slung across his shoulders and isn't quite ready to start saving any lives yet. hilariously, he has just passed by three elderly people who are supposedly seriously injured - with one of them looking like he's knocking on death's door - without showing the slightest bit of concern. He is though checking in with one of our Scream Queens.

The bald guy in the dark hoody continues to randomly wander around. The big guy in the center of the image with the backwards baseball cap and the white "Team Keryn" T-shirt is a professional loiterer as well. The guy between the two of them, in the red jacket, is also a bit of a loiterer. He though is at least pretending to provide assistance to someone - a woman who is supposed to be his wife and who he has been working on continuously since the smoke cleared. No one is even pretending to help any of the other victims on the scene.

Meanwhile, Carlos is now trampling the fencing while attempting to get over it. Just beyond him, on the other side of the fence, is our favorite photographer. While there, he will get his 'iconic' photo of Nicole as well as the photo of Carlos leaning back against the fence surveying the scene.



Next up we see that Carlos is now inside the barrier but he has restored the fence, disguising the fact that he just came trampling over it. Dr. Panter is now passing nonchalantly by Jeff Bauman, who he can't help but notice. It couldn't really be any more obvious that Panter is fully aware that this is not a real crisis situation. There is an old guy who looks dead just inches from him, another guy with no legs just a few feet away, and a half-dead girl maybe ten feet away, but the good doctor still isn't ready to lend a hand just yet.



Moving on, we find that Dr. Panter was apparently unable to find anyone in need of assistance so he is walking away from the scene. The Director is now standing over the dead-looking old guy, but he doesn't seem to be too concerned. It is difficult to discern much else.



In the next image in the series, the entire victims' area appears to have been blurred out, so it's difficult to say what is going on. It's unclear whether the heroic Dr. Panter has wandered off the scene or if he is just lost in the haze. The Team Keryn guy is donating his belt to the guy in the red jacket, who already used his own belt. And the gal in the brown sweatshirt is, shockingly, running around screaming.



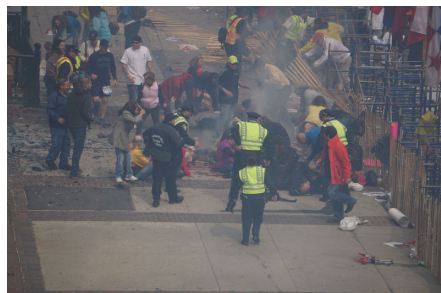
The next shot gives us more of the same, with a haze hanging over the victims' area.



In the next image we get a clearer view, but it appears that Tang has excised a number of shots from his collection. According to the race clock, the two preceding images were taken just one second apart, but now we have a gap of eighteen seconds between the last frame and the following one. We can see that Panter is back on the scene but he still has his jacket across his shoulders and he continues to show a complete lack of concern for any of the alleged victims. And Carlos, needless to say, hasn't yet begun to save Jeff's life. The smoky haze is still lingering over the scene, but only where the victims are gathered.



Moving on, we find that Panter has finally taken off his jacket and may be ready now to pretend to help someone. Carlos though is still on break. The Director is absurdly standing right in the center of the action, doing nothing. All of our Scream Queens and professional loiterers are gathered to the left, with the lady in the checkered coat doing a fine job of emoting. The police have arrived, but they're not rushing to help anyone.



Next up we have The Director still standing center-stage, right next to legless Jeff, who no one has yet shown any concern for. Panter has now decided that Mery Daniel is the patient most in need of his attention, Carlos is meditating, and the loiterers are continuing to loiter. Meanwhile, the older guy to the far left is using a time-honored method of reviving an unresponsive patient – stand over them, cup your hands, and yell at them really loudly.



We now pull back a bit to take a better look at the bizarre smoke column centered over the victims' area. I can see no logical reason why that should be there. Did someone start a campfire to keep everyone warm? For there to be smoke still being generated, something would have to be smoldering on the ground. But why then does no one seem concerned with putting it out? And why has no one moved away to avoid breathing the presumably toxic smoke? Why is no one shielding their face to filter out the smoke? Why does everyone act as though it's not really there at all?



The next image is largely more of the same – more unexplained smokiness, more loitering, more emoting by the gal in the checkered coat, and more failure by the police to make any effort to secure the crime scene. Carlos though is off break now and doing a little demo work. The fire department is now on the scene, but apparently not to put out the smoldering fire that is producing all of the smoke.



Tang next cuts away to a completely worthless shot that I don't really have much to say about, but I am including every shot in the collection lest I be accused of deliberately leaving something out.

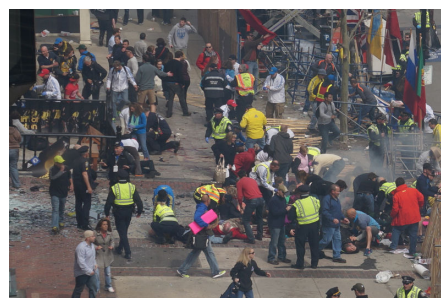


We now return to the scene to find that Tang has hoodwinked us. While he was cutting away to that worthless foreground shot, a full 27 seconds elapsed. What we have seen then so far in this post is a series of images shot very quickly, followed by an unexplained 18-second gap, which in turn was followed by four images captured in just thirteen seconds, which were followed by an unexplained 27-second gap in which we got just one pointless foreground shot. Clearly Tang is hiding something from us.

There are now far more responders on the scene. In the background, a number of people, none of them police personnel, are actively working to keep outsiders off the scene. Did someone deputize these people? Carlos is still not quite ready to save Jeff's life. In the upper right corner, we see that the Craft crew arrived on the scene while Tang was taking a break. And Dr. Levine as well. We also see that there is nothing preventing vehicles from pulling up to the scene, and therefore no valid reason to parade the victims down the street for the cameras.



Next up we find our favorite photographer getting ready to move on after capturing yet another of the images that has appeared in this series (he is behind the railing and appears to have just snapped the shot of the victim lying in front of the undamaged paper sign). Carlos continues to fiddle with the scaffolding while ludicrously still holding his flag. The Director, all three Scream Queens and all the professional loiterers continue to linger on the scene, though they clearly have no business being there and they are accomplishing nothing other than frequently getting in the way.



Moving in closer, we can see that Dr. Levine has now arrived, but he isn't in too big of a hurry just yet to offer any assistance. Victims either lie unattended or are being worked on by civilians. Apparently civilians were authorized to provide medical assistance *and* tend to crowd control at this event. Someone though really should check on the old guy in the left foreground. Or at least move him before someone trips over him. I'd hate to see anyone get injured.



Let's now see what kind of absurdities we can find in the next image. Right off the bat, it's hard not to notice Dr. Levine cheerfully waving to someone while continuing to show no concern whatsoever for the injured victims all around him. The old guy is now surrounded by professional looking responders, but still no one seems to care enough to check up on him. Carlos continues to rescue Jeff by wrestling with the scaffolding. And the guy in the red jacket is *still* trying to get that tourniquet around his wife's leg.



This next image will be the last for this post. Dr. Levine is now looking up at the Lenscrafters building, which was a popular thing to do at the time. You can see the FBI-looking guy in the upper right corner doing the same thing, as is the guy in blue just behind Levine. Curiously, the only part of the image that is obscured by smoke is the general area where we know that Campbell and Rand are awaiting medical attention.



In the next installment, we'll find out whether Carlos will stop wrestling with the scaffolding long enough to rescue Jeff Bauman, whether Dr. Panter will realize that Krystle Campbell is dying, whether the guy in the dark hoody will ever find a purpose in life, whether Dr. Levine will ever decide to use his medical expertise to help out, and whether the Scream Queen in the pink vest will use that bottle of water in her hand to put out the smoldering fire that keeps obscuring our view of the only alleged fatality on the scene. Stay tuned.

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the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 12)

June 20, 2013

Before proceeding fearlessly onward, I have a link here to an absolutely must-see video. Entitled *Stu Seagall Strategic Operations Video Business Card*, it is another video featuring the work of crisis actors for training purposes. It is though much more revealing than the previous video I linked to, so go and watch about the first three minutes of it. I'll wait right here until you get back.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpIkY24xmKQ>

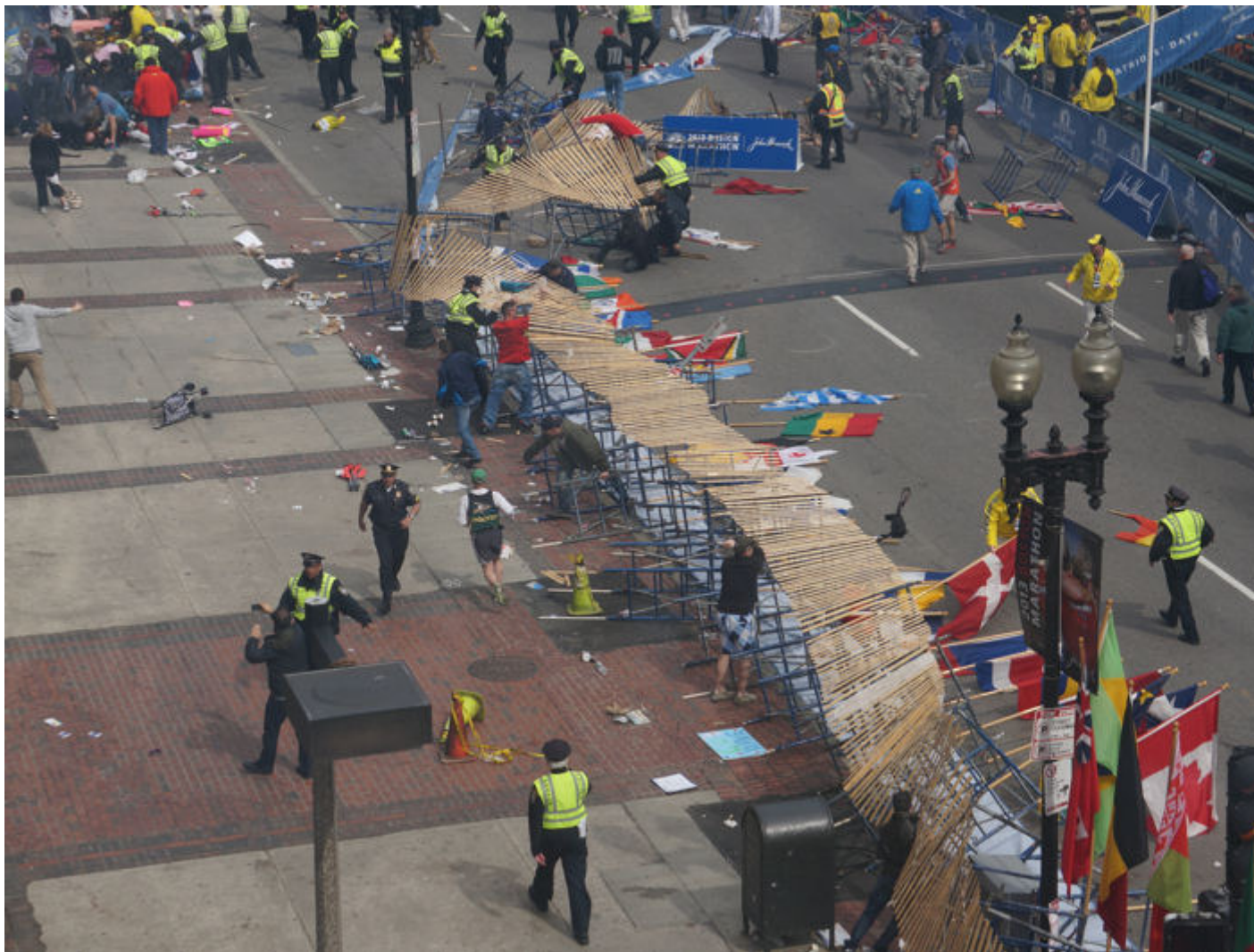
Now that's some pretty realistic fake gore, don't you think? Way better than the low-budget affair we saw in Boston. But then again, there was considerably more time available to prep the fake victims in the Seagall video. The Boston victims didn't have that luxury, which is undoubtedly why what we mostly got in lieu of realistic wounds was lots of ripped clothing and fake blood.

I'm sure you also noticed how easy it apparently is to create realistic looking explosions that are completely harmless even to those standing right next to them. But what you may not have noticed is that there is something markedly different about the fakery in the video and the fakery on the streets of Boston. Go back and watch those first few minutes again and pay close attention to how the actors respond to the sudden and unexpected loss of a limb.

As the video stresses, the goal is "hyper realism." And the people putting these simulations together have experienced the real thing and know what they are doing. Which means that, as it turns out, people don't really react well to having a limb blown off. They tend to writhe around in so much pain and fear that it takes several people to physically restrain them so that their wounds can be tended to.

As the Navy corpsman in the video points out, "The actors have been playing the role – not just laying there." The role, you see, requires more than "just laying there." And yet every one of our Boston victims did exactly that. None of them "play[ed] the role." Which raises the obvious question: who cast this Jeff Bauman character? I don't know that I've ever seen a stiffer performance (though to be fair, I do generally try to avoid any films starring Keanu Reeves).

The next seven images in the chronological sequence are the ones covering the 48 seconds during which Krystle Campbell was famously photographed. We've seen them before but for the sake of continuity and to see what we might have missed the first time around, let's run through them once again. This first one, as will be recalled, features Dr. Levine waving to his fans while the blond EMT passes by he and Dr. Panter. The second is one of Tang's patented cutaway shots.



In this next image, the red jacket guy, who is reportedly Kevin Corcoran, continues to work feverishly on his wife, Celeste Corcoran. Kev still has on his ball cap. Does that seem odd to you? It does to me. Have you ever worn a ball cap on a windy day? This bomb supposedly exploded with enough force to blow legs clean off and to reduce clothing to ribbons, but it didn't blow the cap off Kev's head. He must have had a chinstrap on that thing.

Just below and slightly to the right of Kev, emerging from the haze, is a kid! Where the hell did he come from?! I guess he's part of our cast now so we're going to need a name for him, so I'm going to go with Li'l Jeff, even though he is actually supposed to be Noah Gregory. Another newbie to keep an eye on is the guy in the red shirt and loafers strolling onto the scene to the lower left. And the Dick Cheney-looking guy in black who is near the signpost, in front of the curiously emotional police couple. He came on the scene a few frames back.

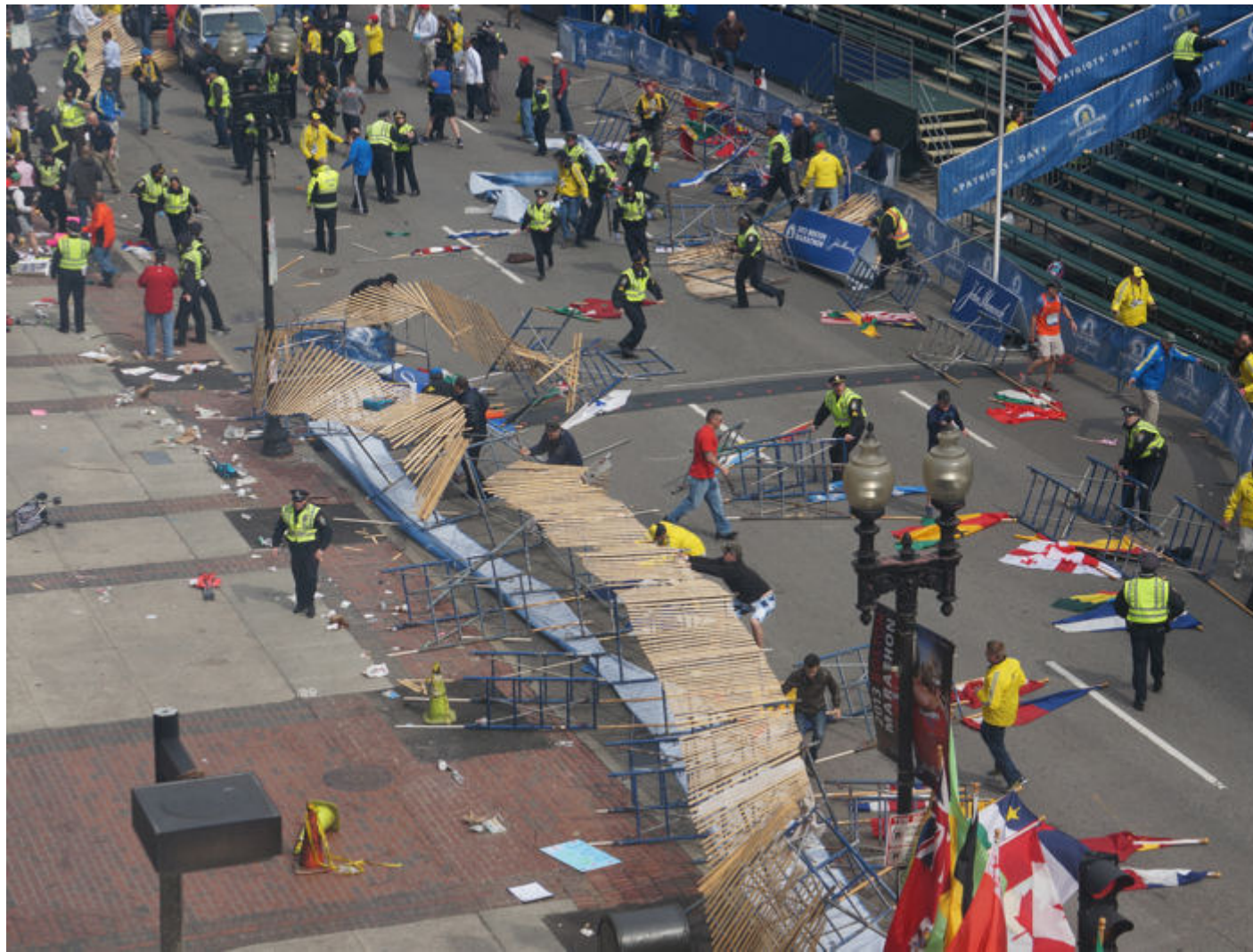
The dark hoody guy we've been following, now in the background just to the left of center, is supposed to be Michael Gross, husband of victim Nicole Gross. They allegedly got separated in the blast and he has been searching for her. Being that there are so many victims and so much ground to cover, he's been having a really tough time. Also, he has a pretty serious head injury that might be causing some disorientation. You might not be able to see his head injury, but he has one. So does Li'l Jeff. I know that these are true facts because I read them in newspaper articles.



In the next image it is almost time for Campbell's big photo-op, which apparently required a closed set. Mr. Loafers in the red shirt is taking care of that while Michael, in the upper left corner, continues to search in vain for Nicole. Dr. Panter and others are prepping Mery for her gurney ride. Let's pause here for just a moment to think about just how completely ridiculous that is: consider that, as we know from earlier images, Mery is lying right next to Jeff Bauman. Literally, right next to him. Yet none of the responders in that area seems to think it at all odd that he is being completely ignored while the two-legged gal is being cared for. Meanwhile, Cheney and pink vest are closely monitoring the Campbell photo-op.

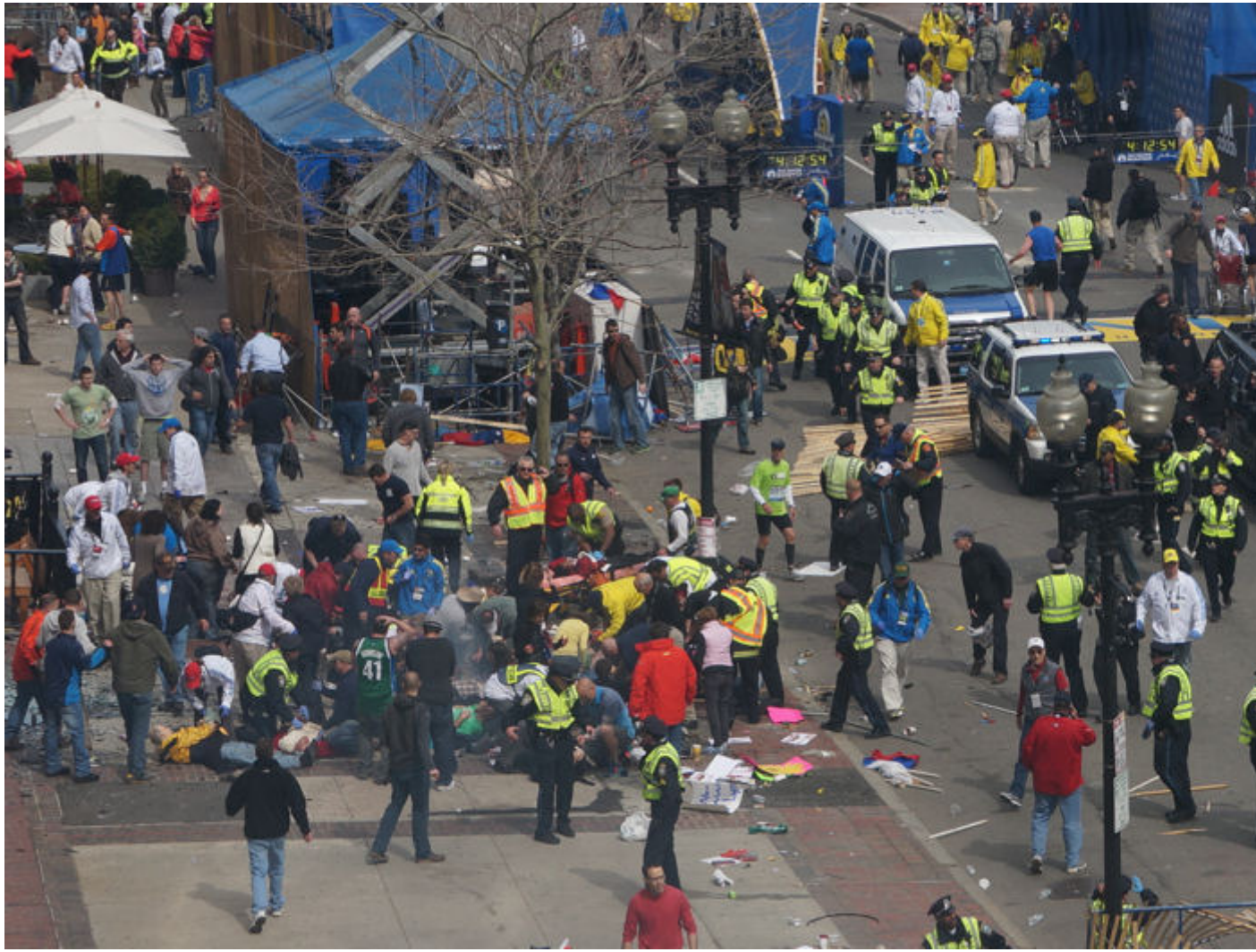


Tang next cuts away to give us two rather pointless frames, neither of which is really worth commenting on other than to note that a lot of people seem to be concerned with tearing shit down that would normally have remained up for the rest of the day.





Returning now to the scene of the crime, we see that Mr. Loafers is wandering around in the foreground, as is Michael, who is still having no luck finding Nicole. Pink vest and Cheney are still hovering over Campbell, though no medical personnel seem to be too concerned about her. The bloody old lady in the lower left portion of the image is now on her feet and apparently able to stand on her bloody legs! At the rear of the victims' circle, next to the blond EMT who now has her back to us, yet another guy is stripping off his belt to donate to the Save Celeste Corcoran Project. That makes three belts for Celeste and none for Jeff. The Scream Queen in the brown sweatshirt is still pointlessly loitering around, Carlos and Dr. Panter are heroically rescuing Jeff, and Mery Daniel is loaded onto the gurney and ready to roll. She is the only victim we will see being prepped for transport.



Tang cuts away once again in the next image, giving us yet another pointless ... wait a minute! Holy shit! There is a guy with a black backpack running from the scene at the bottom of the image! Someone needs to stop that guy! Does the FBI know about this? He's obviously a terrorist of some sort.



We next get the kind of poorly framed shot that Tang seems to like to use when there is something going on in the other half of the victims' circle that we aren't supposed to see. We can though see that Mr. Loafers appears to be the new director, Carlos is working very hard to save Jeff Bauman, and the sweatshirt gal still won't leave the scene. Meanwhile, one responder continues to crouch down and hold on tightly to Li'l Jeff, which is, quite frankly, starting to get a little creepy.



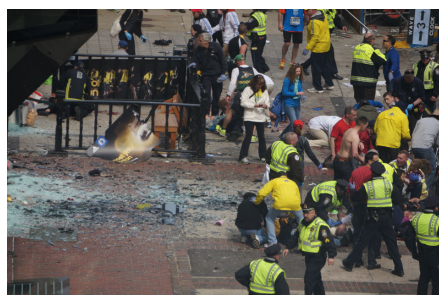
This next shot is an endlessly fascinating one, primarily because we just happen to have the exact same scene captured at almost precisely the same moment in time from the reverse angle. Look at the positions, posture, etc. of all the key characters and you will see that these two images were captured just a split-second apart. And lo and behold! Look who's back on the scene! I do believe it is our old friend Running Man, standing right next to the pink vested mourner-for-hire! I have no idea where he's just come from though. At one time I thought he had taken a place among the prone victims, but I am no longer very confident in that conclusion. So I really have no clue where he's been, but I'm very happy to see that he is back in time for the coming wrap party.

From the reverse angle, we can see that there aren't very many apparent victims left, though all three Jeffs – Original Jeff, Other Jeff, and Li'l Jeff – are still there. We can't actually see Original Jeff because the douchebag in the orange jacket is in the way, but we can see that Carlos is (not) leading the charge to rescue him. From Tang's perspective, we see that Dr. Levine is, naturally enough, standing idly by while observing Running Man and pink vest, unaware that Campbell is dying just a couple feet in front of him. The director remains on the set, Kev is still working on saving Celeste, and the sweatshirt gal might finally be punching out for the day.

Guess how long it's been, by the way, since Tang last showed us this scene? If you guessed 58 seconds, then pick any of the stuffed animals from the bottom shelf. Considering that the total elapsed time since detonation is just over four minutes, a minute is an extraordinarily long time to cut away from the action.



Tang next gives us his favorite partial view of the scene. Some shirtless dude is trying to get his hands on baby Jeff, but Li'l Jeff's savior doesn't want to give him up. A cop might finally be telling Mr. Loafers to get the fuck out of the way, Kev is still working away, and Carlos is placing a whoopee cushion in a wheelchair, but not in Jeff's wheelchair, which hasn't arrived yet.



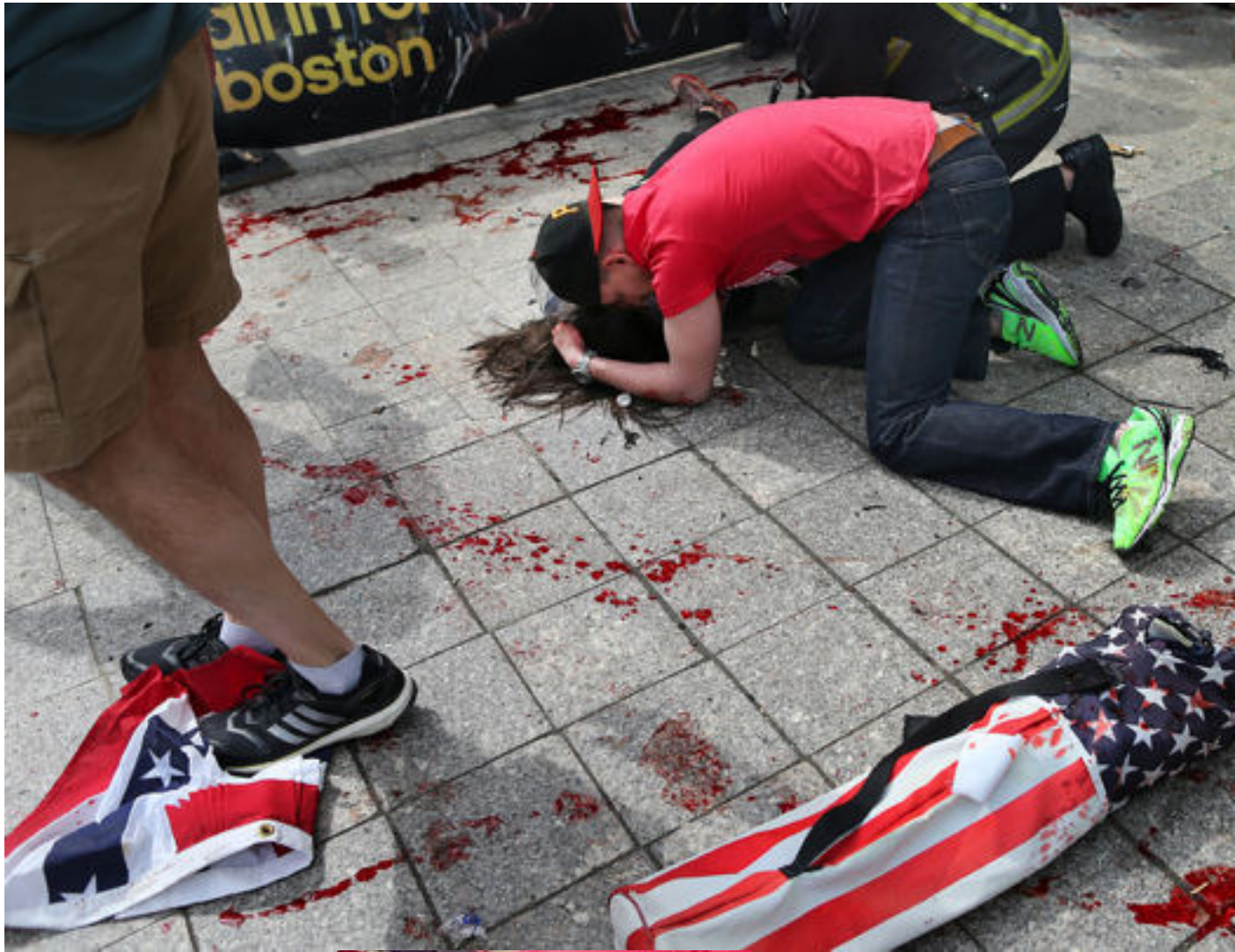
In the next image, Dr. Levine is calling signals while Dr. Panter prepares to hike the ball. The shirtless guy is getting more aggressive in his attempts to abduct Li'l Jeff and Mr. Loafers has decided to hang around a bit longer. So too has the brown sweatshirt gal, who is now actually attempting to help someone, though I have no idea who because there were no victims in that area initially (upper left). Meanwhile, Running Man and pink vest continue to hover over Campbell. In the bonus image, we can see that Running Man and pink vest seem to be pretty chummy. We can also see the back of Li'l Jeff's head (right behind Carlos), where his injury is supposed to be.



The next image in the series confused me at first because our favorite photographer can clearly be seen to the far left, just beyond the railing, snapping a photo that I thought he had already taken. But as it turns out, he captured two completely different images staged around the same victim. On his first trip over there, about two minutes after the blast, the main 'responder' on the scene was a civilian in a black cap and red shirt, as can be seen in the first image below. A few minutes later, when the photographer returned, there was a new 'responder' on the scene, this one in a blue cap.



The first image our fearless photographer captured appeared to show a man grieving over a presumably dead victim. Or maybe just an overly friendly stranger trying to help out. The image was the basis of a social media post that someone attempted to turn viral. The boyfriend, needless to say, has apparently invented a teleportation device of some kind that enabled him to arrive on the scene just two minutes after the first blast. Amazingly, he's already found his significant other while Michael, who was already on the scene, is still looking for his.



This man was going to propose to his girlfriend. She was at the marathon in Boston. When the man heard what had happened, he rushed over there. He found his love dead. If you really care repost and tag to #prayforboston

Within a few minutes though, the distraught boyfriend had gotten over his loss and moved on, and the victim, identified as Sydney Corcoran, had come back from the dead. I don't want to sound like an alarmist, but someone should probably think about shooting her in the head before she starts eating her rescuers. Also, father-of-the-year Kevin Corcoran should probably take a break from tying belts around his wife and at least check in on his daughter. She was, after all, dead just a few minutes ago.



Returning now to the Tang sequence of images, we find that the scene is quickly becoming a total clusterfuck, and it will soon get even worse. Most of the people on the scene – including the firemen, the national guard troops, most of the police, and pretty much all of the civilians, have no real business being there and would only be hindering any real rescue operations.

Shirtless guy and the other guy have now agreed to a topless wrestling match to determine who gets to keep Li'l Jeff. Running Man is still on the scene keeping an eye on Campbell and he has now been joined by Mr. Loafers. And Carlos and Dr. Panter are still prepping Jeff for his star-making wheelchair ride.



Moving in closer, we see Dr. Levine chatting it up with the firemen while numerous non-medical personnel continue to hover over Campbell's location. Mr. Loafers though has grown bored with that and is wandering away. Shirtless guy has lost the wrestling match and failed to gain control over Li'l Jeff. Meanwhile, Carlos is being handed some mysterious blue object and it looks as though Jeff's wheelchair has now arrived, so it's probably about time to cut away again.



As expected, Tang cuts off our view of Jeff undergoing the final preparations for his ride into the history books. There isn't much to say about this image other than that the guy in the foreground seems to be aware of Tang's camera.



That's all for this edition except for this one final image, because I don't want to leave you all to worry over the fate of Li'l Jeff. According to one report, "[Li'l Jeff] had been struck by shrapnel in the back of his head, where he now has a bald patch, and straight to the bone on his right leg, where he has a long scar that he has dubbed the 'swordfish.'" He sure looked cute though taking a wheelchair ride out of there, just like Original Jeff and Other Jeff. It would have been nice though if the footrest hadn't been digging into his ouchie. Didn't any of the fake responders in Boston know how to use those things correctly?

<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2013/06/16/18986893-boston-marathon-victim-still-fighting-to-keep-leg-months-after-bombing-i-could-not-have-it-tomorrow?lite>



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the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 13)

June 25, 2013

Apparently some of you have actual lives, which means that, unlike me, you haven't spent countless hours obsessing over the Boston Marathon bombing photos. And because of that, some of you have let me know that you are having trouble locating the areas of the images that I am referencing in the text. So I have decided, because I'm a giver, to include some crudely-rendered colored arrows to provide some visual references.

Anyway, when we left off last time, Jeff's chariot had arrived, prompting Tang to once again cut away from the action. We return to the same view without much having changed, other than that the cop in the left foreground is about to perform a knee-drop on the old guy laying on the ground (blue arrow). That old guy, by the way, whose name is reportedly Bill White, will allegedly lose one of his legs. There is apparently a little-known provision in the new Obamacare bill that requires any leg injury, regardless of severity, to be remedied with amputation.



Returning once again to the action after another lengthy absence, we see that the scene is now completely overrun with ‘responders.’ There can’t be more than a handful of the original victims left, now surrounded by scores of civilians, firemen, police, medical personnel, and national guard troops. In the upper right-hand corner, Jeff and Carlos (green arrow) are about to become the poster boys for this whole sordid affair. Notice that just moments before this shot was taken, the Bauman entourage had passed by one of those very rare and coveted gurneys (yellow arrow).

In the foreground, Mr. Loafers (purple arrow) is consulting with the cop and the fireman, while in front of the tree, Dr. Levine (blue arrow) is doing what he does best – calmly waiting in the wings on the off-chance that someone might need medical assistance. Dr. Panter (orange arrow), next to the guy in the orange jacket, is also on standby. And Li’l Jeff is still being held by the same responder guy (red arrow). Li’l Jeff, as you may have guessed, got separated from his mom in the blast, so now he’s on his own. There’s no way to find his mom because she could be as much as 3-4 feet away.



In the next image, the bearded guy who had been lying among the victims is now talking to the cop in the foreground (blue arrow). Like so many others in Boston that day, he appears to be modeling a pair of pants from Walmart's Robinson Caruso collection. Meanwhile, Mr. Loafers checks in on one of the victims (yellow arrow) and it looks like Krystle Campbell's gurney may have finally arrived (green arrow). In the upper left corner, responders are swarming all around Sydney Corcoran.



Moving on, we find the scene around Sydney reaching such a fever pitch that the guy in the shorts is leaping the railing (light blue arrow) to get in on the action, even though there are already a number of professional responders on the job. The cop is now checking out bearded guy's pants and asking about where he can get a pair (green arrow). Elsewhere, new victims continue to surface (yellow arrow), Dr. Levine (orange arrow) is still on standby, and Dr. Panter (pink arrow) is pretending to tend to Campbell. Notice also that the tables inside the railing are still perfectly intact (blue arrow). File that away for future reference.



Next up we find that the bearded guy is being arrested for vagrancy (blue arrow). Bearded guy, by the way, is supposedly Colton Kilgore, seen being interviewed in the first link below. According to a fundraising page Kilgore set up, he was watching the marathon that day with a group that included Li'l Jeff and his mom, Rebekah Gregory. Funny then that he doesn't seem too concerned in any of the images with reuniting Li'l Jeff with his mom and her boyfriend. Rebekah Gregory, curiously enough, is a corporate housing executive whose company works with clients such as Honeywell, GE, Exxon, AT&T, and the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.

http://wlos.com/shared/news/features/top-stories/stories/wlos_local-boston-marathon-victims-marathon-ahead-11971.shtml

<http://www.gofundme.com/dimartinofamily>

<http://corporatehousingbyowner.com/blog/2013/04/preferred-corporate-housing-executive-injured-in-boston-marathon-bombings/>

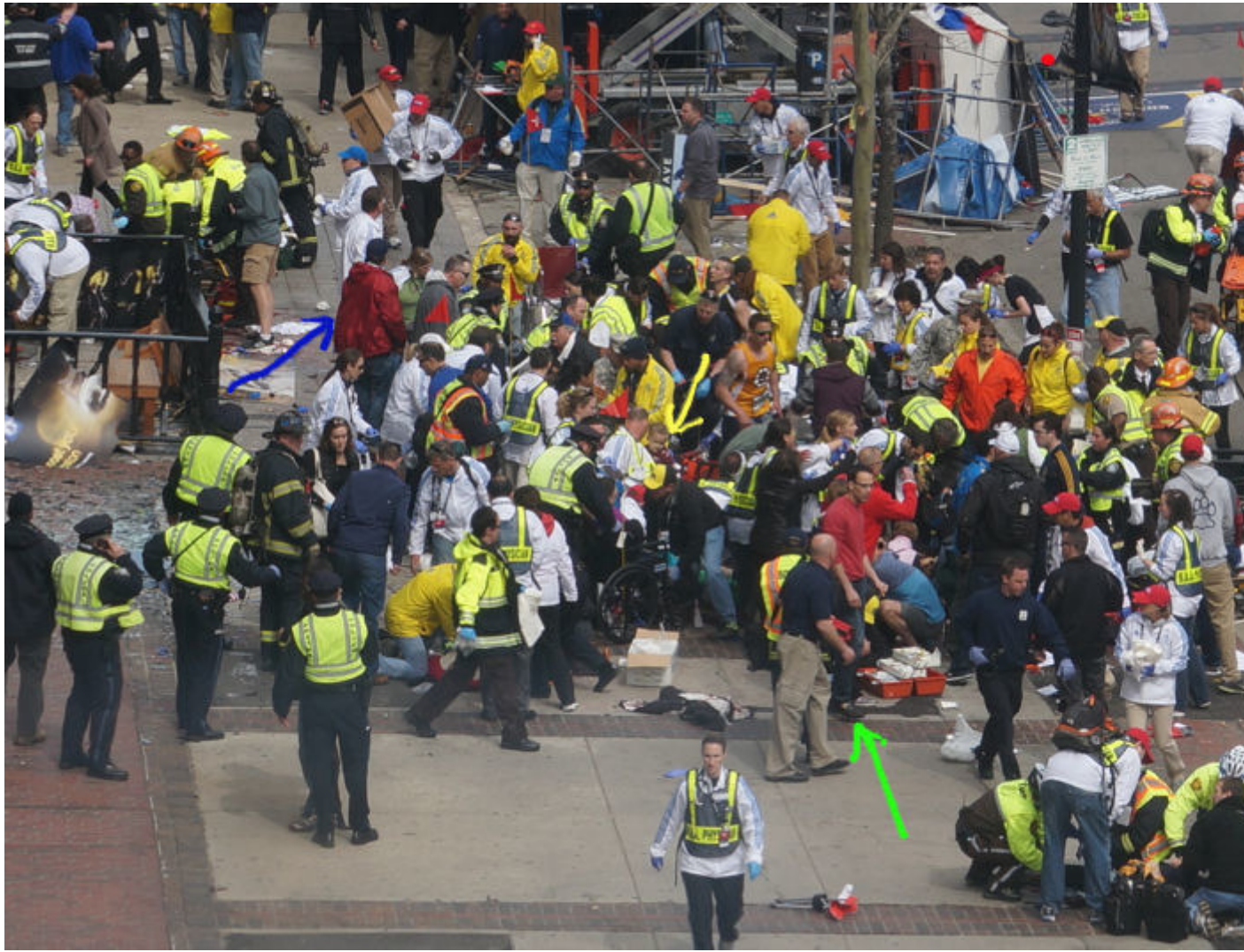
<http://www.corporates.com/clients.php>

<http://www.corporates.com/government.php>

Elsewhere in the image, there continues to be a great deal of activity centered around Sydney Corcoran, but Kevin “Family Values” Corcoran (green arrow) doesn’t seem too concerned. Alongside Campbell’s waiting gurney, our favorite blond EMT (red arrow) knows she is being photographed.



In the next photo, Kev stands calmly by (blue arrow) while continuing to ignore the fact that just behind him and to his left there are a half-dozen responders frantically working to allegedly save his daughter’s life. Meanwhile, Mr. Loafers (green arrow) continues to make his rounds and no one has yet called Child Services to report the appalling exploitation of Li'l Jeff (yellow arrow). In the upper right corner, Grumpy Gus (orange arrow) is now setting off on his wheelchair ride.



Here's Grumpy Gus from the reverse angle, in an image captured at almost the same moment in time. He doesn't seem to be dealing with his injuries as well as most of the Boston Strong victims. His right leg must be very badly injured because he has some kind of splinty thing on it and a physician is supporting it for him, which nobody bothered to do for Jeff or The Other Jeff. And his face has some kind of red fluid on it that looks like it was self-applied.



Grumpy Gus is reportedly Eric Whalley, who was allegedly very gravely injured. Let's check in now with some trusted mainstream media sources to find out just how serious his wounds were. According to the *Daily Mail*, "The Whalleys ... have had nearly a dozen surgeries between them to remove multiple ball bearings and nails. Eric Whalley was struck in the skull and eye and may lose his sight. There is also the chance he will suffer brain damage ... [Eric] had a blood clot on one side of his brain. He also had orthopedic surgery on his right leg. 'The feet are in especially bad shape,' said [son Richard] Whalley. 'Part of the right foot was blown off.'"

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2311243/Boston-Bombings-2013-Eric-Whalley-65-iconic-blast-picture-lose-sight-suffer-brain-damage.html>

Sounds pretty serious. The *Boston Globe* provided some more details: "[Eric Whalley] had spent the week on his stomach and side after surgery to repair and reattach his retina and should regain partial vision in that eye. The BB that pierced it remains embedded in his brain; removing it would cause more harm than good. After a terrifying first few days in which doctors stabilized bleeding in his brain while trying to stave off infection, Eric has been alert, upbeat, and as sharp-witted as ever, his son said. For now, doctors plan to reconstruct Eric's damaged right foot and lower leg through a series of surgeries over the coming year, though amputation may be necessary, Richard said."

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/05/11/the-boston-marathon-wounded-eric-and-ann-whalley/YShKIhsoJ3ujL7xilYI4WN/story.html>

According to the family's fundraising page, Whalley was in an intensive care unit for several days and "suffered brain trauma and damage to his legs, and will need several follow up operations including a serious neurological operation later this week at Brigham & Women's hospital." Sounds pretty grim, doesn't it, what with the possible brain damage, partial blindness and the possible loss of a leg? Before jumping to any conclusions though, let's take a look at a photo of Whalley taken before he was loaded into that wheelchair.

<https://www.giveforward.com/fundraiser/yy72/whalleyrecoveryfund/updates/29764>



There are quite obviously no open wounds on his right leg at all. Nothing whatsoever other than some dried red paint here and there. I suppose it could be argued that the injuries are to the back of his leg, but that would make no sense since he was supposedly struck in the eye, which means that he would have had to be facing the blast. His right foot is also fully intact, unless it was somehow partially blown off without damaging his shoe. And the 'blood' on the ground all around his legs is of unknown origin since he has no open wounds visible. He does though favor the Castaway look when it comes to shopping for pants.

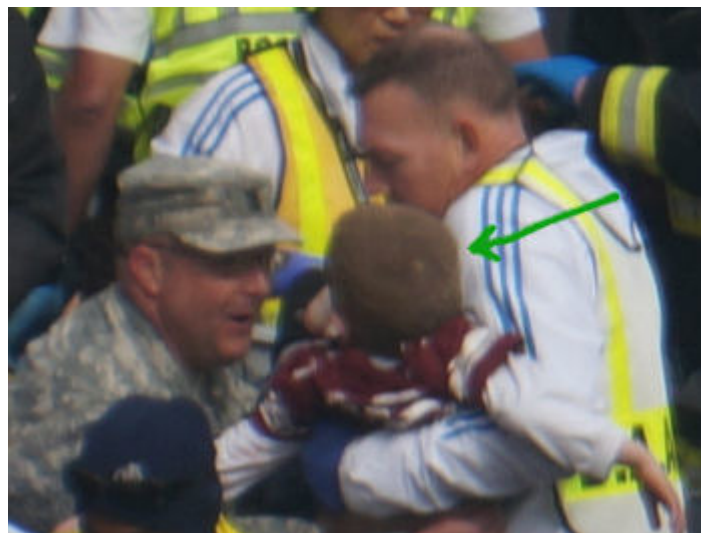
Has anyone else noticed, by the way, that the shrapnel in the bomb was very respectful of the modesty of the victims? Whether we're looking at Shrapnel Man, Running Man, Colton Kilgore, or Grumpy Gus, we consistently find that pant legs have been shredded while the victims' crotches remain discretely covered. And that is surely a good thing because – let's be honest here – no one really wants to see Whalley's bloody junk on display. Come to think of it though, it seems kind of weird that there were so many explosive amputations of legs and not a single report of an explosive castration. Would Super Jeff be nearly as upbeat and optimistic if he had had three appendages blown off?

Eric Whalley, as it turns out, is a former pharmacology professor turned biotechnology executive. He recently retired from Biogen Idec, Inc., a corporate entity that is undoubtedly involved in research and development projects that you don't want to know about. Both of his sons work in the biotechnology/biomedical industry as well. Nothing suspicious about that, I suppose.

<http://www.biogenidec.com/>

Returning now to the Tang images, we see that Kev (yellow arrow) continues to refuse to even look in his daughter's direction, while Dr. Levine continues to do absolutely nothing (blue arrow). Campbell appears to be loaded onto her gurney (green arrow), a process being closely monitored by Mr. Loafers (light blue arrow), because it's always good to have some random fuckwad in the way when you're trying to save the life of a young woman who supposedly barely has a pulse. It's now been more than eight minutes since the blast, by the way, and Campbell is one of the last remaining victims.

In other news, Li'l Jeff is finally being handed off to a national guardsman (red arrow), which provides us with a clear view of the back of his head, which was reportedly ripped open by shrapnel. It's no surprise then that in the close-up, we can see the bloody, jagged wound (green arrow – but don't waste too much time looking for it).



In the next image, the guy under the green arrow is pointing over his shoulder and saying, “Check this shit out! Right behind me are two Steven Spielbergs!” One of them, Dr. Levine, has found something new to do: leer at the cute girl. Meanwhile, Mr. Loafers (red arrow) continues to monitor the handling

of Campbell, Kev (yellow arrow) continues to ignore the plight of his daughter, and the girl in the foreground (blue arrow) knows that she is on Candid Camera.



Shockingly enough, Tang next cuts away from the action around Campbell to give us three relatively worthless images taken in fairly rapid succession. In them, we can see that Kev appears to be putting his belt back on while never once so much as looking in his daughter's direction. We also see that Li'l Jeff is still on the scene. Following those three shots, Tang gives us an even more useless pic.









Tang must then have had to take a big dump, I'm guessing, since he stopped shooting for the next four minutes or so. In the image below, some twelve minutes have elapsed since the blast and the party is starting to break up. Still lingering on the scene though are Mr. Loafers (yellow arrow), pink vest and her Cheneyesque sidekick (green arrows). Li'l Jeff is for some reason still on the scene as well, but his final rescuer (red arrow) is on the way. In the upper right corner, The Other Jeff is being rolled out for his photo-ops (blue arrow).



Here is yet another view of The Other Jeff (whose 'real' name, I suppose I should note, is Patrick Downes), which shows that someone got their act together at some point and uncovered his injury for the cameras. There weren't all that many gory injuries to traumatize the American people with, so it's a good thing that this one wasn't wasted. I don't mean to question the top-notch emergency medical care the victims received, but wouldn't that makeshift tourniquet have worked better if it had been applied above the wound? Also, in the two close-ups, is that the same leg injury? Just checking.





I'm sure no one will be surprised to learn that Downes allegedly lost a leg that day. So did his girlfriend. Celeste Corcoran allegedly lost two, as did Jeff Bauman. Mery Daniel reportedly lost one, as did Karen Rand and Bill White. Hoody and Whalley barely avoided losing theirs. Rebekah Gregory is supposedly still fighting to keep hers. It appears that this is shaping up to be The Year of the Amputee.

Given that we aren't supposed to have very long attention spans these days, many have probably already forgotten that one of the first big stories to hit the airwaves this year concerned a guy by the name of Oscar "Blade Runner" Pistorius. Few could have guessed that just two months later Pistorius would be replaced as the most high-profile double amputee on the planet by our very own Jeff Bauman. Or that two months after that, there would be an Amputees Gone Wild incident on a Belgian soccer field.

And the year is only half over.

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the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 14)

July 1, 2013

Before returning to the last of the Tang images, I have an interesting photo here that I just stumbled across the other day. Pretty much all of the other images that I have seen of the first smoke cloud were taken from the finish line, which offered an obstructed view of the scene. This one though was taken from the other direction and offers a much clearer, less obstructed view. And I have to say that, from this angle, it does not look to me like that smoke cloud resulted from an explosion on the ground.



Returning now to where we left off, we find that Mr. Loafers (blue arrow) is still lingering on the scene. In another minute or so though, he and everyone else will be gone and the show will be over. Li'l Jeff's final rescuer (red arrow) has him loaded up and ready to roll. Is it just me, by the way, or does L'il Jeff's chauffer look more like a model than a cop? Meanwhile, the table that was perfectly intact just a couple minutes ago is now reduced to firewood (green arrow), though it is hard to see from this angle.



In the next two images, we get an unobstructed view of the now-vacated scene. These pics are notable primarily for what is *not* visible. We don't, for example, see any leftover body parts littering the pavement. Not even any chunks of bloody flesh. There is not, as far as I can see, any biological matter whatsoever on the pavement. There is some of what is supposed to be blood, but not nearly what there would have been had scores of people been ripped apart by a bomb.

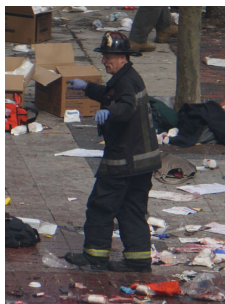
There is also no sign of any scorched material that would account for the smoldering fire that kept the victims' area shrouded in smoke through much of the 'rescue' operation. And there is one other thing that is noticeably absent: an abundance of blood-soaked towels, rolls of gauze, bits of clothing, etc.. Dozens of people were allegedly treated on this pavement, many of them suffering from amputation or near-amputation injuries. Efforts to staunch the flow of blood and to clean up the wounds so that injuries could be assessed should have resulted in scores of blood-soaked articles left behind, but there is no indication of that in these images.

In the second image, we can though see that the wooden table, which had been minding its own business, has been pulverized for unknown reasons (blue arrow). I guess someone had to improvise a leg splint or something.





Before leaving behind the Tang images, I have just one more question: what the fuck is this guy doing? Practicing his tightrope act? Or maybe working on his America's Got Talent audition?



After the show was over, pink vest and her sidekick casually strolled off the scene, passing by a waiting ambulance along the way (red arrow). I think we can all agree that in this image, as well as in all the other images we have reviewed, it is perfectly clear that the pink lady did not sustain any injuries in the blast, despite the fact that she was standing almost alongside the girl who was

supposedly hit with lethal force, as can be seen in the second image below (red arrow), the very first clear shot captured by Thorndike.





In this next shot, we get a fairly detailed view of pink vest and her Cheneyesque partner-in-crime, and once again it is perfectly clear that neither suffered any injuries. We can also see once again that Li'l Jeff, despite media reports to the contrary, was clearly not hit in the back of the head by shrapnel – which is a good thing since shrapnel ejected with enough force to literally blow peoples' legs off would have surely killed him had he taken a direct hit to the head.



It is perfectly clear from the photographic record that pink vest was in fine shape just moments after the blast, just as it is clear that she moved freely about the blast area throughout the rescue operation. In the dozens of images in which she appears, it is painfully obvious that she did not suffer any injuries and she was able to leave the scene on her own two feet. Moments later though, she was videotaped being paraded out for the cameras as though she was a wounded victim with a leg injury.



In all fairness though, there appears to have been a serious shortage of actual victims, so the people running the show had to make do with what they had. As the video linked below reveals, there was not, as Quinn and others have claimed in their feeble attempts at 'debunking' this series, a shortage of ambulances and gurneys. To the contrary, the problem was that there were not nearly enough victims to fill the massive convoy of responding ambulances.

This is, I have to say, perhaps the most bizarre interview clip to emerge from the Boston fiasco. The reporter on the scene, who seems rather baffled by what he is seeing, explains that although all the known victims have been transported off the scene, there is still a solid line of ambulances extending for at least four city blocks, all parked nearly bumper-to-bumper with their lights flashing. Also rather bizarre is that as the reporter is questioning yet another surgeon who just happened to be on the scene ready to spring into action – and who is spinning the usual tall tales of tending to phantom victims with missing body parts – he gestures toward the doctor and indicates that he is covered in blood, despite the fact that we can clearly see that he isn't! As with all other aspects of this sordid tale, we are supposed to believe what we are told rather than what our own eyes tell us is true.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjFxfjXOPVZQ>

There is one more curious aspect to the saga of the lady in pink. She and the Cheney guy, whom she left the scene hand-in-hand with, appear to be a couple. Why then were they not together before the explosion? As it turns out, her sidekick was across the street in the VIP section (red arrow), separated from his significant other by two temporary barricades. He ultimately made his way over to the blast site – though not in a frantic, “Oh my God! The love of my life has just been blown up by a bomb!” kind of way. But he was only able to do that *because* the bomb went off and chaos ensued. Otherwise, the two would have been completely cut off from one another.



Moving on now to other alleged victims, I'm sure that all of you are, like me, concerned over how Christian “Hoody” Williams has been faring in his struggle to recover from his life-threatening wounds. As it turns out, “his legs and hands are gnarled and scarred.” But as I always say, it is better to have gnarled and scarred legs than no legs at all. As the story goes (or at least one version of it), Hoody was waiting near the finish line with his girlfriend, Caroline Reinsch, when, “The bomb blew him into a tangle of bodies. His legs and right hand were ripped open and bled profusely. She put pressure on one of his wounds and on her own at the same time and pleaded with him to stay awake. Soon they were being whisked away, in separate wheelchairs, to separate hospitals.”

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/06/15/woundedcouple/cvtcSZksFxRnZYqnow0XIO/story.html?event=event12>

I'm sure that everyone remembers seeing that in the sequence of images. We all remember seeing Hoody with his hand and both legs blown open and bleeding profusely, just as we recall seeing Reinsch alongside of him, applying pressure to one of his wounds and struggling to see to it that he didn't lose consciousness. We all recall that sequence of events, don't we? Because I'd hate to think that Caroline Reinsch is yet another despicable liar. Here she is, by the way, being whisked away by wheelchair (wheelchair, gurney ... what's the difference really?) to the hospital. I have no clue though where she was picked up from. Hoody, as we have already seen, was also transported by gurney.



But Hoody was also, as can be seen at about the 5:55 mark in the following video, transported by wheelchair. I assume that the wheelchair ride came before he was loaded onto the gurney and outfitted with the oxygen mask, but who the fuck knows? Also of considerable interest in the video is the initial description of the first bomb site provided by the *ABC News* reporter: “We are getting more reports from law enforcement officials and other sources on the scene ... it's not clear whether it was inside or outside the store but it blew out windows in about four buildings in the area. *Fifteen to twenty people injured*, according to those sources.” (emphasis added)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=UDMRT9bLBmY#t=354s

You may have also noticed that the pink lady's sidekick can briefly be seen in the opening minutes of the video as he passes by the cameraman, in the area beyond the finish line where the victims were being paraded out for the cameras. Homeboy really got around that day – from the VIP section to the blast site to the photo-op area and then back to the blast site. Funny how numerous people can be seen and heard on videotape steering people away from the blast site but certain people seem to have had the freedom to wander about as they saw fit.

Let's now revisit Nicole Gross and her attentive hubby Michael. As will be recalled, "The Charlotte couple was there to offer support to Nicole's mother, Carol Downing, who was running in the 26.2-mile race. Nicole's sister, Erika Brannock of Maryland, was with them." According to one media report, "Michael Gross received third-degree burns to his head, face and arms, as well as lacerations ... Nicole and Erika were about 10 feet away when the blasts occurred. One of Erika's legs was partially amputated, and one of Nicole's legs was fractured. It would take Michael Gross three or four hours to locate his wife before they both finally ended up at the same hospital."

http://thetandd.com/news/opinion/charlotte-family-survives-explosions/article_c99ea184-a7b3-11e2-892c-001a4bcf887a.html

Other reports, as we have already seen, have claimed that Nicole suffered much more serious injuries than just a fractured leg. According to the *Charlotte Observer*, "Nicole Gross was hospitalized with a broken leg, a broken ankle, a severed Achilles tendon and other injuries." *International Business Times* reported that, "The explosion resulted in two breaks in her left leg, an ankle fracture in her right, a severed Achilles' tendon and multiple wounds for Gross."

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2013/04/20/3994014/nicole-gross-face-captured-the.html>

<http://www.ibtimes.com/nicole-gross-blond-woman-boston-marathon-bombing-scene-photo-undergo-fourth-surgery-1201899>

Now that we have gotten to know some of our cast members a little better, let's take another look at a photo we have looked at once or twice already. In it, we find that Michael Gross (blue arrow), while fighting through the pain from the severe burns on his head, face and arms, is desperately searching for Nicole (light green arrow). It will be another three to four hours before he finds her, possibly after belatedly deciding to run the marathon. If he had located her sooner, he might also have found and returned her other shoe, which is sitting right behind her (dark green arrow).

Meanwhile, Hoody (purple arrow), who is drifting in and out of consciousness and in imminent danger of bleeding out, is being tended to by Caroline Reinsch (no arrow, because she's not actually there and never was). Elsewhere on the scene, The Director (red arrow) and all three scream queens (yellow arrows) are on the set doing whatever it is they're supposed to be doing. I might have to change pink vest's job description though from Scream Queen to Set Designer.



Next up is a close-up view of the amazingly durable material that was covering the front of the temporary barricade. The section in the image is directly in front of the blast site (pink vest, by the way, can be seen bending over just behind the cops). Not a single piece of shrapnel appears to have ripped through the fabric. Word on the street is that the company that manufactured this material is soon going to introduce a line of bomb-proof clothing that is expected to sell like hotcakes. For protection from Boston-type bombings, of course, a full suit will not be required so smart shoppers can save money by only buying the pants.



Let's leave off for now with another image of Eric Whalley, who had a very serious case of bomb-hair. Original Jeff, The Other Jeff and Li'l Jeff all were afflicted with bomb-hair as well, which is characterized by the hair on a person's head curling into a short Afro and taking on an ashen appearance. In very severe cases, such as with Whalley, it can also include a heavy accumulation of unidentified foreign matter. Luckily it is a very rare condition that only a handful of victims were afflicted with.



In the first close-up view, it appears as though Whalley has some type of poorly-applied latex appliance over his right eye. In the second close-up, taken when he was still on the ground, the eye injury looks more convincing, but it also looks like he is sporting a rug. And some funky fake eyebrows, which are no longer visible in the first close-up – or in the third close-up, in which his face has gotten a bit bloodier. The last image is what Whalley is supposed to look like when he's not decked out in a rug, fake eyebrows and vampire blood.





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the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 15)

July 12, 2013

Has anyone seen the new NBC television series *Siberia*? If not, you really should check it out. Not because it is a particularly good show, because it isn't, but it certainly is an interesting one. The pilot episode is available for viewing on NBC's website.

Before it aired, the new series was promoted as a 'reality' show featuring real people competing in a survivalist environment for a \$500,000 prize. It was also scheduled as a 'reality' show, airing as part of a three-hour block of programming that also includes *American Ninja Warrior* and *Get Out Alive with Bear Grylls*. And it is clearly structured as a 'reality' show, complete with frequent confessional segments with the contestants, who are identified in captions by first name and occupation.

But there is nothing real about any of it. It is a 100% scripted show with actors in contrived situations reading lines written by a screenwriter. And yet the show's creators clearly want you to accept it as reality. But why?

There has never been, as far as I know, a show quite like *Siberia*. There have been, to be sure, other scripted shows that mimic reality shows, but that has been for the sake of skewering the over-the-top elements of reality television. *Burning Love*, for example, did a splendid job of parodying *The Bachelor* franchise, but that show's creators let the audience in on the joke. In *Siberia*, no one ever winks at the camera.

What then is the purpose of the new series? It's not an actual reality competition show nor is it a parody of reality television. It is a scripted show that very much wants to be accepted as a reality show. It is a show, in other words, whose only purpose seems to be to further blur the line between what is real and what is not. And it arrived, conveniently enough, directly on the heels of the Boston Marathon bombings and the possibly even more absurd Woolwich incident in the UK. But I'm sure that is just a coincidence.

“The story of Celeste Corcoran and her daughter Sydney, who also suffered a grievous leg injury on April 15, is one of many harrowing tales beginning to pour out as victims of the bombing recover enough to give testimony. Each narrative gives a deeper appreciation of the damage wrought by the Marathon Day terror.” So said Richard Knox, writing for *NPR* on May 1, but I beg to differ; as we have seen repeatedly, each narrative just adds more layers of lies.

<http://m.npr.org/story/180110959>

The *NPR* story holds that while Kevin was heroically tending to his wife, “the Corcorans thought their 18-year-old daughter, Sydney, was somewhere safe, away from the bombs, watching the race with friends. But in fact, Sydney lay not far away from where her mother fell. She didn’t know where her parents were. She saw no one familiar. She looked down to see blood gushing from a gaping wound on her right thigh ... ‘I was just so tired and I thought I was just going to bleed out,’ she recalls in a little-girl voice. ‘I felt like this was it. I was just going.’”

So despite the fact that Sydney was only about 15 feet away from her parents, she didn’t know where they were and they didn’t know where she was. According to *NPR*. According to the *LA Times*, however, “Sydney and her parents were standing near the finish line at the Boston Marathon when two explosions ripped through the street, said Paul Corcoran, her great-uncle ... The blasts left Sydney’s legs shredded with shrapnel. Celeste’s injuries, though, forced doctors to amputate her legs below the knee, he said. Kevin, a truck driver at a firm nearby, had only minor injuries.”

<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/apr/16/nation/la-na-nn-photo-boston-bombings-20130416>

The *New York Daily News* claimed that “Sydney, 18, suffered near-fatal shrapnel wounds, including a torn femoral artery.” According to father Kevin, doctors at the hospital told him that “this was a mortal wound and, if the people didn’t get to her when they did, she would have bled to death.” As we already know from the beaver incident in Belarus, torn femoral arteries can be killers. If, on the other hand, you get both legs blown right the fuck off, you can lie unattended for a good six minutes and not even lose consciousness or the color in your skin and lips.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/mother-daughter-injured-bombing-recover-side-by-side-article-1.1323457>

Another *Daily News* article noted that, “Moments after the second blast, an unknown Good Samaritan stanchied the bleeding, possibly saving Sydney’s life. A photo of the heroic moment quickly became one of the iconic images of the Boston bloodshed. ‘(My father) looked down and saw my mom and her eyes were open,’ said Tyler Corcoran, 20. ‘Once he realized she was alive, he noticed both her legs hanging on by skin.’”

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/fund-set-mother-daughter-hurt-boston-marathon-article-1.1319548>

Over in the UK, the *Daily Mail* informed readers that, “Celeste and Kevin's daughter, 18-year-old Sydney Corcoran, was lying on the ground with dire wounds to her leg. She had become separated from her parents in the blasts. Two strangers rushed to help her - one created a tourniquet around her injured leg that ended up saving her life while the other tried to keep her alert as the color drained from her face. 'From the moment I got in the ambulance I wanted to know where they were,' Sydney said of parents, her eyes welling with tears. 'I thought I was going to wake up and have no one left but my brother.'”

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2315485/Boston-bombs-How-Kevin-Corcoran-heroically-saved-wifes-life.html>

In Lowell, Massachusetts, where the Corcorans are said to live, the local paper reported that, “shrapnel from one of the bombs that exploded during the Boston Marathon shredded both of Sydney's legs, leaving her with deep arterial injuries.” With all of that as background then, we now know what to look for as we review yet more images from that day. Like so many others in this incredibly poorly-scripted saga – Hoody and Reinsch, Li'l Jeff and his mom, The Other Jeff and his girlfriend, Michael and Nicole, and Jeff and whoever the hell it was that he was supposed to be with – the Corcorans got separated in the blast. Sydney's legs were both shredded. Celeste's were attached only by skin and had to be amputated. And Kev escaped with minor injuries.

http://www.lowellsun.com/todayshadlines/ci_23036408/lowell-mom-daughter-seriously-injured-boston-blast

Let's first review one of those 'iconic' images of Sydney so that we will be able to recognize her in the Thorndike and Tang images. As we can see below, Sydney was dressed in black and dark gray, with a large black handbag. The most distinctive feature of her clothing was the lime green band around her waist, which will make it relatively easy to track her movements.



Let's take a look now at one of the earliest Thorndike images. It's still pretty smoky but Celeste (red arrow) is on the ground, right next to Eric Whalley, and Kev is bending over and standing over her (blue arrow). Sydney, as can be seen, is just a few feet away, walking away from mom and dad (green arrow). On her shredded legs! And with her torn femoral artery!



In the next image, also from the Thorndike collection, we get a clearer view of Celeste Corcoran (red arrow), wedged in between Eric Whalley and Nicole Gross. We also get a clearer view of Sydney (green arrow), who in this pic has all her weight on just one of her shredded legs.



Next up we see that, miraculously enough, Celeste (red arrow) is able to hold her legs up despite the fact that they are attached only by skin. Sydney, meanwhile, (green arrow) now has all her weight on her shredded right leg, the one that also has a torn femoral artery. Whalley (yellow arrow) is, for whatever reason, beginning to make his way over to the railing. His wife Ann (orange arrow) will also make her way over there. She will then, like her hubby, make a high profile, bloody exit, though she isn't bloody yet.



In the next image under review, both Kevin (blue arrow) and Celeste (red arrow) are looking at, and undoubtedly communicating with, the daughter (green arrow) who was either separated from them in the blast or was assumed to be elsewhere watching the race with friends. Meanwhile, the Whalleys continue to make their way over to the railing.



Moving on now to the Tang images, we see that Kev (blue arrow) mistakenly believes that Celeste (red arrow) has been stung by a jellyfish and he is preparing to give her a golden shower. Michael Gross (dark green arrow) has begun his desperate search for Nicole (light green arrow) and Eric Whalley (yellow arrow) is now almost in position. Elsewhere, we can see that there are no victims on the ground behind where Big Brown (orange arrow) is standing.



In the next frame though, none other than Sydney Corcoran (green arrow) is now lying just beyond where Big Brown had been standing. It is perfectly obvious that she had no problem walking over there despite her grave leg injuries. Meanwhile, Kev (blue arrow) continues to focus on assisting Celeste (red arrow), and, in a promising development, Michael (orange arrow) appears to have spotted his beloved Nicole (yellow arrow).



Someone has decided that Sydney's location did not have the proper backdrop for her 'iconic' photos so her rescuer is walking her over to a better location (green arrow). It's always good to be upright and moving as much as possible when dealing with a torn femoral artery. The old hag who will be wheeled out with a bloody face and left hand doesn't look as if she has started to bleed just yet (red arrow). And it appears that Michael (orange arrow) is dangerously close to finding Nicole (yellow arrow), but it hasn't been 3-4 hours since the blast so let's wait and see what happens.



Damnit!! He was so close but apparently he lost her in the smoke and haze and Michael is now walking away looking very discouraged (orange arrow). On the plus side though, the flames that burned his head and face seem to have left his sunglasses undamaged. Sydney (green arrow) is now in place and ready to have her life saved while Kevin (blue arrow) continues to tie belts around his wife's barely-attached legs.



The next image is of Celeste being carried off to a waiting ambulance while Kev follows dutifully behind. Notice that although Kev tied at least two and possibly three belts around her legs, they are all gone now and have been replaced with numerous bows and ribbons that are apparently supposed to simulate real tourniquets. And her legs, both of which will be amputated, appear to be attached by more than just skin. Bizarrely, her rescuers never cut away her pant legs to assess her injuries.



Returning now to an early Thorndike image, we see Kev looking as though he is trying to help Celeste get up on her feet, requiring her to put weight on her barely-attached left leg (black arrow). Alongside of her is Eric Whalley (white arrow), whose legs don't look as if they have started to bleed yet in this pic. Big Brown (brown/orange arrow), meanwhile, is in her original position along the fence, and the lady in pink (dark blue arrow) is very near Krystle Campbell and Karen Rand (purple arrows). Pink's accomplice (lighter blue arrow) is lurking directly across the street, waiting for the barricades to come down. We can also see that Michael Gross (upper green arrow) started out alongside the Team Keryn guy (upper red arrow), whom he appears to be communicating with in some of the images. The Director (yellow arrow) is also in the huddle of people just beyond the victims' circle. Elsewhere, Nicole (light green arrow) is alongside Jeff (lower red arrow), Mery and Hoody. And the girl at the end of the darkest green arrow is supposed to be Nicole's sister, Erika Brannock, though the two were apparently fighting that day because they never acknowledge one another in any of the available images. Erika, alas, supposedly lost a leg.



In the next image, we see that Sydney made a remarkable recovery and was able to stand on her shredded, nerve-damaged, artery-severed legs just a few days after the bombing. But that is hardly surprising since all of the Boston victims have made remarkably quick recoveries. And not just in terms of their physical recoveries; their psychological recoveries have been even more amazing. There has been no mention of that in any of the feel-good media stories, as if it is perfectly natural for those with freshly amputated limbs to be among the happiest people on the planet. But it isn't. In the real world, the sudden and unexpected loss of a limb can be the most traumatic event that life can throw at you.

The psychological process is very similar to what one goes through after losing a very close family member, particularly a child. For in both cases, the person has lost what he/she feels is a very important part of themselves, which they will now need to get through life without. There is normally a series of phases that a person in recovery goes through, with anger, resentment, confusion, fear, deep depression, and suicidal thoughts and actions being very common.

That is especially true with younger victims. As *Healio.com* noted, “The age at which one receives an amputation plays a role in the recovery process. Desmond and MacLachlan note that for a young traumatic amputee, limb loss may represent the loss of life opportunities, whereas for an elderly person with peripheral vascular disorder, amputation may offer increased mobility, a decrease in pain, or both.” None of the Boston victims, young or old, benefited physically from the sudden loss of a limb.

<http://www.healio.com/orthotics-prosthetics/prosthetics/news/online/%7B20bb0ac6-5ae1-4c65-b8e7-281ca1821228%7D/the-psychology-of-losing-a-limb>

“A recent article in the *Journal of Prosthetics and Orthotics* by Deirdre Desmond, BA (Mod), and Malcolm MacLachlan, PhD, noted that depression, anxiety, hopelessness and suicidal ideation are common barriers to psychological adjustment and rehabilitation efforts. The authors stated that individuals who have suffered a traumatic injury often experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and rates of clinical depression reported in outpatient settings range from 21 percent to 35 percent ... Spouses can especially feel overwhelmed with many conflicting emotions. Sometimes, a partner will feel so unable to manage that they leave.”

So in the real world, the sudden loss of a limb is a major, life-changing event. It has been known to destroy families. It has been known to lead to suicide. It has been known to lead to a lifetime of bitterness and anger. But not, of course, when the victims are ‘Boston Strong.’ In Boston, amputees have been the happiest, most well-adjusted people you’d ever want to meet since the minute they woke from surgery.



The last two images are of the impossibly happy and smiling Corcoran family, who just couldn't be more thrilled about the loss of mom's legs.





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the Center for an Informed

Special Report on the Boston Marathon: The Curious Case of the Man Who Could Only Sit Down (Part 16)

July 27, 2013

Can anyone remember there ever being so much attention focused on the survivors of a mass-casualty incident in this country? In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, there was intense media focus on the events of that day for many, many weeks, but never any mention of those who survived with life-altering injuries. There had to be a number of people who lost limbs that day, or lost their sight or hearing, but we never heard a word about any of them.

We didn't follow their progress through numerous surgeries, physical therapy, fitting of prosthetic devices, reintegration into their home life, etc.. They didn't make high-profile appearances on *Dancing With the Stars* or at major sporting events, and they weren't interviewed by the likes of Anderson Cooper and Brian Williams. They weren't the subject of lengthy, front-page newspaper articles and glossy magazine covers.

The same is true of every other mass casualty event in recent memory, whether we're talking about Littleton, Oklahoma City, Sandy Hook, Virginia Tech, Fort Hood, Aurora, or numerous other such incidents. The only exception to that rule has been when one of the victims happened to be a certain US Congresswoman. Other than that, I can't recall a single case where the injured survivors of such an attack have become such media darlings.

Why do you suppose that is? Everyone reading this can name at least one of the survivors of the Boston bombings and will be able to do so for a long time to come, but unless it involved a family member or close friend, I seriously doubt that anyone can name a single person who survived the 9-11 attacks with serious bodily injuries. In the past, all the attention has been on the roll call of the dead, but this time our attention is being directed toward the survivors.

But why? What makes them so special? What makes them so much more worthy of our attention – and our money – than survivors of past attacks? Why did they, unlike any of their predecessors, receive massive, no-strings-attached, tax-free payoffs that were paid out in an extraordinarily short period of time?

“The charity fund established after the Boston Marathon bombings awarded \$60.9 million Friday to victims of the attacks, including maximum payments of nearly \$2.2 million each to two double amputees and the families of the four people slain. Fourteen other people who lost single limbs will receive nearly \$1.2 million each. In all, 232 victims will receive payments, said Camille Biros, deputy administrator of the One Fund Boston, which has been collecting public donations for the victims ... Sixty-nine people who were hospitalized for at least one night will receive six-figure payouts that range from \$125,000 for the 18 people who spent one or two nights in a medical facility to \$948,000 for the 10 victims who spent 32 nights or more.”

http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-06-28/national/40262155_1_one-fund-boston-lingzi-lu-boston-marathon

These amounts were paid out in lump-sum payments on June 28, just two-and-a-half months after the marathon. They were deemed to be ‘gifts,’ which means that they are tax-free. And in an unprecedented move, recipients were not required to sign any waivers barring them from seeking further compensation through the courts. These amounts are also in addition to the not insignificant amounts that alleged victims have raised on their own through personal GoFundMe pages. Jeff Bauman, for example, has reportedly raised over \$1,000,000, which means that he has already received over \$3,000,000 in tax-free, no-strings-attached cash payments.

For those who believe that Bauman really did lose his legs in the marathon explosions, that surely doesn’t seem like an undue amount of compensation. But consider that Michael Gross, who wandered freely about the blast zone and was clearly uninjured, pocketed a quick \$125,000 for his overnight hospital stay. I have little doubt that the Lady in Pink did as well. And our old friend Shrapnel Man (*aka* James “Bim” Costello), who walked away from the scene unassisted, received a cool “\$735,000 under the formula outlined by Biros. He said he was grateful for the donations.” Why wouldn’t he be? He’s also raised at least another \$50,000 through GoFundMe, for an untaxed total of nearly \$800,000.

<http://www.gofundme.com/bimstrong>

“Costello, a clerical worker at Harvard University whose legs were severely burned and wounded by shrapnel from the bomb, said he has good health insurance and would use the money mostly for other needs.” He has \$800,000 worth of other needs? Apparently so, with one of those needs being to “buy a new SUV for his friend Paul Norden, who lost his right leg in the attack. Norden’s brother, J.P., also lost a leg, and their wheelchairs do not fit in the brothers’ current vehicle, Costello said.”

Quite a selfless act, needless to say, but also an unnecessary one given that the Norden brothers received just over \$2.5 million from the One Fund and their own GoFundMe pages, which will probably be enough to cover the cost of a new vehicle.

<http://www.gofundme.com/Believe-in-Boston>, <http://www.gofundme.com/2pfm04>

Like so many of the alleged victims of the Boston bombings, Costello and the Norden brothers spent a good deal of time at the city’s Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, which has been frequently referenced in countless feel-good stories about the remarkable recoveries of the ‘Boston Strong’

victims. But one rather curious fact about the facility has been all but lost amid the coverage: it is a brand new 300,000 square foot, \$220,000,000 facility that just opened its doors on April 27, 2013, just twelve days after the marathon bombings.

http://www.newspauldinghospital.com/#tab_1/

Just in time, in other words, to take in the marathon victims as presumably some of its very first patients. And that is probably a good thing since you don't really want your fake patients to be mingling too much with your real patients. The 132-bed hospital, as it turns out, is located in the decommissioned Charlestown Navy Yard. Sounds about right.

* * * * *

So I'm guessing that there must be a special 'debunking' school out there that all the fucktards on the internet must have attended. I say that because another 'debunker' has now emerged from the fetid slime to offer up essentially the same bullshit that others have already tried to pass off as good coin. In fact, much of it reads like a cut-and-paste job that combines Quinn's Orwellian logic with Fucktard's overwrought appeals to emotion.

This new 'debunking' – and I am using the term 'new' rather loosely here because though the piece is dated July 20, it reads as though it were written back around the first week of May and treats my series as though it began and ended with the initial two posts on May 1 – was penned, albeit very poorly penned, by a guy by the name of Keelan Balderdash.

<http://wideshut.co.uk/review-of-jeff-bauman-legless-man-boston-bombing-conspiracy-theory-graphic-images/>

Though Balderdash apparently fancies himself to be a writer and editor, his grasp of the English language seems tenuous at best. As just one example, while commenting on Carlos the cowboy hero, he gives us the following two brilliantly constructed sentences: "And what exactly is he acting? How to looked shocked and a bit confused?" I don't know that I have seen that caliber of writing since my youngest daughter was in about the fifth grade.

Anyway, Balderdash has, like Quinn, taken a decidedly Orwellian approach to debunking my work. He begins by boldly stating that he hasn't actually read my series: "As I write this sentence I have yet to engage with the series beyond a quick scan, thus I've titled this article a 'review' instead of a 'debunking.'" It's actually neither a review nor a debunking but rather a craven hit piece that utilizes the same 'talking points' already trotted out by others. But what is important here is that he is claiming to have not even bothered to read my posts.

If I may be so bold, I'd say that Balderdash's claim basically translates as follows: "I've read through McGowan's work and there is no way that I can even begin to 'debunk' the body of evidence that he has put together without coming off sounding like a complete asshat, but my paymasters are insisting that I give it a go so I'm going to just copy off of some other people's failed 'debunkings' and pretend as though about 90% of the research he has done over the last few months doesn't exist."

Not long after acknowledging that he is 'reviewing' something he claims to have not read, Balderdash declares that theorists such as myself "want to be ignorant, because it suits their agenda." He then proceeds to describe me throughout his post as "willfully ignorant," which is quite a ballsy statement coming from someone who begins his piece by admitting that he chose to approach this topic from a position of willful ignorance. Methinks this guy and Joe Quinn must be trading handjobs out behind the woodshed.

I'm not going to bother responding to most of Balderdash's feeble arguments, primarily because I already have – when they were originally penned by Quinn and Fucktard. I will though catalogue some of Balderdash's more egregious lies and misrepresentations, beginning with this one: "this is the problem with a lot of the Boston bombings theories. They are based on ambiguous interpretations of a handful of photographs."

The reality, of course, is that to date I have presented into evidence and analyzed no fewer than 216 photographic exhibits. Balderdash's attempt to dismiss all of that clearly reveals that he is either "willfully ignorant" or simply a brazen liar. And since it is readily apparent that he is feigning ignorance to try to avoid being caught in an outright lie, let's just cut to the chase and acknowledge that this guy is a lying sack of shit. He strikes me as a guy who has spent his entire adult life trying to convince any woman who will listen that 4 inches is really 8 inches.

In this next short passage, Balderdash manages to squeeze in a couple more very obvious lies: "This lady in blue, named as Krystle Campbell, died. You can see her laying [sic] legless near Bauman and so called [sic] "accomplices" in the photo below. Another man in the middle (towards the top) of the photo has a serious leg wound. Why is McGowan ignoring these people?"

As the photographic record makes very clear, Campbell was not lying legless. Had Balderdash done even the most rudimentary research, he would have known that. The other guy he is referring to is, of course, The Other Jeff, *aka* Patrick Downes, but Balderdash either has no clue who any of these people are or he is just a compulsive liar. The notion that I ignore Campbell and The Other Jeff in my series is without question yet another absurd lie. Balderdash's audience, to the extent that he even has one, is apparently quite gullible.

Since Balderdash is such an entertainingly ridiculous figure, let's take a look at some more of his completely nonsensical and very poorly-written commentary: "The aftermath of a bombing is a very shocking and confusing time, there's no telling what was going through the minds of those in the photo, but creating a baseless theory is not going to enlighten us any further. That being said there

isn't a constant stream of photos." There isn't?! Really? So the scores of sequential photos that I have presented exist only in my mind? Or is this just another example of Balderdash talking out of his ass?

Let's now listen in as Balderdash tells some more lies, this time about the heroic rescue of Jeff Bauman by Carlos Arredondo: "But why is it ridiculous that he's in a wheelchair? If that's the only thing his rescuers could come by in that immediate instance, so be it ... If you've followed the story you'll know that Arredondo tied up his arteries and can be seen holding on to the end of one of them."

Actually, if you've followed the story you know that even Arredondo has attempted to distance himself from the ridiculous claim that he was pinching shut one of Bauman's femoral arteries. You also know that the notion that a wheelchair was "the only thing his rescuers could come by" has been completely and thoroughly debunked. You know that Carlos and company can be seen pushing Bauman right past an empty gurney and that several other gurneys had already left the scene. The 'debunkers' though seem to think that if they keep repeating the same easily refuted lies that it will somehow make them true.

It is quite revealing, needless to say, that those who have chosen to attack this series have needed to resort to the same tired lies over and over. If my research is so shoddy, and if the conclusions I have drawn are so ridiculous, then why has no one been able to put together even a halfway honest challenge to it? Why must they still pretend that the case for this being a staged incident begins and ends with a handful of photos of Jeff Bauman? Why must people like Balderdash so grossly misrepresent my work with comments like the following: "Nobody saw 'crisis actors' lugging around props, getting in to [sic] position or applying their injury make-up [sic], but we're expected to believe McGowan has managed to pick them out through a few photos?"

And why does Balderdash, with his distinctively mangled grammar and syntax, characterize my work as using "a lot of photos and some video [sic] that are in the public domain to pick [sic] tiny irrelevant discrepancies in people's accounts"? When virtually every alleged victim and every responder has told wildly imaginative tales that are completely unsupported by the photographic evidence, does it seem fair to dismiss all of that as nitpicking (I'm assuming that's the word he was going for, but who the fuck knows?) "tiny irrelevant discrepancies"? And did I use "a lot of photos" or "a few photos"? Balderdash can't seem to decide.

Speaking of nitpicking, Balderdash feels that I am guilty of nitpicking Arredondo's account as well, though he of course doesn't know how to write the word properly: "How nit-picky can you get? So the Hero of the day didn't immediately get to Bauman like he said in an interview, he was busy trying to get there. Well it looks like he got there as fast as possible! ... The gist of his story is correct."

No, Balderdash, the 'gist' of his story is total bullshit, just as is the 'gist' of your semiliterate rant.

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Programmed to Kill

The Politics of Serial Murder

Ed Kemper

Ted Bundy

Gary Heidnik

Angelo Buono

Arthur Shawcross

Jeffrey Dahmer

William Heirens

Richard Chase

Charles Manson

Richard Speck

Kenneth Bianchi

Bobby Joe Long

Henry Lee Lucas

John Wayne Gacy

Herb Baumeister

David Berkowitz

Wayne Williams

Bob Berdella

Richard Ramirez

Albert DeSalvo

Cary Stayner

Marc Dutroux

Danny Rolling

Herb Mullin

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PROGRAMMED TO KILL

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The Politics of Serial Murder

David McGowan

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The Politics of Serial Murder

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This book is for all the survivors.

“This man, from the moment of conception, was programmed for murder.”

—Attorney Ellis Rubin, speaking on behalf of
serial killer Bobby Joe Long

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Introduction

Mind Control 101

“[T]he experimenters will be particularly interested in dissociative states, from the abaissement de niveau mental to multiple personality in so-called mediums, and an attempt will be made to induce a number of states of this kind, using hypnosis.”

—From a declassified MK-ULTRA¹ document

It is probably safe to say that this is not your typical ‘true crime’ book. It is, instead, a journey into an even darker, more disturbing world—one that exists in the shadows of the world depicted in the hundreds of formulaic serial killer biographies that line the shelves of America’s bookstores. For many readers, much of the information contained within these pages will be unfamiliar, and some of the theories and ideas that are discussed may seem rather bizarre.

Perhaps the most controversial theory that readers will find themselves confronted with concerns a phenomenon commonly referred to as “mind control.” Although the concept of *mind control* has long been a staple of that polluted well-spring of information known as the ‘conspiracy theory’ literature (where it often mingles freely with outlandish tales of reptilian aliens and paranormal activity), it has never been a polite topic of discussion in mainstream culture. The only exposure that most people have had to the idea of *mind control* is through the often metaphorical, and frequently absurd, images that Hollywood has provided in a decades-long string of films—from *The Manchurian Candidate* and *The Stepford Wives* in the 1960s and 1970s, to such recent offerings as *Conspiracy Theory* and *Zoolander* (along with the remakes of both *The Manchurian Candidate* and *The Stepford Wives*).

1 The term “MK-ULTRA,” while actually just one of many codenames used over the years by the U.S. intelligence community, is commonly used to refer to all CIA-sponsored research on mind control.

Most people are naturally quite skeptical of the notion that someone's thoughts and actions can be controlled by unseen actors. Particularly in Western culture, where the idea of "free will" is firmly indoctrinated, theories of mind control are inimical to the omnipresent mantra that "we are all responsible for our own actions." It is quite likely then that scenarios involving mind-controlled killers—whether assassins like Lee Harvey Oswald or Sirhan Sirhan, or serial killers like Henry Lee Lucas or Charles Manson—will be summarily dismissed by many readers. Skeptics though should bear in mind that, contrary to perceptions, *mind control* is not a fictional creation of novelists and Hollywood screenwriters; to the contrary, there exists a substantial paper trail establishing that the U.S. intelligence community has devoted a vast amount of both human and financial resources, over a period of several decades, to the study of *mind control*. Along the way, luminaries of numerous social sciences have been recruited and co-opted.

Detailing all the techniques and procedures that have received attention from the Central Intelligence Agency and its brethren is, unfortunately, well beyond the scope of this book.² It is possible, however, to provide a rough sketch of what *mind control* really is—a sketch that will, it is hoped, help to demystify a phenomenon that is not, as it turns out, nearly so esoteric as it may at first appear to be.

The basic methodology of mind control was revealed many decades ago by George Estabrooks, a prominent psychologist/hypnotist who worked under contract to American intelligence agencies. In his book *Hypnotism*, first published in 1943, Estabrooks teased his audience by noting that the "intelligent reader...will sense that much more is withheld than has been told." While that was undoubtedly an accurate assessment, Estabrooks nevertheless did reveal enough to allow an informed reader to construct a reasonably accurate picture of the fundamentals of mind control.

The degree to which any given person is susceptible to being *mind controlled* is a direct function of that person's susceptibility to what are known as "dissociative states." According to the psychiatric community, dissociative states (or dissociative

2 All of the following books focus directly or indirectly on CIA-sponsored mind control research: Jose M.R. Delgado *Physical Control of the Mind* (Harper and Row, 1969); Donald Bain *The Control of Candy Jones* (Playboy Press, 1976); Walter Bowart *Operation Mind Control* (Dell Publishing, 1978); Peter Watson *War on the Mind* (Hutchinson, 1978); Peter Schrag *Mind Control* (Pantheon, 1978); John Marks *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate* (Times Books, 1979); Martin Lee and Bruce Schlain *Acid Dreams* (Grove Press, 1985); and Gordon Thomas *Journey Into Madness* (Bantam, 1989). All of these titles contain pieces of the puzzle, but all contain varying amounts of disinformation as well (as do more recent titles).

‘disorders’) include Amnesia, Fugue State, and what used to be called Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) but is now generally referred to as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). All of these terms describe the same basic phenomenon: a person who is seemingly in control of his or her actions over a given time period is unable, at a later date, to recall or account for those actions.

As with any category of ‘mental illness,’ there is no dividing line that separates those who are diagnosed with dissociative ‘disorders’ from those who are ‘normal.’ Virtually everyone possesses the ability to experience dissociative states. Many people, for example, are familiar with the phenomenon sometimes referred to as “driving on autopilot.” The scenario generally plays out as follows: you suddenly ‘snap out of it’ just as you are pulling into your parking space at work, and you realize, to your horror, that you can’t remember anything since leaving your house! If this has happened to you, then you have experienced being in a dissociative state. In essence, you drove to work while in a “fugue state,” and you later had “amnesia.” In a similar vein, it could be said that an “alter personality,” which you have no conscious awareness of, drove you to work. In any event, it is clear that *someone* piloted your car to work in a safe and reasonable manner, and it was someone other than ‘you.’

Many people are also familiar with another common example of a dissociative state: you are deep in thought, oblivious to everything around you, possibly working on the solution to one of the world’s great mysteries, when suddenly your silent meditation is interrupted—perhaps by an unexpected noise, or by someone calling your name or tapping your shoulder. As you ‘snap out of it,’ you suddenly realize, much to your dismay, that you cannot remember what it was that you were so deep in thought about just moments before. If you have ever had a similar experience, or if you are familiar with the dreamlike state that some people attain just before falling asleep, or while engrossed in a book or television program, then you have experienced being in a dissociative state of consciousness.

While the ability to dissociate is likely universal, or nearly so, some people are clearly more susceptible to dissociative states than are others. There is little question that someone’s innate ability to dissociate can be greatly enhanced—although not necessarily by ethical means. The most severe of the dissociative ‘disorders,’ MPD/DID, is in almost all cases created by psychological trauma so severe that the traumatic episode(s) cannot be integrated into the experiences of the core personality. By far the most common cause of MPD is early childhood trauma—usually, but not always, resulting from horrific abuse by a parent or other adult guardian. Dr. Frank Putnam noted in 1989 that he was “struck by the quality of extreme sadism that is reported by most MPD victims. Many multiples have told me of being sexually abused by groups of people, of being forced into prostitution by family members, or of being offered as sexual enticement to their

mother's boyfriends. After one has worked with a number of MPD patients, it becomes obvious that severe, sustained, and repetitive child abuse is a major element in the creation of MPD." Dr. Deirdre Barrett, writing in 2001 for *Psychology Today*, offered a similar observation: "'dissociaters'...have the following traits in common: Many such subjects reported a history of child abuse. Although some remembered this directly, some had been told by others that they had been battered...Other dissociaters who had not been abused had suffered childhood traumas such as prolonged, painful medical conditions and before the age of 10 experienced the deaths of their parents."

As mental health professionals have long recognized, the normal human reaction to highly stressful situations is what is known as the "fight or flight" response. Children, however, typically lack the ability to either fight off or flee from their attackers and abusers. This is particularly true, of course, for very young children. The human brain, that wonderfully resilient organ, therefore reacts in the best way that it can under the circumstances: it allows the child to mentally 'flee' from the situation. When the abuse is of an extreme and sustained nature, the brain's response is to build a virtual wall around the traumatic experiences by creating a separate and distinct 'alter personality' to deal with current and future episodes of abuse.

Although MPD/DID is a 'disorder' listed in the *DSM IV*, the veritable bible of the psychiatric community, the public generally looks upon the notion of multiple personality with a healthy dose of skepticism—a skepticism encouraged by a news and entertainment media apparatus that generally mocks and ridicules the condition, and by a not insignificant number of psychologists and psychiatrists who deny the existence of MPD/DID (strangely enough, many of the most visible and vocal members of the denial crowd tend to be psychologists and psychiatrists who have received funding from the CIA).

In November 2001, researchers in Melbourne, Australia conducted what the *Herald Sun* described as a "world-first study" of Multiple Personality Disorder. The goal of the study was to help resolve the dispute within the mental health community. The conclusion reached by the researchers (at least one of whom "had been sceptical of the disorder" before working on the project) was that individuals "who suffer multiple personality disorder are not faking their alter-egos." The study involved comparing the brainwave patterns of people claiming to be suffering from the disorder with the brainwave patterns of actors portraying the condition. While the actors gave "outwardly convincing performances," the researchers found that there were "distinct changes in the brain of sufferers as they 'switch' personalities," while those changes were not detected in the brains of those who were just acting the part.

So how does all of this relate to the concept of mind control? In the simplest possible terms, what the term “mind control” refers to is the process of first *enhancing* an unwitting subject’s natural ability to dissociate (creating, in essence, the condition of Multiple Personality Disorder), and then *controlling* that subject’s dissociative states (by creating one or more alter personalities that are effectively under the control of others, and that are unknown to the ‘core’ personality).

But can this really be done? Is *mind control* is a real phenomenon, or merely the product of the fertile imaginations of various ‘conspiracy theorists’ and self-described survivors? The answer to that question lies in the answers to several other questions, beginning with:

- Do dissociative states occur naturally in the human species?

As anyone who has ever driven their car to work “on autopilot”—or been caught “daydreaming” or “spacing out”—can testify, the answer is yes (although the vast majority of people would not normally use the term “dissociative state” to describe the experience).

- Can the naturally occurring ability to dissociate be enhanced?

The answer here also appears to be yes, albeit with the caveat that enhancing that ability generally requires the infliction of severe trauma, preferably during the vulnerable childhood years.

- Would the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies be restrained morally or ethically from inflicting such trauma?

How this question is answered depends largely upon the individual reader’s political orientation and level of awareness of national and world events. Serious students of covert operations know that the CIA has a long and very sordid history of sponsoring countless assassinations, civilian massacres, violent coups, and barbaric torture/interrogation centers (and that is just the short list). This bloody, and very well documented,³ record suggests that there is little, if anything, that the CIA will not attempt to justify in the name of “national security.” Documents released through FOIA requests have revealed that, at the very least, the agency has not shied away from funding and sponsoring studies in which very young children have been dosed with LSD continuously for several weeks.

- If we accept that dissociation is a real and naturally occurring human ability, and that the tendency to dissociate can be enhanced, and that the intelligence

3 See William Blum’s *Killing Hope* (Common Courage Press, 1995) for a detailed look at some of what the intelligence community really does with your tax dollars.

community's hands are not tied by ethical concerns, then the final, and most critical, question becomes: can enhanced dissociative states, once created, be *controlled*?

George Estabrooks was clearly convinced that that was indeed the case. He claimed that once a person's core personality had been split, it was then possible to control one or more of the alter personalities, without the conscious awareness of the primary personality. This process, according to Estabrooks, allowed the intelligence community to create "Super Spies"—unwitting 'agents' who were willing to follow any orders unquestioningly. Among other duties, these Super Spies made ideal couriers, since they could be fed sensitive information while in a controlled dissociative state and thereafter have no conscious awareness that they were transporting important data. Even under torture, the Super Spy would reveal nothing—for as far as he (or she) was aware, there was nothing to reveal! Someone at the receiving end who was familiar with the Super Spy's programming, however, could readily extract the information—after which the Super Spy would remain blissfully unaware that a mission had been successfully completed.

As dubious as Estabrook's scenario may at first appear to be, it is not so very different from the common phenomenon of "driving on autopilot." Let us imagine that you have managed, once again, to find yourself at work with no idea how you got there. You can remember nothing beyond pulling out of your driveway. So you decide, out of curiosity, to pay a visit to a skilled hypnotist,⁴ who succeeds in "putting you under," so to speak. While in the "hypnotic trance" (another term for a dissociative state), you would be able to relate to the hypnotist (and anyone else in the room) all the mundane details of your drive to work. Once brought back to a normal state of consciousness, however, *you* would still have no conscious memory of your drive to work (unless instructed otherwise by the hypnotist). You would

4 Hypnotism is another phenomenon that is regarded with considerable skepticism by both the general public and the scientific community—although there are signs that that is beginning to change. "Despite its long history, scientists have wondered whether hypnotism is a genuine psychological state or a gimmick," noted the *National Post*, "But recent research shows it causes measurable changes in the brain." A number of mainstream media articles in recent years have begun to acknowledge the effectiveness of hypnosis, especially as a means of pain control (Lamaze childbirth techniques, for example, are really just a form of self-hypnosis). *Psychology Today* noted that hypnosis "is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon, but rather a continuum. Most people can be hypnotized to some degree—the only question is how far." The same can be said, of course, of the ability to dissociate, which largely determines susceptibility to hypnotism.

have served, in essence, as a Super Spy. All that is missing from the equation is the element of *control*.

And how would that control be attained? Estabrooks shied away from the details, only alluding to the severe psychic torture that is required to split a person's core personality and then exert control over the alter personalities that are created. The trauma is often referred to euphemistically as "a form of hypnotism." In one passage, for example, Estabrooks noted that multiple personalities "are caused by a form of hypnotism in the first place! We will see that emotional shock produces exactly the same results as hypnotism." Later, he came a little closer to the truth: "multiple personality [can] be both caused and cured by hypnotism. Remember that war is a grim business. Suppose we deliberately set up that condition of multiple personality to further the ends of military intelligence." Still later, he came even closer: "everyone [can] be thrown into the deepest state of hypnotism by the use of what [I] termed the Russian method—no holds barred, deliberate disintegration of the personality by psychic torture... The subject might easily be left a mental wreck but war is a grim business."

War is indeed a grim business, as Estabrooks was apparently fond of stating, but that argument hardly justified the type of research the doctor endorsed, including using children, who are "notoriously easy to hypnotize," as research subjects.

Decades after the publication of Estabrooks' seminal work, another psychiatrist/hypnotist, by the name of Paul Verdier, wrote an obscure book entitled *Brainwashing and the Cults: An Expose on Capturing the Human Mind*. Verdier's manuscript began on a promising note, with this acknowledgement: "It must be accepted that brainwashing...is now being used here [in the United States] by devious persons with personal gain in mind." Unfortunately, the author followed that bold proclamation with a woefully inaccurate accounting of who those "devious persons" might be. He did though provide a reasonably good description of the process of mind control (although Verdier, like Estabrooks, did not use the term "mind control").

By Verdier's account, the objective of the would-be "brainwasher" is to access those areas of the brain that are outside of the individual's conscious control. This is accomplished, the doctor explained, by circumventing the normal inhibiting response of the cerebral cortex, so that "an individual's voluntary conscious self-control [will] be bypassed or short-circuited." In order to disable what Verdier referred to as the brain's "cortical block," all of the following were recommended: alcohol; euphoric drugs; isolation; solitary confinement; and "the most dramatic and unique item in the brainwashing arsenal," hypnosis. All of these "brainwashing" techniques, significantly, have been exhaustively researched by the CIA.

Verdier went on to explain that in order to achieve truly lasting states of brainwashing (or mind control), it is necessary to subject the victim to “profound and deep emotional states.” The recommended emotional states are fear, shock, and anxiety—all of which have “an intense disinhibitive effect on the human brain.” Even more effective is *pain*—because, “according to the eminent neurologist, Dr. Wilder Penfield,⁵ sensations of pain from the muscular sensory system enter the sub-cortical brain regions directly.” With a passage seemingly lifted from Estabrooks’ writings, Verdier left no doubt that *pain* and *fear* are the most useful items in the MK-ULTRA toolbox: “Russian political scientists do support the belief that given enough punishment, all the people in any time or place are susceptible to hypnotic control.”⁶ Verdier echoed other of Estabrooks’ beliefs as well, including the idea that “brainwashing” could and should be widely utilized for “benevolent” purposes,⁷ and the notion that children are ideal candidates for mind control programming: “Brainwashing can be slow, insidious and sure when applied to children early in life...It is likely that there is a short period of time following corporal punishment when the child is in a state of decortication—hypnosis, so to speak. This is the ideal time to plant the positive instructions for better behavior in the future.” What the good doctor considered “corporal punishment” and “positive instructions” was left to the reader’s imagination.

The vulnerability of children to dissociative states brought on by traumatic abuse is one of the reasons that the CIA and other intelligence agencies have played key roles in the creation of relatively mainstream satanic groups, as well as in denying the existence of underground satanic cults engaged in violent criminal enterprises. Some of the available evidence suggests that an array of satanic groups have served as intelligence agency ‘fronts’ for mind control operations—which actually makes perfect sense, considering that if the goal is to severely traumatize

5 Dr. Penfield was an associate of the notorious medical torture practitioner, and MK-ULTRA operative, Dr. David Ewen Cameron.

6 This is a very common form of disinformation that is found frequently in the writings of CIA-affiliated writers: acknowledge that mind control is a real phenomenon, but then blame it all on those godless communists. Other agency-penned manuscripts deny that mind control exists at all, which is another common form of disinformation.

7 The final chapter of Verdier’s book, entitled “Benevolent Brainwashing In The Future,” contains the following recommendation: “The process of brainwashing... could be used effectively and economically to solve many of society’s pressing human problems which, until now, have seemed virtually unsolvable.”

children, then surely nothing compares to the seemingly outlandish stories told by those who have survived what has been dubbed “Satanic Ritual Abuse” (SRA).

Verdier took note in his book of the fact that one of “the most pronounced emotional experiences that a human being can undergo is having his or her life threatened. Threats of death are used as a basic tool by brainwashing Communists. Even among them, however, this threat is used sparingly, for they know that humans quickly adapt to this type of threat, especially if it is repeatedly given but never carried out. In order to avoid this routinization of stressful emotional situations, they have been known to casually execute prisoners for the apparent effect it has on others.” The actions that Verdier predictably attributed to “brainwashing Communists” precisely mirror the stories that have been told repeatedly by self-described survivors of ritual abuse. These victims speak of receiving frequent death threats, directed against both themselves and their family members. They speak also of having those threats reinforced through their forced witnessing of, and even participate in, the killing of others.

There has been a tremendous amount of energy expended to discredit all such stories. At the forefront of the movement to deny the validity of the stories told by countless survivors is the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, a group led by a truly vile coalition of CIA-funded psychiatrists and accused (and in some cases, convicted) pedophiles. Also playing a key role in the movement are Paul and Shirley Eberle, the authors of a purportedly authoritative book entitled *The Politics of Child Abuse*. The Eberles’ book attempts to lay the blame for virtually *all* child abuse accusations and prosecutions on overzealous prosecutors, therapists and parents. That argument might be a little more credible, however, if the Eberles themselves were not known to Los Angeles police as distributors of child pornography—a fact that media outlets conveniently and rather consistently ignore while touting the Eberles as authorities in the field of child abuse.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, claims of ritual abuse are certainly not a modern phenomenon. Such claims have actually been around for quite some time, and they were given legitimacy by no less an historical figure than Sigmund Freud. Over 100 years ago, Freud recognized that ritual abuse was likely the primary cause of the psychological problems that he observed in his female patients. Author Kevin Marron noted that Freud had commented on the marked “similarity between what [his patients] told him and the accounts of the witchcraft confessions of the 16th century.” In a letter to a colleague, written in January 1897, Freud pondered: “But why did the devil who took possession of the poor things invariably abuse them sexually and in a loathsome manner? Why are their confessions under torture so like the communications made by my patients in psychological treatment?” If Freud were alive today, he might well add: “And why are the

communications made by my patients a century ago so like the stories told to therapists today by survivors of SRA?”

Should this remarkable consistency spanning several centuries be attributed to some kind of recurring mass hysteria? Or can it best be explained by the fact that, as historians (and the *Chicago Tribune*) have noted, “satanic cults have been documented in Europe and America as far back as the 1600s”? Has there always been something dark and evil lurking in the shadows, only occasionally raising its head—at which times its existence is denied, its perpetrators cast as victims, and its real victims mocked and ridiculed? To ponder such a question, alas, requires calling into question some of our most fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world we live in—and that is a decidedly unsettling venture.

Perhaps when viewed in the context of a covert, state-sponsored mind control program, some readers can begin to understand not only why there might be those who are motivated to inflict appalling levels of abuse on some of America’s children, but also why so much effort would be expended attempting to discredit claims of horrific abuse if the claims are in fact valid.

Truth be told, the stories told by survivors of ritual abuse tend to be self-discrediting. One of the potential benefits, therefore, of cloaking mind control activity in satanic rituals is that the operations are largely immune to disclosure. Even if an operation is uncovered, the stories told by the children tend to be so outlandish, so far removed from the world that we know, that the claims are easily cast aside as the product of a child’s fertile imagination. In May 2000, however, a report commissioned by the United Kingdom’s Department of Health concluded that Satanic Ritual Abuse was not (as an earlier report ordered by the Conservative government found in 1994), a “myth.” The *Independent* noted, in anticipation of the report’s release, that a “specially commissioned government report will this week conclude that satanic abuse does take place in Britain. It will say that its victims have suffered actual abuse and are not suffering from ‘false memory syndrome.’”⁸

One of the primary authors of the controversial report was therapist Valerie Sinason, who reportedly had personally treated 126 survivors of ritualized abuse. According to a report in the *Guardian*, Sinason has said “46 of her patients claimed to have witnessed murder of children or adults during ritual abuse ceremonies that had involved up to 300 people at a time. Some 70% of the reported

8 The timing of the report on this landmark study was rather curious. The *Independent* published the story on April 30, 2000—otherwise known as *Walpurgisnacht* (Night of the Witches) or *Beltane*. Along with the summer and winter solstices, *Walpurgisnacht* is among the most significant of the occult holidays.

abuse was carried out by paedophiles and the rest by satanists.” The *Independent* added that sixteen of the victims had also claimed “they had seen induced abortions or babies killed.” Sinason’s research has led her to conclude that some children “are born for the purpose of abuse and are not registered on birth certificates.” That claim has been voiced repeatedly by U.S. victims as well.

In a report from February 2000, the *Independent* revealed that Sinason had photographs documenting “horrific injuries to children and the existence of ceremonial sites with the remains of mutilated animals.” The same article noted that Scotland Yard had begun an investigation. It is unclear where that investigation led, as it is unclear what the official response was to the release of Sinason’s study. Media outlets appear to have dropped the story just before the report was issued. Many readers of the press accounts that preceded the report’s release were no doubt predisposed to dismiss Sinason and her fellow researchers as cranks. Where exactly, readers were left to ponder, was this alleged photographic evidence showing children with horrific injuries? And where is the evidence of ritual murders being performed?

As it turns out, shockingly enough, such evidence is not that difficult to find. As hard as it may be to believe, especially for readers conditioned to think that all such stories are nothing but ‘urban myths,’ photographic evidence of exactly the sort described by Sinason is being peddled all over the Internet. But even with such compelling evidence being widely circulated, many will still be tempted to discount the stories told by the survivors of such abuse. Skeptics are advised to keep in mind the words of Detective Robert Simandl of the Chicago Police Department: “It’s difficult for us to believe such crimes are occurring, but they are, all over the United States.”

Indeed, all over the world, as we shall see in the next chapter.

“In the early 1950’s the CIA was looking for ‘specially gifted subjects’ to study ‘dissociative states,’ which could be ‘induced and controlled to some extent with hypnosis and drugs.’”

—Arlene Tyner, writing in *Probe* magazine,
July/August 2000

PART I

THE PEDOPHOCRACY

“From our comfortable seat in life...we never could have imagined that thousands of well-off adults, integrated and even cultured, find pleasure in seeing children tortured and killed.”

—From a front-page editorial in Italy’s *Corriere della Sera*
(reprinted in *The Irish Times*, September 29, 2000)

Chapter 1

From Brussels...

“The case of abduction and murder against Belgium’s infamous paedophile Marc Dutroux remains unresolved. He has not been brought to book for these heinous crimes. There appears to be a steel veil drawn over the facts at the highest level and no one is prepared to expose those involved in this blatant cover-up... The official answer is that a series of hysterical conspiracy theories forced investigators to search for paedophile networks, which didn’t exist. But for observers of this debacle, that’s exactly what didn’t happen. Far from being investigated, leads pointing to a network seem to have been blocked or buried.”

—Olenka Frenkiel for the *BBC*, May 2, 2002

To the vast majority of Americans, the name Marc Dutroux does not mean much.

Drop that name in Belgium though and you are likely to elicit some very visceral reactions. Dutroux—convicted along with his wife in 1989 for the rape and violent abuse of five young girls, the youngest of whom was just eleven—now stands accused of being a key player in an international child prostitution and pornography ring whose practices included kidnapping, rape, sadistic torture, and murder.

Dutroux was sentenced in 1989 to thirteen years for his crimes, but was freed after having served just three. This was in spite of the fact that, as prison governor Yvan Stuaert would later tell a parliamentary commission: “A medical report described him as a perverse psychopath, an explosive mix. He was an evident danger to society.” The man who turned Dutroux loose on society, Justice Minister Melchior Wathelet, was rewarded with a prestigious appointment to serve as a judge at the European Court of Justice at The Hague.

Shortly after Dutroux's release, young girls began to disappear in the vicinity of some of his homes. Though technically unemployed and drawing welfare from the state, he nevertheless owned at least six houses and lived quite lavishly. His rather lucrative income appears to have been derived from trading in child sex-slaves, child prostitution, and child pornography. Many of his houses appeared to stand vacant, though at least some of them were in fact used as torture and imprisonment centers where kidnapped girls were taken and held in underground dungeons. Some of Dutroux's homes were used in this way for several years following his early release, with a growing body of evidence to indicate that fact to the police. Authorities nevertheless failed to act on the information, or acted on it in ways that implied either complete incompetence (according to most press reports), or police complicity in the operation (according to any sort of logic).

Officials seem to have routinely ignored tips that later proved accurate, including a report from Dutroux's own mother that her son was holding girls prisoner in one of his houses. In addition, key facts were withheld from investigators working on the disappearances and lines of communication were unaccountably broken, inexcusably hindering the investigation. Police did search one of Dutroux's homes on no less than three separate occasions over the course of the investigation. On at least two of those occasions, two of the missing girls were being held in heinous conditions, imprisoned in a custom-built dungeon in the basement. Nevertheless, according to the *Guardian*, the police searches came up empty—even though the investigating officers reported “hearing children's voices on one occasion.”

It was not until August 13, 1996, four years after the disappearances began, that authorities arrested Dutroux, along with his wife (an elementary school teacher), a lodger, a policeman, and a man the *Guardian* described as “an associate with political connections”—elsewhere identified as Jean-Michel Nihoul, a Brussels businessman and nightclub owner. One of those taken into custody—Michel Lelievre, described in a May 2002 *BBC* report as a “drug addict and petty thief”—reportedly told his interrogators that at least some of the girls abducted by the ring “were kidnapped to order, for someone else.” This was just one of many statements by suspects and witnesses that would later be dismissed by Belgian officials.

Two days after the arrests, police again searched Dutroux's home and discovered the soundproof dungeon/torture center. As *CNN* reported, three years earlier “police ignored tips from an informant who said Dutroux was building secret cellars to hold girls before selling them abroad.” In addition, in 1995, the same informant had told police that Dutroux had offered an unidentified third man “the equivalent of \$3,000 to \$5,000 to kidnap girls.” Incredibly, it was later reported by the *Guardian* that police actually had in their possession a videotape

of the dungeon being constructed: “Belgian police could have saved the lives of two children [who were] allegedly murdered by the paedophile Marc Dutroux if they had watched a video seized from his home which showed him building their hidden cell.” The tape had been seized in one of the earlier searches.

At the time of the final search, two fourteen-year-old girls were found imprisoned in the dungeon, chained and starving. They described to police how they had been used as child prostitutes and in the production of child pornography videos. More than 300 such videos were taken into custody by the police.

On August 17, 1996, the story got grimmer as police dug up the bodies of two eight-year-old girls at another of Dutroux’s homes. It would later be learned that the girls had been kept in one of Dutroux’s dungeons for nine months after their abductions, during which time they were repeatedly tortured and sexually assaulted—all captured on videotape. The girls were then left to slowly starve to death. Alongside of their decimated corpses was the body of Bernard Weinstein, a former accomplice of Dutroux who had occupied one of the houses for several years. Weinstein had been buried alive.

A few weeks later, two more girls were found buried under concrete at yet another of the Dutroux properties. Autopsy reports suggest they were drugged and then buried alive. By that time, ten people connected to the case were reportedly in custody. As the body count mounted, the outrage of the Belgian people grew. They demanded to know why this man, dubbed the ‘Belgian Beast,’ had been released after having served such an absurdly short sentence. And they demanded to know why, as evidence had continued to mount and girls had continued to disappear, the police had chosen to do nothing. How many girls, they wanted to know, had been killed due to this inaction?

Adding further fuel to the fire, as a *Los Angeles Times* report revealed, were claims by “a highly regarded children’s activist, Marie-France Botte...[that] the Justice Ministry is sitting on a politically sensitive list of customers of pedophile videotapes.” The same report noted, “the affair has become further clouded by the discovery of a motorcycle that reportedly matches the description of one used in the 1991 assassination of prominent Belgian businessman and politician Andre Cools. Michel Bourlet, the head prosecutor on the pedophile case, meanwhile, has publicly declared that the investigation can be thoroughly pursued only without political interference. Several years ago, Bourlet was removed from the highly charged Cools case, which remains unsolved.”

A report in *Time* magazine alluded to murky links between the Dutroux operation and organized crime figures. Marc Verwilghen—the chief investigating magistrate on the case—stated the case more bluntly: “For me, the Dutroux affair is a question of organised crime.” Also mentioned in the *Time* article was the use

of secret “underground tunnels,” not unlike those described by children a decade earlier at the infamous McMartin Preschool.

Outrage continued to grow as more arrests were made and evidence of high-level government and police complicity continued to emerge. One of Dutroux’s accomplices, businessman Jean-Michel Nihoul, confessed to organizing an ‘orgy’ at a Belgian chateau that had been attended by government officials, a former European Commissioner, and a number of law enforcement officers. A Belgian senator noted, quite accurately, that such parties were part of a system “which operates to this day and is used to blackmail the highly placed people who take part.”

According to the *BBC*, Nihoul has brazenly claimed: “I am the monster of Belgium.” He has all but dared the state to prosecute him, claiming that he is beyond the reach of the law because he has information that, if made public, “would bring the Government and the entire state down.”

In September 1996, twenty-three suspects—at least nine of whom were police officers—were detained and questioned about their possible complicity in the crimes and/or their negligence in investigating the case. As the *Los Angeles Times* noted in a very brief, two-sentence report, the detainments “were the latest indication that police in the southern city of Charleroi may have helped cover up the alleged crimes of Marc Dutroux.” The arrests followed raids on the police officers’ homes and on the headquarters of the Charleroi police force and were based on information supplied by police inspector Georges Zicot, who had already been charged as an accomplice. Three magistrates had also reportedly been interrogated by police investigators.

Just days before the arrests, police had also arrested five suspects in the Cools assassination, including a former regional government minister named Alain VanderBiest. Strangely enough, the *News Telegraph* reported that: “Police investigating the Cools murder in 1991...have been given helpful leads by some of those arrested in the Dutroux case.” The *Telegraph* also noted that Cools “had promised ‘shocking revelations’ before his death.”

On October 14, 1996 came the straw that broke the camel’s back: Jean-Marc Connerotte, who had been serving as the investigating judge on the Dutroux case, was dismissed by the Belgian Supreme Court. Connerotte was viewed by the people as something of a rarity: a public official/law enforcement officer who actually appeared to be pursuing a prosecution, rather than a cover-up. The *News Telegraph* described him as: “the only figure in the judiciary who enjoys the nation’s confidence.” As the *New York Times* reported, Connerotte “became a national hero in August after saving two children from a secret dungeon kept by a convicted child rapist and ordering the inquiry that led to the discovery of the bodies of four girls kidnapped by a child pornography network.” He had also

arrested three men in 1994 as suspects in the Cools assassination—just before the case was transferred to the jurisdiction of another magistrate.

A May 2002 *BBC* report revealed that, after Connerotte's removal, a "special team of police officers interviewing Regina Louf and the other 'X' witnesses, as they were called, were the next to be sacked." The "X" witnesses were victims of the pedophile ring who had come forward to tell harrowing tales of their victimization.

A woman named Regina Louf was the first of eleven such victims to be interviewed by police officials. Louf claimed that she had been victimized by the ring—which included her parents and her grandmother—from the time that she was a very young child. She described the operation in detail to authorities, supplying them with names—names that included "senior judges, one of the country's most powerful politicians—now dead—and a very influential banker." According to Louf, the operation "was big business—blackmail—there was a lot of money involved." Many of her victimizers, she said, were secretly filmed for blackmail purposes.

Louf identified Michel Nihoul as a regular organizer of 'parties.' These parties, she said, "not only involved sex, they included sadism, torture and murder." She described in detail the murdered victims, and how and where they were killed. The *BBC* reported that when police checked into Louf's claims, they were able to verify "key elements of Regina's story and found [that] at least one murder that she says she witnessed matched an unsolved murder." Nevertheless, the same *BBC* report revealed that, "today in Belgium Regina Louf's reputation is destroyed. The Prosecutor General of Liege, Anne Thilly, declares she's completely mad despite numerous statements from independent psychologists to the contrary." According to the judges now on the case, "her testimony has been declared worthless" and will not be presented in any trial of Dutroux or his associates.

Connerotte's removal from the Dutroux case fanned the smoldering flames of public outrage; as the *Times* reported, "Hundreds of thousands of people had petitioned the high court to retain the judge." Adding yet more fuel to the fire, prosecutor Michel Bourlet was claiming that evidence indicated a pedophile ring, composed of the wealthy and powerful, had been protected for twenty-five years. With the families of Dutroux's victims calling for a general strike, men and women all across the country walked away from their jobs in protest as railway workers and bus drivers shut down public transportation, bringing some cities to a virtual standstill. The *Telegraph* reported that, "in Liege, firemen turned their hoses on the city's court building" to symbolize the massive clean-up that was in order.

On October 20, 1996, 350,000 citizens of the tiny nation of Belgium took to the streets of Brussels dressed all in white, demanding the reform of a system so corrupt that it would protect the abusers, rapists, torturers, and killers of children. The political fallout from the case ultimately brought about the resignation

of Belgium's State Police Chief, Interior Minister, and Justice Minister, who became sacrificial lambs tossed to the outraged masses to avoid what could easily have exploded into a full-scale insurrection by the people, particularly after police 'incompetence' allowed Dutroux to 'escape' and remain at large for a brief time in April 1998.

There were in fact calls from the people for the entire coalition government to step down. Months later, an opinion survey by Brussels' *Le Soir* newspaper found that only one in five Belgians still had confidence in the federal government and in the nation's criminal justice system. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported in January 1998, "the conviction remains stubbornly widespread that members of the upper crust—government ministers, the Roman Catholic Church, the court of King Albert II—belonged to child sex rings, or protected them."

The lingering distrust of the people was not alleviated by the fact that a parliamentary inquiry had identified, in April 1997, thirty officials who had, as the *Times* tactfully put it, "failed to uncover Dutroux's misdeeds." Nearly a year later, none of them had yet suffered any repercussions. Additionally, at least ten missing children suspected of having fallen prey to Dutroux's operation have never been found.

Just a few months before the parliamentary commission issued its report on the Dutroux case, viewed by many as a shameless cover-up, the *Telegraph* reported, "grim rumors...have been circulating that a second paedophile network at least as appalling may have been operating in parallel to that said to involve Dutroux." The bodies of seven children were believed to have been hidden by the ring, which was thought could be linked to Dutroux through Michel Nihoul. Two months after that, a man named Patrick Derochette and three of his family members were arrested following the discovery of the body of a nine-year-old girl. Rumors quickly began circulating linking that crime to Dutroux as well. Like Dutroux, Derochette had previously been convicted on multiple counts of child rape. He had been committed to a psychiatric institution from which he was released after just six weeks. Authorities quickly denied that there was any connection between the cases. In January 1998, however, the *Telegraph* reported, "new evidence from a lawyer involved in the investigations blows a hole in previous police claims that there was no link between the cases involving the alleged child murderers Marc Dutroux and Patrick Derochette." Once again, the connection was said to be through Nihoul.

In April 1999, the *Guardian* weighed in with this report: "the highly respected chairman of a parliamentary inquiry into the [Dutroux] case claims that his commission's findings were muzzled by political and judicial leaders to prevent details emerging of complicity in the crimes...Mr. Verwilghen claims that senior political and legal figures refused to cooperate with the inquiry. He says magistrates

and police were officially told to refuse to answer certain questions, in what he describes as ‘a characteristic smothering operation.’”

As of May 2002, nearly six years after Dutroux was taken into custody, his trial had yet to begin. Parents of victims continued to loudly shout of a cover-up, and the *Telegraph* was reporting that: “It was recently learnt that scientific tests on 6,000 hairs found in the [underground dungeon] began only this year.” Those tests, of course, could reveal how many victims passed through Dutroux’s chamber of horrors. Perhaps more importantly, they could also, as a *BBC News* report noted in January 2002, “establish whether the girls had any other visitors.”

Anne Thilly, the aforementioned Prosecutor General of Liege who dismissed as “mad” a key prosecution witness, has been quoted as saying, “there was no need to get the hairs analysed as no one else entered the cage. There was no network so there was no need to look for evidence of one. In any case, the hairs have all now been analysed.” Thilly gave no indication of how she knew there was nothing to find before even bothering to look. And contrary to her claims, the *BBC* reported in May 2002 that the hairs had “still not been analysed,” according to “sources central to the investigation.” Thilly has also claimed “the bodies [recovered from Dutroux’s properties] were too decomposed to test for DNA.” The *BBC* though noted “the autopsy states quite clearly that the bodies were not decomposed. Samples were taken. It is just that no one seems to know what has happened to the results.”

The January *BBC* report came on the heels of an interview that the imprisoned Dutroux granted a Flemish journalist and a Belgian senator. Therein, Dutroux was quoted as admitting, “a network with all kinds of criminal activities really does exist. But the authorities don’t want to look into it.” He also acknowledged the existence of “a well-grounded [paedophile] ring. I maintained regular contact with people in this ring. However, the law does not want to investigate this lead.”

Another lead that was never seriously investigated involved allegations of satanic cult involvement in the abductions. In 1996, police had found a note at Bernard Weinstein’s home that led them to investigate the *Abraxas* organization and its high priestess, Dominique Kindermans. Some segments of the Belgian press speculated that the organization was a satanic cult that assisted in obtaining young girls for ritual sacrifices.

If the Marc Dutroux case were some kind of aberration, it would still be a disturbing story for the level of unspeakable corruption and depravity of the Belgian political and law enforcement establishment of which it speaks. Far more disturbing is the fact that it does not appear to be an isolated case at all.

As 1999 drew to a close, the nation of Latvia was rocked by a child prostitution/child pornography scandal that reached to the very top of the political power

structure. The case first broke in August, when police uncovered a massive operation involving as many as 2,000 severely abused children. When media reports began linking top Latvian officials to the case, a special parliamentary commission was assembled to investigate the emerging allegations. In February 2000, the chairman of the commission delivered a report to Parliament linking the country's Prime Minister and Justice Minister, the director of the State Revenue Service, and a number of army and law enforcement officers to the case. A campaign was immediately begun to discredit the committee chairman, including allegations that he is tied to the former KGB—a classic case of redbaiting that enabled the allegations to be dismissed as 'Communist' propaganda.

On November 27, 2002, *The Guardian* reported that many among Portugal's elite were linked to a pedophile ring as well: "A scandal over a paedophile ring run from a state orphanage gripped Portugal yesterday as it threatened to engulf diplomats, media personalities and senior politicians. Photographs of unnamed senior government officials with young boys from Lisbon's Casa Pia orphanage were among the evidence reportedly available to police after they arrested a former orphanage employee called Carlos Silvino." One revelation in the case was "that systematic sexual abuse of children at the home had allegedly been going on for more than 20 years and had been known to police and other authorities for most of that time." Teresa Costa Macedo, a former secretary of state for families, has said that she sent a dossier to police twenty years ago containing "damning proof" of the abuse, including photographs and eyewitness statements. The information was not acted upon, and, for her trouble, Macedo became the victim of a campaign of threats and intimidation.

In June 2003, the *Independent* reported that police "at first denied her reports existed," but then later produced them. Macedo has testified before parliament that the former president, Antonio Ramalho Eanes, the former foreign secretary, Jaime Garcia, and elements within the police all knew of the ongoing abuse. An official report claims that, "among the children still living at Casa Pia, at least 128 had been subjected to sexual abuse. Many are deaf and dumb." Countless other victims have passed through the facility over the last thirty years. Among those detained or questioned in the case were Carlos Cruz, known in Portugal as "Mr. Television"; Manuel Abrantes, a former director of Casa Pia; Joao Ferreira Diniz, a doctor at Casa Pia; Jorge Ritto, a former ambassador to UNESCO; Hugo Marcal, Carlos Silvino's former attorney; Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, Portugal's Socialist Party leader; television talk show host Herman Jose; and Paulo Pedroso, a former Labour minister.

A follow-up report in the *Independent* noted that Casa Pia, founded by a police superintendent, first "came under scrutiny 20 years ago when a young inmate died...Officials found the home's doors open all night and youngsters in

a cruising area for male prostitutes. Four children aged between eight and 12, missing for a fortnight, were found in a luxury flat in nearby Cascais owned by a diplomat." That diplomat was Jorge Ritto. It is now alleged that Silvino, an employee and former resident of Casa Pia, acted for years to procure young boys for rich and powerful pedophiles, including Ritto. Adolescent witnesses have claimed on Portuguese television that they were offered enticements and "then raped...and recruited for sex parties with powerful 'friends.' Others, now adult, have told of chilling experiences long suppressed." A Portuguese organization calling itself *Innocence in Danger* has been working for years to publicize the problem of child abuse and child abductions in the country, but have been unable to penetrate what they describe as a "media blackout."

As of February 2003, a campaign was underway in Scotland to unseal records that have been sealed for 100 years under special order. The records concern the activities of Thomas Hamilton, a notorious child molester/murderer who was credited with killing sixteen schoolchildren and a teacher, and then himself, in 1996. One police report sealed under the order "concerns Thomas Hamilton's activities at a summer camp in Loch Lomond in 1991, five years before the shootings," and allegedly links Hamilton to "figures in the Scottish establishment, including two senior politicians and a lawyer," according to the *Guardian*.

A report in Scotland's *Sunday Herald*, from March 2003, revealed that 106 documents had been sealed. These included "a letter connected to Hamilton, which was sent by George Robertson, currently head of NATO, to Michael Forsyth, who was then Secretary of State for Scotland," as well as "correspondence relating to Thomas Hamilton's alleged involvement in Freemasonry." A deputy justice minister, Michael Matheson, was quoted in the article questioning the official justification for sealing the documents: "The explanation to date about the 100-year rule was that it was put in place to protect the interests of children named in the Central Police Report. How can that explanation stand when children aren't named?"

On September 29, 2000, *The Irish Times* reported that yet another pedophile network had surfaced: "Eight people were arrested in Italy and three in Russia, and police said 1,700 people were being investigated in Italy." The images traded by this ring were "divided into several categories...The most gruesome, police said, was coded 'Necros Pedo,' in which children were raped and tortured to death."

And so it is that we first confront that most disturbing of topics—snuff films, which most people assume do not actually exist. As recently as February 1999, the *New York Post* assured readers that: "Snuff films are the stuff of urban legend...how did this legend get started? No one knows." The unfortunate truth though is that snuff films do actually exist, and they likely have existed for as long as film has existed, though they were not always known by that name. According

to the *Post*: “The term ‘snuff’ was actually coined during the Charles Manson case, when press reports repeated a rumor that the Manson ‘family’ had filmed home movies of the brutal slayings.” Other reports hold that the term was coined in 1976 by a writer for the *New York Times* who was in need of a phrase to describe reports of murders following sexual activity being captured on film.

In the late 1970s, as Carl Raschke noted in *Painted Black*, the “Texas House Select Committee on Child Pornography disclosed...that investigators probing leads to organized crime in Houston, Dallas, and other major cities found that ‘slave’ auctions for sixteen- and seventeen-year-old boys were routinely held in Mexico. Some of the boys were featured in brutal snuff or ‘slasher’ movies.” Raschke also quotes from a study by U.S. mental health professionals that claims that a child from Mexico “can be packaged, delivered, and sold deep within [the United States] in a short time,” and that many are purchased solely “for the purpose of killing.”

In *Enslaved*, Gordon Thomas reported that: “At the start of the year [1991] Britain’s Scotland Yard was continuing to investigate reports that up to twenty children in London had been murdered last year in [snuff films] and the video tapes sold on the Continent.” Journalist Nick Davies, writing for the *Guardian* in November 2000, revisited that investigation, which was centered on a group of British pedophiles living in Amsterdam. The investigation revealed that the men were running gay brothels that were essentially ‘fronts’ for trafficking underage boys, many purchased from the streets of economically ravaged Eastern Europe, and others collected from the streets of London. Prominent among the group of pedophiles were a man named Alan Williams, known as the “Welsh Witch,” and another named Warwick Spinks, who according to Davies, “pioneered the trafficking of boys as young as 10.”

The men used the boys in the production of child pornography and, according to several witnesses, in the production of snuff films. Davies wrote: “not just once but repeatedly, evidence had come to the attention of police in England and the Netherlands, that, for pleasure and profit, some of the exiled paedophiles in Amsterdam had murdered boys in front of the camera.” Indeed, witnesses had independently given descriptions of snuff films that were remarkably consistent in the details of the types of torture used and the manner of death, though the descriptions of the victim and the filming location differed, indicating that a number of such films had been made. One witness claimed to have seen five such films.

In the fall of 1998, British detectives flew to Amsterdam to investigate a particularly detailed account provided by a witness. The investigators had in their possession: a detailed description of the apartment where the witness had viewed the tape; the name of the owner of the apartment and videotape; the name of the man who committed the murder; a detailed description of events on the tape;

and the first name and approximate age of the victim. With all that in hand, says Davies, the detectives “hit a wall.” Dutch police “said it was not enough” to warrant launching any sort of an investigation. By that time, investigators had been hearing accounts of the snuff films for nearly eight years. At one point, they had recruited an undercover officer “to pose as a child abuser and befriend Warwick Spinks,” who acknowledged to the officer that he was actively involved in trafficking boys. He also revealed that he knew “some people who were involved in making snuff movies and how they did it was, they only sold them in limited editions, made 10 copies or something, 10 very rich customers in America, who paid \$5,000 each or something like that.” There is no indication that any thorough investigation was ever conducted, or that any arrests were ever made.

In September 2002, the *Chicago Sun Times* carried a brief report of two brothers who were arrested and charged with possessing an enormous collection of child pornography. Seized from the brothers were 5,000 photographic images, along with about 100 videotapes and 8mm films. Among this evidence were images of “young girls apparently tortured, raped and killed.” The American media has shown no inclination to shine any additional light on the case.

An account of the recent Italian case carried by the *Guardian* affirmed the existence of snuff films: “Police have discovered a massive international paedophile network selling violent child-pornography videos to clients in Italy, the US and Germany... (authorities are) trying to identify 5,000 people who are suspected of attempting to purchase the videos, some of which appear to contain images of children being tortured and murdered.” The UK’s *Independent*, in a follow-up published in November 2000, also confirmed that the seized materials included child snuff films: “Horried investigators gathered images of more than 2,000 children who were filmed while being abused, raped, and...killed.” By that time, close to 1,500 people had been charged in the case, but not—as the *Guardian* noted—“those in high places who are believed to form a ‘paedophile lobby.’”

As in the Belgian, Latvian, and Portuguese cases, there were indications in the Italian case of high-level complicity and a strong belief among the people that the facts of the case were being covered up. And as with the other cases, the *Independent* reported that the magistrate heading up the inquiry “provoked a furore by denouncing a ‘paedophile lobby’ supported by politicians which he said openly obstructed the investigators and worked to prevent tougher sanctions for the consumers of child pornography.” The *New York Times* reported in March 1997 that there is “growing public indignation in France and elsewhere about the recurrent reports of kidnapping, rape or incest involving the very young.” The same *Times* report revealed that French police had “detained more than 250 people and confiscated some 5,000 videocassettes” in conjunction with an investigation into a massive child pornography ring. Those detained by police were

described as “mainly married professionals.” A dozen of them soon turned up dead, allegedly by their own hand.

The *BBC* filed a brief report on a 1996 case that was otherwise almost completely ignored by the English-language press: “Mexican police broke up an international child pornography ring based in the resort of Acapulco which they said had at least *four thousand clients in the United States*,” (emphasis added). A UN envoy investigating the case said that the “child pornography sometimes involved babies of less than one month old.”

In June 1997, the *News Telegraph* spoke of over 800 French homes being raided and 204 suspects being taken into custody. Among those detained were “more than 30 teachers...and a number of priests,” as well as the deputy mayor of the town of Saint Mihiel. By the end of the week, four had committed suicide, including a school headmaster. Three years later, the *BBC* filed a very brief report noting that a verdict was due “in the trial of more than sixty people accused of possessing child pornography. One of the judges hearing the case said examining the video evidence made him feel physically sick.” In a familiar refrain, it was reported that: “the French courts have been accused of attacking the easy targets—porn consumers—rather than producers and distributors. And one children’s rights group has alleged that senior public figures were among those investigated—but their cases were dropped before coming to court.”

In 1998, another large-scale international ring was discovered operating out of the Netherlands and Berlin, Germany. The *New York Times* reported that investigators called the case “nauseating,” in that “images of abuse of even babies and infants were peddled via the Internet and other media.” Police discovered “voluminous records of what appear to be clients and suppliers from countries including Israel, Ukraine, Britain, Russia and the United States.” The ring was first uncovered when a key member was found dead in Italy. According to the *Irish Times*, he was murdered by another member of the ring. His apartment in the Dutch town of Zandvoort was found to contain “thousands of digital images stored on computer disks,” as well as “hundreds of addresses of suspected suppliers and clients,” according to the *New York Times*. The images shocked even veteran sex-crimes investigators, one of whom stated that the seized evidence “left [him] speechless...It looks like the perpetrators are not dealing with human beings but with objects.”

The *BBC* reported in June 1999 that two unnamed German men had “gone on trial, accused of running a child pornography ring in Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic.” The pair, along with at least eleven identified but unindicted accomplices, “made video recordings of the gang sexually abusing children between the ages of three and 14 since 1993.” A large but unspecified quantity of “videos, photography, magazines and CD-ROMs containing child pornography

were confiscated.” Also noted was a possible connection to the Dutroux case: “There have been cases of Slovak children being taken to Vienna to make pornographic films. The Belgian paedophile Marc Dutroux...was a regular visitor to one Slovak town.”

In September 1998, another ring had been raided—one that the *BBC* described as “a larger and more sinister paedophile network called Wonderland.”⁹ The *San Jose Mercury News* reported, “police in...22 states and 13 foreign countries conducted coordinated raids...aimed at breaking up an Internet child-pornography ring...The ring involves as many as 200 people around the world,

9 The network was so named in honor of Lewis Carroll’s revered children’s book, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. Carroll, whose real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, was widely known to have a predilection for underage girls and boys, and is now something of a patron saint of pedophiles around the globe. A concerted effort has been made over the decades to cover up Carroll’s pedophilic tendencies, but the truth is evident even in the heavily whitewashed profiles of him that can be found in modern encyclopedias. “Always a friend of children, particularly little girls, Carroll wrote thousands of letters to them,” notes Microsoft’s *Encarta*, adding that Carroll “gained an additional measure of fame as an amateur photographer. Most of his camera portraits were of children in various costumes and poses, including nude studies.” A *New York Times* report from August 1998 states: “Dodgson exhibited a lifelong affection for little girls, seeking them out not only to enjoy their company and tell them stories, but also to photograph them, at times naked. His university colleagues thought this bizarre.” The *Times* also noted that the mother of Alice Liddell, the pre-pubescent girl that inspired Carroll’s most famous book, had banned Carroll from the Liddell home by the time the book was published. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* reports that Carroll’s photographic hobby was abandoned in 1880, but dismisses suggestions that “this sudden decision was reached because of an impurity of motive for his nude studies.” Carroll’s interest in child sexuality certainly hadn’t diminished; as the *NY Times* reported, “[Carroll] remained attached to his ‘child friends’ after giving up photography, even sketching some naked girls as late as 1885.” *Britannica* also notes that Carroll—who was raised in an environment where there were “few friends outside the family,” and who was ordained a deacon in the Church of England on the winter solstice of 1861—generally lost interest in his child ‘friends’ when they reached the age of twelve. *Wonderland* is also the name of the quarterly publication of an organization calling itself the Lewis Carroll Collector’s Guild, which bills itself as a “voluntary association of persons who believe nudist materials are a constitutionally protected expression and whose collective interests include pre-teen nudes.” As Gordon Thomas has noted, “in *Wonderland* the ‘delights’ of ‘transgenerational sex’ pepper the pages.” Such is the legacy of the man whose literary works are peddled to our children.

who exchanged over the Internet thousands of sexually explicit images of children as young as 18 months.” The *Independent* later reported that the ring “shared pictures of children being abused—in some cases live via web-cam broadcasts over the internet.” The raids included homes in “Australia, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Sweden,” according to the *New York Times*, which added that: “Several dozen people were arrested, but officials said they expected more than 100 to be charged.” The *Independent* later reported that 107 suspects were ultimately arrested. The *Mercury News* implied that that was only the tip of the iceberg: “The ring actually extends into 47 countries.”

The case was described by a British official as “stomach-churning.” The *Times* reported, “Wonderland Club members are believed to have posed their own children for pictures...In other cases...parents may have taken money to let their children be used.” The *Guardian* reported that over 1,250 children were featured in the photos and videos, “many of whom suffered appalling injuries and were seen sobbing uncontrollably as they were being sexually violated.” The *Independent* added that the victimized children were “mostly under [the age of] 10.” A *BBC* report held that the combined raids resulted in the seizure of more than “750,000 computer images of children.” A Detective Superintendent with the British National Crime Squad called these images “disgusting” and added that “the behavior that has been carried out is absolutely appalling.” The *BBC* also took note of the fact that, while ignored by the American press, “Wonderland originated in the United States.”

Among the scores of U.S. homes raided in connection with the case, one yielded a “database of more than 100,000 sexual photographs of naked boys and girls.” Interestingly enough, the *Times* also noted that another raid, “in Missouri, turned up a cache of weapons as well as child pornography in a heavily fortified trailer”—illustrating once again, as did the Dutroux case, the close ties between organized pedophilia and other terrorist assaults against society.

As with the earlier raids in Europe, a rash of ‘suicides’ followed the Wonderland arrests. By October 24, 1998, the *Mercury News* was reporting that no fewer than four of the thirty-four American suspects had killed themselves. These included a retired Air Force pilot, a microbiologist at the University of Connecticut, and a computer consultant in Colorado. In the UK, the Wonderland raids—dubbed Operation Cathedral—resulted in the indictments of eight suspects. One of the eight turned up dead four months later—another alleged suicide. The other seven were given ridiculously light sentences in February 2001 for their complicity in inflicting unfathomable abuse on countless children. Sentences ranged from 12 to 30 months. Just a few weeks before the sentences were handed down, the *Guardian* was reporting that: “Police today arrested 13 suspected paedophiles in the largest ever UK operation against child pornography.” Once again, a massive

amount of appalling evidence was seized, with most of the material featuring “scenes of children being raped and sexually abused.”

The *Independent* reported in February 2001: “Detectives working on the [Wonderland] case discovered that many of the paedophiles were also members of other child pornography groups.” One of the groups most closely tied to Wonderland was a ring known as the Orchid Club, which had been exposed by a 1996 investigation in San Jose, California. That investigation had led to the indictment of sixteen men on charges of conspiring to produce and exchange child pornography. Members of the club were identified in at least nine states and three foreign countries. By the time of the Wonderland raids, the *Mercury News* was able to report that the purported ringleader of the Orchid Club and “twelve others either have pleaded guilty or have been convicted in connection with that case.” Their crimes included recruiting “young relatives and friends of their own children to be molested and photographed.”

The club was also, like Wonderland, involved in “real-time exploitation of children” on the Internet. Club members were able to send in requests and have them acted-out on live feeds. The club also held a pedophile ‘summit,’ at which members “traded stories about pre-teen girls they had molested and photographed in sexually explicit poses.” The summit was held, appropriately enough, on April 20—the birth date of Adolph Hitler and a significant occult holiday.

In late March 2001, yet another interlinked, global pedophile network was exposed. That month, the *Independent* reported, “US authorities announced the arrest of four American citizens for involvement in an international child-porn ring called Blue Orchid.” The *Los Angeles Times* added further details: “the United States and Russia have shut down a Moscow-based international pornography ring that used the Internet to sell videotapes of children engaged in sexual acts.” These tapes were said to sell for “between \$200 and \$300.” As an *Associated Press* release revealed, “police seized some 600 videotapes, 200 digital video disks and many boxes of photographs.” Video duplication equipment and sales and shipping records were also seized, leading to “criminal inquiries in 24 nations... Many of the tapes were bought by people in the United States; others went to Germany, Britain, France, Denmark, China, Kuwait, Mexico and scores of other countries.”

The *Times* reported that nine people had been arrested and fifteen search warrants had been issued in the case. The *AP* report noted that four of those arrests were in Russia, where two suspects, alas, had “committed suicide.” The ring was also said by the *Times* to offer what were cryptically referred to as “custom-made videos” for the hefty price of \$5,000 each. The contents of these videos were not revealed, but it was revealed that the “prevalence of child pornography has increased dramatically with the growth of the Internet. There are approximately 100,000 web sites worldwide associated with child pornography.”

This point was reinforced the next day when the British press reported police raids on yet another pedophile ring. A report in the *Guardian* held “more than 30 people, including a...man working for a national youth organization, were arrested yesterday in dawn raids on the homes of suspected paedophiles.” Once again being sold and traded were images “which showed children being abused.” A report on the case in the *Independent* quoted a law enforcement spokesman as revealing, “that those arrested included members of ‘some interesting professions,’” though the source demurred from revealing what those professions might be. The official did say that they had “a disturbing scenario of one or two juveniles who have been caught in this way. One of them appears to be a 13-year-old boy.” The police acknowledged that the arrested boy was “also a potential victim and would be treated in that light,” which seems rather obvious. Nevertheless, a follow-up to the story that the *Independent* ran in May held that the boy had become “one of the youngest people to be listed on the sex offenders’ register.”

The next month, the *Guardian* carried a report on Eric Franklin Rosser—accused child pornographer, one of the FBI’s ten-most-wanted criminals, and a former keyboardist for John Cougar Mellencamp’s band. According to the report, “investigators believe Rosser’s material is among pornography circulated by a British paedophile ring...More than 1,800 members are thought to belong to a club called Teenboys. Its website features boys aged around 12...Teenboys is considered bigger than the notorious Wonderland Club.”

In September 2001, the *Scottish Daily Record* reported that a “salvation army couple working on a British army base have been arrested in a massive paedophile crackdown.” Seized from the couple’s home were “some 400 videotapes...computers, discs, photographs and other material...images of children as young as two have been found.” The same report claimed “a massive vice probe into kiddie porn in the USA would expose some of the biggest names in Hollywood as paedophiles. A federal investigation, codenamed Operation Avalanche, has already resulted in over 100 arrests—and the US Department of Justice say there will be hundreds more, including celebrities.” Lori Rabjohns, identified as a Justice Department spokeswoman, was quoted as saying: “These are people who appear upstanding members of society...We’re talking doctors, lawyers—and celebrities.”

The investigation came about as a result of a raid on the Ft. Worth, Texas home of Thomas and Janice Reedy, who had been operating a business called Landslide Productions, which offered child pornography for sale over the Internet. The Reedy’s website, according to the *Independent*, functioned as a portal to “more than 5,700 websites with names such as Child Rape and Cyber Lolita.” The Reedys had made millions of dollars from their child porn business, which “employed more than a dozen staff, including a customer service represen-

tative and a receptionist.” This financial empire was built with “money raised from the torture, rape and sexual abuse of children as young as two.”

The raid on the Reedy’s home, conducted in September 1999, unexpectedly yielded a database of the names and addresses of a reported 75,000 subscribers around the world. According to a report carried in February 2002 by *TechTV*, “more than 35,000 [of those] individual subscribers [were] in the United States.” Nevertheless, only 100 arrests had been made at that time of the report—a number that remained unchanged in the months after the initial arrests. By early 2003, the story had dropped out of sight with little indication that there would be any further arrests, despite Chief Postal Inspector Kenneth Weaver’s earlier insistence that the initial arrests were just “the tip of the iceberg.”

More than 7,000 subscribers to the site were British citizens. Their names, addresses and credit card information were provided by the FBI to British authorities, who launched an investigation paralleling Operation Avalanche that was dubbed Operation Ore. As in America, only a few of the known offenders have thus far been arrested. Included among those questioned by police have been television personality Matthew Kelly and legendary guitarist Pete Townshend.

Rushing to Townshend’s defense was *The Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn, who earlier played a prominent role in denouncing the McMartin prosecutions. In a posting on his *Counterpunch* website from February 2003, Cockburn grossly misrepresented the nature of the charges against Townshend. He charged that, according to the Supreme Court, “‘porn’ encompass[es] even clothed images of children if they are construed as arousing. ‘Child’ means anyone under 18.” Cockburn labeled Townshend’s arrest “absurd,” and claimed that if you “have a photo of a kid in a bath on your hard drive, and the prosecutor says you were looking at it with lust in your heart, [then] that is tantamount to sexually molesting an actual kid in an actual bath.”

Cockburn was clearly trying to convey the impression that Townshend and others are the innocent victims of overzealous prosecutors. It will be recalled, however, that the images that the Landslide website was offering to Townshend and other subscribers were images of “the torture, rape and sexual abuse of children as young as two.” Those are not the types of images that would easily be mistaken for innocent pictures of a child taking a bath.

Also included among the 7,272 suspects in the United Kingdom, according to the *Observer*, were “hundreds of child welfare professionals, including police officers, care workers and teachers,” all of whom were “identified as ‘extremely high-risk’ paedophiles.” Particularly well represented on the list were law enforcement personnel: “Investigators now believe as many as 90 police officers have so far been identified from an initial trawl of 200 of the British names found in the U.S.

Many of the other suspects work in other sensitive professions, often linked to the criminal justice system.”

On November 4, 2002, the *Independent* carried a brief report that noted that virtually all of the British suspects had “yet to be investigated despite the police having their details for four months.” All the information on the suspects was sent in July 2002 to the fifty-one police departments throughout Great Britain, but “despite detailed intelligence, nearly all of the suspected paedophiles remain at large.” No mention was made of why it took U.S. authorities nearly three years to get the information to their UK counterparts. In January 2003, the *Sunday Herald* announced that the “police inquiry which plans to arrest a further 7000 men across the UK...is set to end in disaster with many suspects walking free.” Detective Chief Inspector Bob McLachlan, the former head of Scotland Yard’s paedophile unit, told the *Sunday Herald*, “the lack of urgency in making arrests will lead to suspects destroying evidence...before they are arrested.” McLachlan also told the *Herald* that claims made by police chiefs and the government that they are prioritizing pedophile crime are nothing but “smoke and mirrors.”

The final line of the *Sunday Herald* article revealed that, according to police, there were enough “rich and famous Operation Ore suspects [to] fill newspaper front pages for an entire year.” According to *The Register* and the *Sunday Times* (which reportedly obtained, but did not publish, all 7,272 names), the list of suspects included “at least 20 senior executives,...services personnel from at least five military bases, GPs, university academics and civil servants.” Also on the list were a “famous newspaper columnist...along with a songwriter for a legendary pop band and a member of another chart-topping 1980s cult pop group, along with an official with the Church of England.”

It is unlikely that any of those suspects, nor the “high-profile former Labour Cabinet minister” mentioned by the *Sunday Herald*, will ever be prosecuted. In August 2003, *Scotland on Sunday* reported that the Scottish arm of the “massive internet child pornography investigation Operation Ore has ended...without anybody being charged with sex abuse.” An unnamed Scottish police chief said that that outcome “would not trouble us if we thought that all the men who were looking at child porn on their computer were just sad creeps who did not pose a risk to the children in their lives, but that is not the conclusion that was drawn from every raid.” To the contrary, what investigators repeatedly encountered was evidence that suspects were engaged in the ongoing abuse of children.

In March 2002, *Knight Ridder* carried a report that stated: “Postal inspectors, the FBI and Canadian authorities have broken up an underground network of adults who traded pornographic videos of children—sometimes their own—being brutally beaten.” At the time that the report was filed, ten perpetrators had already been convicted and “more arrests are expected in the ongoing investigation of what

authorities described...as a unique case.” According to Raymond Smith, head of the Postal Service’s child exploitation investigations: “We’ve seen organized networks of sadomasochistic beatings with adults before, but this is the first time we’ve seen it with children.”

In an apparent attempt to downplay the appalling behavior uncovered by the investigation, a postal inspector named Michael Galuppo described the ring as “a bizarre group of people obsessed with spanking children for sexual gratification.” “Spanking,” it should be noted, is a rather odd way to describe what in fact were brutally sadistic beatings involving “whips, hairbrushes, canes and wooden paddles.” The abuse was so severe that at least one of the children depicted on videotape “suffered permanent disfigurement from beatings that investigators said went on for ‘years.’” Among those convicted in the case were “a middle school teacher...a nurse and former Boy Scout leader...[and] a former Sunday school teacher.”

Just months later, in August 2002, the *Independent* reported that U.S. authorities had “announced the discovery of a ‘despicable’ child pornography ring stretching to Britain and continental Europe, in which parents sexually abused their children and distributed photographs of them over the internet...Robert Bonner, The Customs Commissioner, said he was particularly shocked to see the degree of collusion by parents. ‘If this isn’t unusual, God help us...I’ve rarely seen crimes as despicable and repugnant.’” Of the sixteen suspects arrested in the U.S., one “committed suicide shortly after being arrested.”

These cases were not, of course, in any way “unique” or “unusual,” as veteran Customs and Postal Service officials, with experience investigating cases of child exploitation, should know.

In September 2003, the *International Herald Tribune* carried a report from Berlin concerning “an international police investigation [that] had uncovered an immense child pornography ring involving 26,500 suspects who swapped illegal images on the Internet in 166 countries.” More than 500 homes in Germany were searched and hundreds of computers were seized, along with tens of thousands of CD-ROMs, diskettes, and videotapes. One seized image “showed a baby of four months being abused.” A statement issued by the German Interior and Justice Ministries warned that many of the suspects, a number of whom are reportedly teachers and police officials, “are extremely dangerous pedophiles and are from all walks of life.” About 800 of those suspects reside in the United States.

Curt Becker, the justice minister for the German state of Saxony-Anhalt, called for tougher laws to contend with the growing market for child pornography. He also directly challenged the notion that mere possession of such images is largely a victimless crime. “Every case of child pornography is a document of the sexual abuse of a child,” Becker noted, and “every look at that image kills a child’s soul.”

A January 2003 *Sunday Herald* article revealed that police investigators had discovered “that images of Fred West abusing one of his children are among child pornography available for downloading from the Internet. It is unclear whether the child was West’s murdered daughter Heather.” Fred West was one of the UK’s most notorious, and most prolific, serial killers. Shortly after being charged with twelve counts of murder, he died while in police custody, allegedly by his own hand. Like Dutroux, West had constructed a torture chamber in his cellar where his victims were filmed being raped, tortured, murdered and mutilated. The remains of nine of his victims, minus some missing parts, were discovered buried under his house and in his yard.

While we are on the subject of serial killers, *The Irish Times* carried the following report in July 1998:

Police suspect a series of gruesome gay hate killings in the Sydney region could be the work of a serial killer whose victims might be linked through a notorious paedophile ring. The latest mutilation murder was that of Australia’s longest serving mayor, Frank Arkell, aged 68, who was bludgeoned to death in his flat and who had previously faced 29 child sex charges. In the past few months two other men, one a convicted child sex offender, were attacked in their homes in similar circumstances and also suffered horrific injuries. Arkell, the former Lord Mayor of Wollongong, 50 miles south of Sydney, was a key witness in a royal commission into police corruption which uncovered a network of paedophiles.

Those serial killers sure come in handy sometimes.

“Bruno Tagliaferro, a Charleroi scrap metal merchant who knew Dutroux, claimed to know something about the car in which Julie and Melissa were kidnapped. But he was soon found dead, apparently of a heart attack. His wife Fabienne Jaupart, refused to accept the verdict and arranged for his body to be exhumed. Samples sent to the USA for analysis showed he’d been poisoned. Soon after, her teenage son found her dead at home in her bed, her mattress smouldering. Publicly it was declared suicide, or an accident. There have been 20 such unexplained deaths connected with Dutroux.”

—Olenka Frenkiel for the *BBC*, May 2, 2002

Chapter 2

...to Washington

“...several prosecutors, policemen and crucial eyewitnesses have committed suicide. Important evidence has also disappeared. So maybe Dutroux is being protected from on high. What other explanation can there be for such a disgraceful chain of events?”

—Andrew Osborn in the *Guardian*, January 25, 2002

While the size and scope of pedophile rings have grown rapidly in recent years, America, as it turns out, has long been a nation whose laws were friendly to purveyors of child pornography. It was just twenty-five years ago, in 1978, that the very *first* federal statute on child pornography was passed into law. While forbidding production and sale, the statute placed no restrictions at all on the possession or trade of such materials. New laws enacted in 1984 forbid the trade of child pornography regardless of whether any money changed hands, though possession remained legal. In fact, as recently as 1990, private possession of child pornography was legal in 44 of the 50 states, despite the inescapable fact that all such materials were, by necessity, illegally produced and/or illegally obtained.

Technology has for some time now played a key role in greatly expanding the availability of child pornography. The Polaroid camera, for example, eliminated the need for child pornographers to have access to complicit photo labs. Home video cameras did likewise for moving images. Personal computers, digital cameras, web cams, scanners, and—most notably—the Internet, have vastly expanded the reach of child pornography networks. In the age of the Internet, child pornography is a booming business. The *Los Angeles Times* noted in December 1999 that: “the number of investigations for Internet-related child pornography is soaring. The FBI launched 1,125 such inquiries this year, more than twice as many as last year.”

In the wake of this rising tide, the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling on December 17, 1999 that struck a serious blow to the prosecution of

child pornography cases. As the *Times* reported, the decision stipulated, “the government cannot prohibit computer-generated sexual images that only appear to be pictures of children.” A later report noted that appeals court judge Donald Molloy had stated that the First Amendment bars the government from criminalizing the generation of “images of fictitious children engaged in imaginary but explicit sexual conduct.” As a result of the court’s decision, prosecutors were thereafter “barred from bringing virtual-child pornography cases in California and the eight other Western states within the jurisdiction of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.”

As critics have noted, graphics technology now available to the general public is so sophisticated that it is virtually impossible to determine if an image has been digitally altered, and therefore if any actual children were involved in the generation of the image. U.S. Justice Department lawyers argued that very point, noting that the “government may find it impossible in many cases to prove that a pornographic image is of a real child.” Any good defense attorney, in other words, could raise reasonable doubt as to the authenticity of an image. It could in fact be argued that *all* such computer images “only appear to be pictures of children.” Computer images are not in fact photos, but are digital computer files that display as a facsimile of the original photo. A sound legal argument could be made that all digitally transferred and displayed child pornography is therefore legal, as it does not represent ‘real children.’

That should come as great news to the international child pornography networks, given that the United States is their number-one market. According to investigative author Gordon Thomas, the majority of child pornography produced worldwide is targeted at the U.S., where by the early 1990s it was already a \$3 billion a year business, and growing. Thomas claims that—according to law enforcement figures—over 22 million copies of child pornography videos were sold or rented in the U.S. in 1991. He also writes that much of that pornographic material is produced domestically, where it is “part of the largest segment of movie making in the United States.” Jan Hollingsworth concurs with Thomas’ figures, describing child pornography as a “three-billion-dollar—per year—U.S. industry that grossed twice that worldwide. It [is] bigger than *Disney*. Much bigger.” Speaking of *Disney*, Thomas notes that child porn videos are frequently trafficked internationally by deceptively packaging them as *Disney* videos.

Strangely enough, the first man to benefit from the 9th Circuit Court decision was Patrick J. Naughton. You may remember him as the executive with the Walt Disney Co. who ran one of the company’s kid-friendly web sites. Naughton was arrested and later tried on child pornography charges. He was convicted on December 16, *just one day* before the decision was handed down in the case before the circuit court. Within hours of the appeals court ruling, Naughton was

released by federal prosecutors on \$100,000 bail. Despite the fact that he was, as the *Times* acknowledged, convicted of “possessing pictures of actual children,” a decision was made to release him “until the impact of the court’s ruling can be sorted out”—illustrating the significant undermining of existing law that could result from the circuit court ruling.

On January 22, 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal of the case. In April 2002, the high court rendered its decision, upholding the ruling of the lower court. By doing so, the highest court in the land extended the ban on prosecutions of “virtual-child pornography” to all fifty states. As the *L.A. Times* reported on April 17, 2002, the “ruling creates an immunity for a new generation of ‘virtual’ pornographers who rely entirely on computer images.” The *Times* noted that it was “an unexpected move” for the conservative court, describing the decision as “a surprisingly strong defense of the right to free speech.” The decision was, alas, not all that surprising, given that the Supreme Court has demonstrated in the past—most notably during the 2000 election debacle—its willingness to toss aside its alleged principles when the need arises. Noted by the *Times* once again was the concern among prosecutors that they will “have a hard time proving that children portrayed on an Internet sex site, for example, are real children.” The decision handed down by the Supreme Court, notably, “does not answer that concern.”

Closely associated with child pornography is, of necessity, child abuse. It should be self-evident that all kids used in child pornography are abused children, their abuse recorded on film and tape for the depraved enjoyment of other child abusers. As Anne Houston, the director of the organization Childline Scotland, has said: “Every image of child abuse on the internet is a crime scene.”

Also closely associated with child pornography is the always-controversial issue of ‘missing children.’ There is considerable debate as to whether there is a problem in this country with missing children. Some claim that 200,000 or more children disappear without a trace every year. Others steadfastly maintain that numbers such as those are grossly inflated, and that abduction of children by strangers with bad intent is actually quite rare. The problem is that nobody really knows for sure, since the FBI—America’s compiler of crime statistics—does not bother to keep track. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported in July 2002, there is a “lack of knowledge about the prevalence of a crime that historically has not been included in the federal government’s Uniform Crime Report. Local agencies have only sporadically kept data.” Many believe that the numbers are not compiled because the FBI does not want to know—or more accurately, the FBI does not want *the American people* to know, how many children disappear every year.

What is known though is that reports of child abuse have skyrocketed. Between 1963 and 1988, reported cases of child abuse rose from 150,000 to

2,000,000 per year, a 1300% increase in just a quarter-century. Child abuse may in fact be the most prevalent crime in American society—and possibly the most significant as well, given that it provides the breeding ground for so much of the more visible crime plaguing Western culture. As Thomas reports: “over 90 percent of the teenage prison population are now victims of child abuse.” And that population is growing rapidly. In the wake of *that* rising tide, the *Los Angeles Times* reported in March 2001 that: “President Bush’s budget will trim a program aimed at preventing child abuse and cut some child care spending...A child abuse prevention program will see an 18% cut.”

Author and e-zine editor Robert Sterling has written of what he refers to as “a pattern of trivialization of child molestation evidence” that seems to characterize high-profile media stories. He points out, for instance, that in the highly publicized Woody Allen and Mia Farrow child custody case, all the attention was focused on Allen’s illicit romance with Soon-*yi* Previn. Almost entirely ignored in the media coverage was the fact that Allen was also charged with molesting his own seven-year-old adopted daughter, Dylan. While the press dismissed those allegations as unfounded and unworthy of reporting, Sterling notes that, “Connecticut state authorities, based on the testimony of Dylan and others, have stated that they do believe Woody did molest her, but decided not to prosecute anyway,” allegedly to spare the child any further trauma.

Sterling also takes note of the “case of the Menendez brothers, who, after admitting to murdering their parents, painfully revealed that they were ruthlessly abused and molested by them over the years.” Their claims were never fully investigated and the boys were “viciously demonized for trying to escape the murder charges and accused of making up their abuse,” though there was in fact evidence of that abuse. Also referenced by Sterling is the kid-gloves treatment afforded Michael Jackson when he was charged with molestation: “even though the accusations against him are widely believed to be true, [they] are merely passed off with a laugh among other smirking monologue jokes on Jay Leno.” And of course, though not mentioned by Sterling, sister LaToya was ridiculed by the media when she came forward with stories about the sexual abuse suffered *by* the Jackson kids at the hands of their father. Other cases discussed in the Sterling piece include the over-hyped ‘au-pair’ trial, during which evidence of prior abuse of the child by his parents was consistently ignored, and the Susan Smith case, in which the media refused to consider whether Smith’s own severe childhood abuse could have been a factor in the murder of her children, despite the fact that her father admitted to the chronic abuse.

Coupled with the fact that the press have consistently downplayed the occurrence of child molestation is the equally disturbing fact that that very same media have actively promoted the sexualization of children—a trend that has been

greatly accelerated in recent years, and which has served to, to some degree, legitimize pedophilia. Taking note of the proliferation of young teen—and even pre-teen—sex symbols, Tom Junod wrote in *Esquire* (February 2001) that: “the entire culture is besotted with the erotic promise of teenage girls... The lure of jailbait now supplies the erotic energy to a popular culture desperate for what’s new, what’s young, what’s alive.” The Junod article is, strangely enough, a profile of Greg Dark, one-half of the former ‘Dark Brothers’—notorious purveyors of dark-themed, occult-tinged porno films. Dark is rather noteworthy for having openly produced and peddled child pornography, in that many of his films featured a very young Traci Lords, who began working with the Dark Brothers at the age of thirteen.

But Dark has now put those days long behind him. He is now working comfortably in the mainstream. And he is no longer marketing teen sexuality. No, now he is creating music videos...for Britney Spears, Mandy Moore and the pre-teen Leslie Carter (sister of Aaron Carter and “Back Street Boy” Nick Carter). That is, according to Dark,¹⁰ a completely different line of work.

It is not just the media that has been actively promoting the sexualization of children; certain segments of academia have been busily doing so as well. On April 19, 2002, the *Washington Times* carried a report detailing a “movement within academia to promote ‘free sexual expression of children.’” This “movement to legitimize sex between adults and children is ‘gathering steam,’ warns Stephanie Dallam, researcher for the Leadership Council for Mental Health, Justice and the Media in Philadelphia, an organization that deals with prevention and treatment of child abuse. ‘Some people view children as the next sexual frontier,’ Ms. Dallam says.” Referenced in the *Times* article is Judith Levine’s book

10 Some other interesting facts about Dark emerged from the *Esquire* profile, such as that he was raised by a Satanist father, who “used to read to Gregory from the works of Aleister Crowley, the noted occultist, when Gregory was very young.” His father’s collection of “black magick” books is one of Dark’s most cherished possessions. Also revealed was that Dark is a master manipulator, as he candidly admitted to his interviewer: “And the thing is, I like manipulating people. I’m comfortable manipulating people. I’m good at it.” Junod added that, during Dark’s porno days, he “asked people to do things...curious things...and they did them.” Such is the nature of the man who helps craft the images of America’s teen sex symbols and market them to millions of pre-teen fans. Britney Spears later revealed to *Esquire* an interesting detail of her family life: “...when I was thirteen years old, I used to walk around my house completely naked...My family just always walked around the house naked. We were earthy people.”

Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex, published by the University of Minnesota Press. Levine's book endorses a Dutch law passed in 1990 "that effectively lowered the age of consent to 12." As the *Times* article points out, the book "is only the most recent in a series of academic arguments for 'consensual' sex involving children." Included among such academic endeavors are:

- An article published in 2000 by the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco in which the authors claimed that there was "considerable evidence" that there is no "inherent harm in sexual expression in childhood."
- An interview with San Francisco State University professor Gilbert Herdt in the Dutch pro-pedophilia journal *Paidika* in which Herdt stated: "the category 'child' is a rhetorical device for inflaming what is really an irrational set of attitudes" against pedophilia.
- Another interview with *Paidika*, given by John Money, professor emeritus at Johns Hopkins University, that spoke of "genuinely, totally mutual" sex between adult men and young boys.
- A 1998 study in a journal of the American Psychological Association argued that "value-neutral" terms such as "adult-child sex" should be used to describe a "willing encounter" between an adult pedophile and a child. One of the study's co-authors, Robert Bauserman, with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, has written previously for *Paidika*. This 1998 study, according to the *Times*, "has already been used as evidence to defend accused child molesters in at least three court cases."

Many of these recent arguments in favor of the expression of child sexuality were influenced by the work of Indiana University professor Alfred Kinsey, who claimed in his notorious late-1940s/early-1950s reports on human sexuality that children "are sexual from birth." The professor was, oddly enough, another devoted disciple of Aleister Crowley. Kinsey died shortly after paying a visit to Crowley's Thelema Abbey in Sicily with filmmaker and fellow occultist Kenneth Anger—who was the roommate and probable lover of Manson Family member Bobby Beausoleil...but we will get to that later.

Like child molestation and child abduction, child prostitution is also closely associated with child pornography. And make no mistake about it; child prostitution is a booming business. *A&E*'s "Investigative Reports" has noted that law enforcement figures indicate that there are currently some 600,000 child prostitutes working in the United States and Canada, in an industry that generates \$5 billion a year worldwide. *A&E* also reported that, throughout North America,

there is “growing use of children in the sex trade.” Young boys make up 51% of that trade. The FBI, alas, has turned a blind eye; for the last quarter-century, “federal prosecutions of major pimp operations have been virtually nonexistent.” As Dr. Lois Lee has noted, “It’s not a high priority with the FBI to go after kids that are being transported across state lines. It’s really a disgrace.”

Dr. Lee is the founder of Children of the Night, an organization devoted to helping repair the shattered lives of child-sex-trade victims. Her facility, said to be the only one of its kind in the world, has seen 10,000 kids pass through its doors. Fully ninety percent of them have suffered a lifetime of abuse—first at home, and later on the streets and alleys of America’s big cities. Most of them suffered their first abuse before the age of three. Many of these victims are runaways recruited from small towns across the country, and then brought to prime child prostitution markets like Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Once there, they have an average life span of just seven years; many of them do not make it through their teenage years. For as long as they survive though, they reap enormous financial rewards for their pimps. The younger the child, the more popular they are with the ‘Johns,’ and therefore the more profitable for their exploiters.

A landmark study on the commercial sexual exploitation of children was concluded by the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Social Work in 2001. The chilling report issued by the researchers was completely ignored by the U.S. media. That no doubt was due in part to the rather curious timing of the release of the report: it was issued on September 10, 2001—less than twenty-four hours before the World Trade Center towers came crashing down. Written by Richard J. Estes and Neil Alan Weiner, the study notes that the era of “economic globalization, internationalization, and free trade” has been accompanied by a “dramatic rise worldwide in the incidence of child exploitation...Child pornography, juvenile prostitution and trafficking in children for sexual purposes have emerged as significant problems on the national, regional, and international stages. So, too, has child sex tourism.”¹¹ The ugly reality is that, in the global marketplace, everything

11 According to the publication *Only in Russia*, globalization has been accompanied by another dramatic rise: “In an already crime-ridden country, Russia’s Interior Ministry has identified yet another malefactor to be dealt with—the Devil. Deputy chief of the Ministry’s Main Crime Directorate, Aleksander Greshanin, informed the press on February 3 [2003] that a special department has been set up to investigate the activities of Satanist sects. He said that the Ministry was very worried by the country’s descent into the ways of black magic and devil worship, adding that Satanists often conduct ritual sacrifices and, in some cases, their activities involve serious crimes like murder or grievous bodily harm.” The tone of the article was decidedly skeptical.

has a price tag—including the sexual services of our children. The study also revealed, “CSE [child sexual exploitation] and the CSEC [commercial sexual exploitation of children] appear to be related in complex ways with other forms of child exploitation, such as the use of children in labor, drug and warfare settings.”

Among the findings summarized in the report’s Executive Summary are all of the following:

- “About 20% of children we encountered in this study were being trafficked nationally by organized criminal units using well established prostitution tracks.”
- “Children are trafficked into, and within, the U.S. by a variety of private and public means—e.g., cars, buses, vans, trucks, planes.”
- “Most trafficked children have available to them a variety of false identity papers for use in case of arrest.”
- “The majority of nationally trafficked children both use drugs and engage in drug sales.”
- “[A]bout 10% of the children we encountered are trafficked internationally.”
- “Most internationally trafficked children are the citizens of developing countries located in Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and Central and Eastern Europe.”
- “International trafficking in children is highly lucrative—a single trafficked child can earn a trafficker as much as \$30,000 or more in trafficking fees.”
- “In many cases, trafficked children also are required to serve as ‘mules’ in transporting illicit drugs either into or across the U.S., or both.”

Obvious in these findings is the fact that the trafficking of children—both nationally and internationally—is an immense, and immensely profitable, criminal enterprise¹² requiring “the involvement of a wide range of functionaries—including recruiters, trainers, purveyors of false documents, transporters, money collectors, enforcers...arrangers/investors...corrupt public officials, informers, guides and crew members...supporting personnel and specialists.” The University’s researchers also discovered “approximately 10% of pimps in the U.S. are tied into international sex crime networks.” These individuals “participate

12 The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) released a report on July 30, 2003 that declared that 1.2 million children are trafficked every year, creating a \$10 billion a year industry. The report’s authors concluded: “Trafficking is a truly global problem, affecting all countries everywhere.”

actively in the international trafficking of children—including American children and children who are nationals of other countries. Typically, these pimps also are connected in some way...to international drug networks.” The close connections between the international trafficking of children and the international trafficking of drugs is significant in that, as a number of researchers have documented, America’s Central Intelligence Agency plays a central role in the international drug trade. It would seem then to logically follow that that same organization would be deeply involved in the equally lucrative international trade in children.

Just months before the release of the University of Pennsylvania’s report, DePaul University’s International Human Rights Law Institute released the results of a three year study of sexual slavery. Researchers concluded that some two million women and children are held in sexual servitude worldwide—and those numbers are growing. As with the other academic study, the report’s authors concluded that the “advent of globalization has exacerbated the problem by creating what some call market opportunities for traffickers in human beings and for their exploiters.” Also as with the other study, researchers found clear evidence of official complicity in the trafficking rings. The report’s authors warned that trafficking victims “have no one to turn to for help. Law enforcers are frequently in collusion with the traffickers and exploiters and victims who seek to escape are returned to their captors by those from whom they sought protection. Their despondency and despair is beyond description.”

An estimated 30,000 of these victims die every year from “abuse, torture, neglect and disease.” But neither the U.S. media nor the Washington establishment have anything to say about that, leaving the America people in a state of collective ignorance and denial even as child exploitation rings, which constitute a vast underground in this country, grow exponentially.

How far does this pedophilic underground extend into the halls of power? Are America’s political, corporate and military elite—like their counterparts in Belgium, Latvia and Portugal—hiding a particularly dirty little secret from the American people? A secret that, if exposed, could shatter America’s cherished political and economic institutions and bring the house of cards crashing down? Consider the case of Craig Spence, a behind-the-scenes Republican powerbroker in Washington. In June 1989, the *Washington Times* published a story that sent shockwaves rippling across Capitol Hill. It seemed that Spence had been deeply involved with a callboy ring that supplied young boys, some of them very young boys, to the elite of both political parties, as well as to visiting dignitaries.

It was reported by the *Times* that a list of some 200 influential clients included the names of “government officials, locally based U.S. military officers, businessmen, lawyers, bankers, congressional aides, media representatives and other professionals,” only a few of whom were publicly identified. On the guest lists for

Spence's parties were former CIA Director William Casey and former Deputy Director of Intelligence Ray Cline; Congressman Barney Frank and Senators John Glenn and Frank Murkowski; political activist/propagandist Phyllis Schlafly; former Attorney General John Mitchell (who once co-hosted a party with Spence); journalists William Safire, Liz Trotta, Ted Koppel and Eric Severeid; former Ambassadors James Lilley, Robert Neumann and Elliot Richardson; General Alfred M. Gray, the Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, and Lt. General Daniel O. Graham, an expert on the 'Space Defense Initiative'; and former U.S. Attorneys Joseph diGenova and Victoria Toensing.¹³ Spence once held a birthday bash for the notorious Roy Cohn. He also boasted of playing host to Rock Hudson and other celebrities.

Among the revelations in the case was that Spence had taken some of his call-boy escorts on private, late-night tours of the White House. The tours, of which there were at least four, were cleared by a uniformed Secret Service guard who moonlighted as a bodyguard at Spence's parties. Spence hinted that the tours were arranged by the national security adviser to then-Vice President George H.W. Bush, Donald Gregg, for whom Spence once sponsored a dinner. One of the tours occurred just after Spence stopped by the *Nightline* studio to see his friend, Ted Koppel. Spence reportedly introduced Koppel to a 15-year-old boy, whom Koppel later claimed Spence had introduced as his son. Koppel though had been a close friend for over twenty years and surely knew that Spence did not have a teenage son. Koppel first met Spence in Southeast Asia when Koppel was serving as the *ABC* bureau chief in Hong Kong, and Spence was nominally working as an *ABC* correspondent in Vietnam.

Spence openly boasted of working with both the CIA and ranking members of the Reagan and Bush administrations. He claimed that he had been involved in covert operations in Vietnam, Japan, Central America and the Middle East. His claims were scoffed at and he was largely portrayed as a self-important blowhard.

13 DiGenova served in 1975–1976 as counsel to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, commonly referred to as the Church Committee. He later served as U.S. Attorney under President Ronald Reagan. During that time, and after purportedly leaving government service for private practice, he frequently attended Spence's parties. In December 1988, he accompanied Spence on a business trip to Japan. Toensing, diGenova's wife, is a former deputy assistant attorney general for the Justice Department and a former chief counsel for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (1981–1984). Both were investigated for their close links to Craig Spence. Both later made almost daily appearances on cable newscasts as shrill proponents of the Clinton impeachment proceedings.

There are indications, however, that Spence was involved in covert operations as far back as Vietnam, where he could well have been working under journalistic cover. An associate of his from that era told the *Washington Post*: “Spence pulled disappearing acts in Vietnam—sometimes for weeks at a time...Then he’d turn up, refusing to say where he’d been.”

“The sex? That’s done all the time,” a former Bush economic adviser told the press. “If a foreign diplomat wants a companion, the State Department provides it. It doesn’t matter if it’s a man or woman. They have a special fund set up for that.” What the unnamed adviser did not say was that such services were provided not as a courtesy to the dignitary, but as a way to compromise and control. Allegations quietly arose that the callboy ring, and Spence’s parties, were part of a CIA sexual blackmail operation. Spence’s Washington mansion was said to be overflowing with surveillance equipment, including hidden cameras and microphones and an abundance of two-way mirrors. It was also alleged that cocaine flowed freely at Spence’s parties, and that he could have been involved in bringing drugs in from El Salvador.

The Spence story never really registered on the national media’s radar screen. Despite being a largely Republican scandal, it was completely ignored by such pillars of the purportedly liberal press as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*. The story soon disappeared entirely and Washington and the media proceeded to pretend as though nothing had ever happened. According to a *Washington Times* reporter, the paper trail was quickly covered up. Some 20,000 documents pertaining to the case were sealed by court order and the U.S. Attorney’s office issued a gag order on the release of information. By the time that Craig Spence turned up dead in a Boston hotel less than five months after the story first broke, he had been all but forgotten. He had earlier told a friend: “I may be disappearing soon. It will be sudden. It may appear to be a suicide, but it won’t be.”

Spence was reportedly found lying on his bed in room 429 of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, wearing a tuxedo and with a telephone cradled to his ear and a Walkman headset around his neck. He had, according to the *Independent*, “no obvious signs of injury,” and “police refused to comment on the cause of death.” The door to the room was barricaded. Written on the mirror were several messages, one of which read: “Chief, consider this my resignation, effective immediately. As you always said, you can’t ask others to make a sacrifice if you are not ready to do the same. Life is duty. God bless America.” Another was an apology to the hotel: “To the Ritz, please forgive this inconvenience.” A third was an unexplained Japanese phrase: “Nisei Bei.” The hotel registry showed that the room the apparent suicide victim was found in was occupied by “C.S. Kane.”

Spence had been subpoenaed by a grand jury but had not yet been called to appear. As it turned out, very few witnesses ever did appear before that grand jury. Spence had also reportedly agreed to provide *Penthouse* magazine with “lurid details of Washington’s bisexual wonderland.” His story, needless to say, was never told.

The callboy ring, oddly enough, had close ties to the funeral home/mortuary business. Robert Chambers was convicted on charges of handling the credit card processing for Professional Services, Inc., an entity that served as a cover for an interlinked network of half-a-dozen male escort services. Chambers was a funeral director and the son of the owner of the Chambers Funeral Homes chain. He was sentenced to serve 41 months. Two of the linked services, Dream Boys and Man to Man, were reportedly run by Henry Vinson, a mortician and the former coroner of Mingo County, West Virginia. Vinson had moved to D.C. after losing his job as coroner for making harassing phone calls to rival funeral homes. While he was under investigation in Washington, his obituary appeared in West Virginia newspapers, apparently as the result of an assisted effort to fake his death. Vinson¹⁴ ultimately pled guilty and received a 63-month sentence. The presiding judge openly criticized U.S. Attorney Jay Stephens for departing from mandatory sentencing guidelines. Vinson’s legal representation was provided by *Fox News* mouthpiece Greta Van Susteren.

Also implicated in the case was Democratic Congressman Barney Frank, whose D.C. home was used as a base of operations for an escort service from late 1985 through mid 1987. The service was run by Frank’s lover, Stephen L. Gobie, the son of a Marine Corps master sergeant and Pentagon budget analyst. Frank wrote a number of letters to probation officials on behalf of Gobie, who had four felony convictions from 1982. Those letters provided the necessary cover for the ring, which Frank denied having knowledge of. Gobie also regularly operated out of Chevy Chase Elementary School, in collusion with the ‘magnet’ school’s principal, Gabriel A. Massaro, a former school counselor. The school was home to 350 students aged nine to twelve. Massaro vigorously denied that any students were involved in callboy operations, which he eventually admitted were run from the school. In addition to Barney Frank and Gabriel Massaro, Stephen Gobie had close ties to Craig Spence as well.

¹⁴ Vinson later reportedly married Dr. Diane Shafer, who was appointed to fill the Mingo County coroner position that he had once held. Shafer had previously been convicted of bribery in Kentucky. Her appointment came just after the reversal of the appointment of Gerald Chafin, a mortuary owner and former Mingo County Sheriff who had twice been indicted on federal wiretap charges.

Elsewhere in the country, a political operative named Larry King—hailed as “the fastest rising Black star in the Republican Party”—was embroiled in another high-level pedophile ring. King, whose operation was based in Omaha, Nebraska, had connections to Craig Spence as well as to Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Oliver North, and various other major players in Washington. The King story first began to emerge with the collapse of his Franklin Community Credit Union, one of many such entities that went belly-up in the 1980s savings and loan scandals. A special senate ‘Franklin Committee’ was established and tasked with looking into allegations of financial improprieties, but soon found itself instead investigating claims of child prostitution, child pornography and ritual homicide. Committee members began receiving anonymous threats.

The investigation led to the doorsteps of some of the most powerful men in Omaha, including newspaper publisher Harold Andersen (a lunch partner of George Bush), local columnist Peter Citron, a judge, the mayor, the city’s Games and Parks Commissioner, a prominent attorney, the former police chief, businessman Alan Baer, and multi-billionaire Warren Buffet (for whose son King sponsored a political fund-raiser). Some of the victim/witnesses identified George Bush as being directly complicit. The scandal was completely ignored by the national U.S. media, and appears to have been covered by the local press for the sole purpose of discrediting the witnesses and denouncing the investigation as yet another ‘witch hunt.’ The case did attract some attention from the European press though. *Pronto*, Spain’s largest circulation weekly, reported that the scandal “appears to directly implicate politicians of the state of Nebraska and Washington, D.C. who are very close to the White House and George Bush.” The report also noted “there is reason to believe that the CIA is directly implicated,” and the “FBI refuses to help in the investigation and has sabotaged any efforts” by others to do so.

A documentary film crew from the UK’s *Yorkshire Television*, working in conjunction with the *Discovery Channel*, worked for months investigating the case. The result of their efforts was a film entitled “Conspiracy of Silence,” which concluded that the child victims/witnesses were telling the truth. The documentary was scheduled to air on the *Discovery Channel* on May 3, 1994. Just days before the scheduled airing, the film was pulled without explanation and all copies were ordered destroyed. At least one production copy of the video survived the purge, however, and has been known to circulate among those derisively labeled as ‘conspiracy theorists.’ For everyone else, the conspiracy of silence continues.

The Omaha operation, described in the film as a “large ring of rich and powerful pedophiles,” appears to have been in business for several years—with the knowledge of, and for the perverse pleasure of, a variety of city, state and federal authorities. Jerry Lowe, the first investigator assigned to the case by the Franklin

Committee, reported back: “The allegations regarding the exploitation of children are indeed disturbing. What appears to be documented cases of child abuse and sexual abuse dating back several years with no enforcement action being taken by the appropriate agencies is on its face, mind-boggling.” The investigation revealed that many of the child victims had been recruited from one of America’s most revered charitable organizations—Boy’s Town, with which King had maintained close ties since 1979. Senator and committee member Loran Schmit has said that Boy’s Town was mentioned frequently during the investigation, “but we found it difficult to get information about Boy’s Town.” So too did the film crew from *Yorkshire Television*.

Republican state senator and Franklin Committee member John DeCamp, in his book *The Franklin Cover-Up*, presents a compelling body of evidence to document the charges made by the child victims and various others associated with the operation. Equally disturbing is the evidence presented of the massive cover-up that was perpetrated by the FBI, local police, a grand jury assigned to the case, and of course the ever-compliant media. The cover-up involved, according to DeCamp, the untimely deaths of at least fifteen key players in the scandal—including Franklin Committee investigator Gary Caradori, whose private plane was blown out of the sky on July 11, 1990 with Caradori and his eight-year-old son on board. Caradori had been threatened frequently, as had the witnesses from whom he was gathering information. His vehicle had also been repeatedly tampered with. His brother claimed that Gary had told him that he had recently come to possess a key piece of evidence (a book of addresses and phone numbers) that was so damaging, “if they knew he had it, they’d kill him.”

The wreckage of Caradori’s plane, as a reporter on the scene noted, was “strewn over a $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 mile stretch.” A National Transportation Safety Board investigator acknowledged that the “fact that the wreckage is scattered over a large area certainly demonstrates that it did break up in flight.” Family members claimed that there were items missing from the plane’s wreckage, most significantly Caradori’s briefcase. Within twenty-four hours of the crash, all of his records had been impounded by the FBI. Nevertheless, the NTSB ruled that the crash had been accidental, with no evidence of sabotage. The Franklin Committee—led by Senator Schmit, who suspected sabotage—ordered a private investigation into the cause of the crash. Strangely enough, the man selected to conduct that inquiry was William Colby, a fifty-year veteran of intelligence operations whose career began in the OSS during World War II. Colby’s hiring was urged by his protégé, Senator DeCamp.

In the 1950s, Colby served as the CIA station chief in Italy, overseeing the notorious Operation Gladio. In the 1960s, he ran the Phoenix Program, a campaign of assassination, torture and terror that claimed, by Colby’s own account,

some 20,000 Vietnamese lives. The program was steeped in mind control operations, including the use of prisoners-of-war as unwilling participants in terminal experiments. One of Colby's top aides in Vietnam was none other than John DeCamp. After Vietnam, Colby served as the director of the CIA under President Nixon (Nixon's appointed successor, Gerald Ford, replaced him with George Bush). Considering his past history, Colby was certainly an odd choice to lead an inquiry aimed at ascertaining the truth. Colby's conclusion, according to the *Omaha World Herald*, was that although "the crash had some strange aspects, there was no specific evidence of sabotage."

Just as appalling as the trail of dead witnesses was the fact that the child *victims*, rather than the perpetrators, were arrested and thrown in prison. One of them, a young female victim, achieved the rather dubious honor of spending more time in solitary confinement than any other woman in the history of the Nebraska penal system. She was sentenced to 9–25 years in prison for allegedly committing perjury. Her sentence was ten years longer than the one Larry King received for looting his financial institution of \$40 million. DeCamp explained to the "Conspiracy of Silence" film crew that a message was being sent "to every kid who is a potential witness." Senator Schmit, who told the filmmakers that his pursuit of the investigation had cost him his career and his financial security, believed that a clear signal was being sent to Nebraska politicians as well: a signal to not pursue the investigation any further.

A visibly shaken and disillusioned Schmit explained to the film crew that he "used to be a firm believer that the system would work and that people who did things wrong would be punished. And we discovered victims who claimed to have been abused, and who the grand jury *acknowledged* had been abused, but they did not try to find out who had abused these individuals. Instead, they convicted Alisha Owen of perjury...indefensible from my point of view." It was a full decade before any of the victims received even a semblance of justice, and that came not from the criminal justice system, but from a civil court. In early 1999, a judgment was entered against defendant Larry King in favor of plaintiff Paul Bonacci, who was one of the most severely abused of the child victims. His abuse at the hands of King began when he was just six years old and included his forced collaboration in the production of child snuff films. The memorandum of the district court's decision, issued on February 22, 1999, reads as follows:

Between December 1980 and 1988, the complaint alleges, the defendant King continually subjected the plaintiff to repeated sexual assaults, false imprisonments, infliction of extreme emotional distress, organized and directed satanic rituals, forced the plaintiff to 'scavenge' for children to be a part of the defendant King's sexual abuse and

pornography ring, forced the plaintiff to engage in numerous sexual contacts with the defendant King and others and participate in deviate sexual games and masochistic orgies with other minor children. The defendant King's default has made those allegations true as to him...

The now uncontradicted evidence is that the plaintiff has suffered much. He has suffered burns, broken fingers, beatings of the head and face and other indignities by the wrongful actions of the defendant King. In addition to the misery of going through the experiences just related over a period of eight years, the plaintiff has suffered the lingering results to the present time. He is a victim of multiple personality disorder, involving as many as fourteen distinct personalities aside from his primary personality. He has given up a desired military career and received threats on his life. He suffers from sleeplessness, has bad dreams, has difficulty in holding a job, is fearful that others are following him, fears getting killed, has depressing flashbacks, and is verbally violent on occasion, all in connection with the multiple personality disorder and caused by the wrongful activities of the defendant King.

For the years of unspeakable abuse he suffered, Bonacci was awarded one million dollars. While a bittersweet victory at best, it was considerably more than most other victims of such abuse have gotten. The man primarily responsible for inflicting that abuse, Larry King, has been released from prison and is a free man at the time of this writing.

Chapter 3

Uncle Sam Wants Your Children

“I cannot accept promotion in a system that at first refused to acknowledge and now refuses to deal with the victims of extensive child abuse that occurred at the West Point Child Development Center.”

—Army Captain Walter R. Grote, refusing
a promotion to Major in June 1985

One of the names that surfaced at the Bonacci trial was that of Michael Aquino, the ‘High Priest’ and chief executive of the Temple of Set, an overtly satanic cult that split off from the Church of Satan in 1975. Besides tending to those duties, Aquino has also been known to occupy his time serving as (according to his official biography, circulated by the Temple) a “Lieutenant Colonel, Military Intelligence, U.S. Army.”

Aquino was identified in court, by the mother of a victim, as being a key player in a nationwide pedophile ring. Paul Bonacci himself has also positively identified Aquino as an associate of King who was known to Bonacci and the rest of the children only as ‘the Colonel.’ King’s former personal photographer has identified Aquino as the man to whom he saw King hand over a suitcase full of cash and bonds. The photographer, Rusty Nelson, has also said that he was told by King that Aquino was part of the Contra guns and cocaine trafficking operation run by George Bush and another notorious Lt. Col. named Oliver North. Aquino has also been linked to Offutt Air Force Base, a Strategic Air Command post near Omaha that was implicated in the investigation by the Franklin Committee (and that was also, strangely enough, where George W. Bush opted to hide out on the afternoon of September 11, 2001). Aquino was also claimed to have ordered the abduction of a Des Moines, Iowa paperboy.

This was certainly not the first time that Aquino had been identified as a key figure in organized pedophile/child pornography rings. In July 1988, not long before the King and Spence cases broke, the *San Jose Mercury News* ran a lengthy exposé on the Presidio Child Development Center run by the U.S. Army in San Francisco. Allegations of abuse being perpetrated at the center first emerged in November 1986. Alarmed by accusations made by her child, a parent had sought a medical examination that confirmed that her three-year-old boy had in fact been anally raped. The boy identified his rapist as ‘Mr. Gary,’ a teacher at the center named Gary Hambright. Even with this conclusive medical evidence, however, “it took the Army almost a month to notify the parents of other children who had been in ‘Mr. Gary’s’ class that the incident had taken place.”

Within a year, at least sixty additional victims had been identified, all between the ages of three and seven, and further “allegations would be made by parents that several more children were molested even after the investigation had begun.” Amazingly enough, the center remained open for more than a year after the first case of abuse was reported, although, as noted by the *Mercury News*, “day care centers under state jurisdiction are routinely closed when an abuse incident is confirmed.” And this was considerably more than a simple abuse incident that had been confirmed. The children told stories that implicated many other perpetrators in addition to Hambright. They also told of being taken away from the center to be abused in private homes; at least three such houses were positively identified. And they told of being forced to play “poopoo baseball” and the “goo-goo” game—‘games’ that involved the children being urinated and defecated upon, and being forced to ingest urine and feces. Many of the children also spoke of having guns pointed at them and of being told that they and/or their parents and siblings would be killed if they told anyone what had been done to them.

Despite the mounting number of victim/witnesses, and the numerous crimes alleged by these children, only one suspect, Gary Hambright, was arrested—on January 5, 1987—and he was charged with abusing just a single child. Even then the charges were dismissed just a few months later, in March 1987.

There is little doubt that literally dozens of children were in fact severely abused at the center. There undeniably was medical evidence to document that fact. Five of the children had contracted chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease; many others showed clear signs of anal and genital trauma consistent with violent penetration. Authorities chose to ignore such evidence. One mother complained to the *San Francisco Chronicle* that the FBI never interviewed her or her son, even after doctors had confirmed the boy’s abuse. In addition to the medical symptoms, there were psychological symptoms as well. As *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* noted in April 1992, the “severity of the trauma for children at the Presidio was immediately manifest in clear cut symptoms. Before the abuse

was exposed, parents had already noticed the following changes in their children: vaginal discharge, genital soreness, rashes, fear of the dark, sleep disturbances, nightmares, sexually provocative language, and sexually inappropriate behavior. In addition, the children were exhibiting other radical changes in behavior, including temper outbursts, sudden mood shifts, and poor impulse control. All these behavioral symptoms are to be expected in preschool children who have been molested.”

The journal article, written by Diane Ehrensaft, Ph.D., also noted that the “Presidio case has confronted both the public at large and the mental health community with an extraordinary and abhorrent situation of grave psychological proportions: the willful molestation of young boys and girls by representatives of the most patriarchal and supposedly protective arm of the American government—the U.S. Army.” Ehrensaft observed that a nearly pathological hatred had manifest itself in the fathers of children abused in this way, particularly as they saw their children’s cases stonewalled and swept under the rug. One father was quoted as saying: “When something about the Presidio comes on TV, I want to blow someone away.” Another father echoed that sentiment: “I was ready to blow the army base away.”

One of those who the fathers would have liked to blow away was Michael Aquino. One child positively identified Aquino and his wife, Lilith (known to the kids as ‘Mikey’ and ‘Shamby’), and was also able to identify the Aquinos’ private home and to describe with considerable accuracy the distinctively satanic interior décor of the house. The young witness claimed to have been photographed at the Aquinos’ home. On August 14, 1987, a search warrant was served on the house. Confiscated in the raid were numerous videotapes, photographs, photo albums, photographic negatives, cassette tapes, and name and address books. Also observed was what appeared to be a soundproof room. Neither of the Aquinos was charged with any crimes, nor have they been to this day—a fact that Aquino points to as proof of his innocence.

A month after the raid, a fire—which the Army deemed to be accidental—destroyed the Army Community Services Building adjacent to the Presidio’s day-care center. Strangely enough, “the fire occurred on the autumnal equinox, a major event on the satanic calendar,” as the *Mercury News* noted. The fire also destroyed some of the Child Development Center’s records. “Three weeks later, fire struck again, this time at the day care center itself.” A building that housed four classrooms, one of which was Gary Hambricht’s, was completely destroyed. Investigators from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms determined “both fires, contrary to the Army’s finding, had been arson.” In between the first and second fires (with evidence indicating that a third arson attempt had been made as well), Hambricht was again indicted, this time charged with molesting

ten children. In February 1988, all but one of the new charges were dropped. Shortly thereafter, the remaining count was dropped as well. No further charges were brought against him.

In January 1988, Aquino filed suit against the Army to have it cleared from his record that he had been investigated as a suspected pedophile. According to court records, he also had the gall to charge "Captain Adams-Thompson [the father of a victim] with conduct unbecoming an officer because the Captain reported the allegations of child abuse to the San Francisco police." In denying Aquino's motion, the court concluded "there was probable cause to title Aquino with offenses of indecent acts with a child, sodomy, conspiracy, kidnapping, and false swearing," despite the fact that "the San Francisco police department (SFPD) closed its investigation and filed no charges against the plaintiff or anyone else."

Aquino and some of his defenders have consistently claimed that no one was ever prosecuted in the case due to a lack of evidence. This is cited as proof that the entire affair was no more than a 'witch hunt.' Of course, the failure to prosecute the federal charges could have been due to the fact that, at the time, the U.S. Attorney in San Francisco handling the case was Joseph Russoniello. Russoniello would later be identified by reporter Gary Webb (of the *San Jose Mercury News*) as a player in the Contra cocaine smuggling operation led by Lt. Col. Oliver North and company, just as witnesses would later identify Lt. Col. Michael Aquino as an operative in the very same sordid affair.

In May 1989, Aquino was again questioned in connection with child abuse investigations; this time, at least five children in three cities were making the accusations. The children had seen Aquino in newspaper and television coverage of the Presidio case and immediately recognized him as one of their abusers. Three of the children lived in Ukiah, California, where Police Chief Fred Keplinger was overseeing the investigation of the allegations. The *Mercury News* quoted the chief as saying "the children are believable. I have no doubt in my mind that something has occurred." Aquino was also identified by children in Santa Rosa and Fort Bragg, California. In the Fort Bragg case, "allegations of ritual abuse erupted...in 1985 when several children at the Jubilation Day Care Center said they were sexually abused by a number of people at the day care center and at several locations away from the center, including at least two churches." Aquino was identified as having been present at one of those churches.

According to the *Mercury News*, there was clear evidence of satanic cult activity on the grounds of the Presidio base, including an abundance of satanic graffiti, a satanic altar, and numerous artifacts of satanic rituals. A former MP at the base told the *News* "we've got a cult on the Presidio of San Francisco and nobody cares about it...We were told by the provost marshal to just forget about it." On April 19, 1988, the eve of Adolph Hitler's birthday, an open house was held on the

grounds of the Presidio heralding the opening of a new daycare facility built to replace the fire-damaged Child Development Center. Meanwhile, a report in the *Marin Independent Journal* revealed that Aquino owned a building in Marin County—inherited from his mother, Betty Ford-Aquino—that was jointly leased to the Marin County Child Abuse Council and Project Care for Children. The stated purpose of Project Care was, interestingly enough, to assist parents in locating daycare for their children.

As disturbing as the Presidio case was, it was just one of many ritual abuse cases directly tied to one or more branches of the United States armed forces. As the *Mercury News* reported, “by November, 1987 the Army had received allegations of child abuse at 15 of its day care centers and several elementary schools. There were also at least two cases in Air Force day care centers,” and another in a center run by the U.S. Navy. In addition, “a special team of experts was sent to Panama [in June 1988] to help determine if as many as 10 children at a Department of Defense elementary school had been molested and possibly infected with AIDS.” Yet another case emerged in a U.S.-run facility in West Germany.

These cases erupted at some of the country’s most esteemed military bases, including Fort Dix, Fort Leavenworth, Fort Jackson, and West Point. Many of those making the accusations were career military officers who had devoted their lives to unquestioned allegiance to the U.S. armed forces. Many would resign their posts in outraged protest.

The West Point case, among others, was alleged to be linked to the Presidio case. As *The Times Herald Record* reported in June 1991, the “incidents [at the West Point Child Development Center] unfolded against a backdrop of satanic acts, animal sacrifices and cult-like behavior among the abusers, whose activities extended beyond the U.S. Military Academy borders to Orange County and a military base in San Francisco, parents charged.” The case first broke in July 1984, when a three-year-old girl found herself in the emergency room of the West Point Hospital with a lacerated vagina. She told the examining physician that a teacher at the daycare center had hurt her. The next month, the parents of another child leveled accusations of abuse at the center. As the *Mercury News* reported, “by the end of the year, 50 children had been interviewed by investigators. Children at West Point told stories that would become horrifyingly familiar. They said they had been ritually abused. They said they had had excrement smeared on their bodies and been forced to eat feces and drink urine. They said they were taken away from the day care center and photographed.”

Despite abundant medical and psychological evidence and literally dozens of child witnesses, and despite “950 interviews by 60 FBI agents assigned to the investigation,” the investigation, “led by former U.S. Attorney [and future mayor] Rudolph Giuliani” produced “no federal grand jury indictments,”

according to the *Herald Record*. “In 1987, Giuliani said his detailed investigation showed only one or two children were abused.” Giuliani’s contention was directly contradicted by an independent investigation, as the *Herald* report divulged: “a still-secret, independent report—produced by one of the nation’s top experts on child sexual abuse—confirms the children’s accusations of abuse.”

This was not the first time that prestigious West Point had shown an appalling willingness to overlook military personnel directing extreme levels of abuse at children. A year before the abuse case broke, a 22-month-old child was murdered by an Army staff sergeant. The *Mercury News* reported that following “a court martial hearing, the sergeant was given an 18 month suspended sentence and dishonorable discharge.” In other words, he was essentially given a free ride after murdering a child. With help from Giuliani, the FBI, the U.S. Army, and the grand jury, the abusers of dozens of children at the daycare center (which was, appropriately enough, building number 666 on the academy grounds) were likewise given a free ride.

As with the Franklin case, the children and their parents found justice only through the civil courts. The *Herald Record* revealed that, in a suit brought by the parents, “lawyers for both the government and the 11 child plaintiffs agreed that some children were sexually abused at the center two years ago.” The government, however, claimed that it could not be held responsible, due to the “assault exemption in the Federal Tort Claim Act.” As the *New York Times* explained, “under federal law the government cannot be held liable for assaults committed by its employees and thus cannot be sued for assault.” In other words, the Army did not dispute the allegations; it just rather cavalierly maintained that it was exempt from being sued for what had occurred at one of its daycare centers. The court saw otherwise, however, and awarded \$2.7 million to nine of the child victims—paltry compensation for their suffering, but a victory of sorts nonetheless. The *Times* opined that the settlement amount “was large for a child-abuse case in which no criminal charges were filed.” The article claimed that the case was not pursued because “the Federal Bureau of Investigation found ‘insufficient evidence to prosecute,’” when in fact the Bureau appears to have deliberately ignored and/or covered-up that evidence.

And so ended the West Point case, except that—as one mother noted—it was hardly over: “These people stole our children. She’s nothing like she used to be. She’s a very angry little girl. She doesn’t trust anyone. She’s nothing like she was before this happened. It’s never going to be over for them, or for us.” The mother of a Presidio victim had this to say: “People keep telling us we’ve got to let it go—just forget about it and go on... Three weeks ago, our youngest daughter was having nightmares and our other daughter was closing out the whole

world, going to her room and sitting there, with no radio, no TV, no nothing. Tell me it's over."

Chapter 4

McMolestation

If there is anyone who can relate to the sentiments expressed by the Presidio and West Point parents, it is the mothers and fathers of the children who attended the infamous McMartin Preschool. The McMartin case was, of course, the largest and most well publicized of the multi-victim, multi-perpetrator ritual abuse cases that captured headlines in the 1980s. It was also a case that was grotesquely misrepresented by the media, both mainstream and ‘alternative’—perhaps nowhere more so than in the appalling writings of *Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn, who went so far as to write an op-ed piece entitled “The McMartin Case: Indict the Children, Jail the Parents,” which ran in *The Wall Street Journal* on February 8, 1990.

Virtually everyone agrees that the children of McMartin were victimized. There is considerable debate, of course, over whether that victimization was by abusive caretakers, or by overzealous therapists and prosecutors. Either way, Cockburn’s stance on the case was unconscionable and should have sent a clear signal to the progressive community that there was considerably more to the McMartin allegations than met the eye. The harsh reality is that the McMartin Preschool, in conjunction with at least two other Manhattan Beach preschools and one babysitting service, was the center of a very large child prostitution and child pornography ring whose operations appear to have been protected and covered up by any number of local, state and federal officials.

A glimpse of the true nature and scale of the McMartin case is offered by an official correspondence from Sergeant Beth Dickerson of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department to Agent Kenneth Lanning at the FBI Academy’s Behavioral Sciences Unit in Quantico, Virginia, dated February 10, 1985:

In August 1983, the Manhattan Beach Police Department began an investigation regarding allegations of sexual abuse occurring at the McMartin Preschool...Altogether, approximately 400 children were

evaluated by therapists at Children's Institute International. All interviews were videotaped and 350 children disclosed sexual behavior...

In all, the victims named seven teachers (six women and one male) at the preschool as having molested them. These individuals are currently charged with 209 counts of child molestation. Also named are about 30 other individuals still uncharged, as well as numerous unidentified 'strangers.'

McMartin victims allege sexual abuse occurred on school grounds as well as at a local market, churches, a mortuary, various homes, a farm, a doctor's office, other preschools and other unknown locations...

Most children state they were photographed in the nude...They mention drinking a red or pink liquid that made them sleepy...Children disclose animal sacrificing (bunnies, ponies, turtles, etc.) and some of this occurred in churches. Victims describe sticks put in their vaginas and rectums and also being 'pooped' and 'peed' on. Children say that the adults sometimes dressed in black robes, formed a circle around them and chanted.

In May 1984, another preschool investigation began in the same policing jurisdiction stemming from a McMartin victim who identified the Manhattan Ranch Preschool as a place where he was taken and molested...additional children have begun disclosing sexual abuse (approximately 60) and they have named six or more additional suspects...These children talk of strangers coming to the school and molesting them, being taken off campus and molested, being photographed nude and some talk of animals being abused. The children talk of being hit with sticks and of being 'peed' and 'pooped' on...

[T]he resources of the police department and the District Attorney's office were not sufficient in order to follow up on the multitude of uncharged suspects in both preschools...The Task Force became operational on November 5, 1984. It should be noted that the Task Force has two other preschools under investigation for alleged sexual abuse in addition to McMartin and Manhattan Ranch. One, the Learning Game Preschool, is clearly linked to McMartin.

An astounding 460 children reported being sexually abused at the three closely linked Manhattan Beach schools. Even more astounding, investigative author Michael Newton (among others) has noted that Children's Institute International determined "a full eighty percent displayed physical symptoms, including vaginal or rectal scarring, anal bleeding, painful bowel movements, and the 'anal wick reflex' associated with violent penetration." The stories told

by the victim/witnesses were remarkably similar as to the nature of the abuse, the locations where the abuse took place, and the perpetrators of the abuse. And these were not, as is commonly believed, only preschool children telling such stories; some of the witnesses were former students in their teens and twenties, and their stories corroborated those of the children.

The older witnesses were not allowed to testify at the McMartin trials, however, as the statute of limitations for the crimes committed against them had expired. Many of the younger witnesses were unable to offer testimony as well, for various reasons—most notably because they were too severely traumatized. Even so, as author Jan Hollingsworth has pointed out, prosecutors had at their disposal “more than a hundred child witnesses as old as eleven and a truckload of medical reports bearing documentation of scarred genitals and anuses.” The stories told by these children, it should be noted, were not fed to them by some diabolical team of therapists and headline-seeking journalists. Many of them were offered spontaneously to hundreds of parents and scores of childcare specialists. And many of the victims of the McMartin Preschool, all adults now, still tell the same stories today.

Anyone suggesting that the allegations in the McMartin case were true and that a massive cover-up concealed the true nature and scope of the case is likely to be labeled a ‘conspiracy theorist.’ The most preposterous conspiracy theory surrounding McMartin, however, has always been the notion that some cabal of overzealous therapists was able to implant ‘false memories’ of heinous abuse in the minds of nearly 500 individuals, and have them persist to this day.

Despite the vast number of eyewitnesses—most of them bearing physical evidence of abuse—and despite the fact that the judge who presided over more than a year of pre-trial testimony ruled that the state had more than enough evidence to proceed to trial, District Attorney Ira Reiner inexplicably dropped all charges against five of the seven McMartin defendants on January 17, 1986. Six days before that, he had summarily dismissed two prosecutors on the case.

At least three-dozen suspects who had been independently identified by numerous witnesses were never indicted at all. One of these was a man named Robert Winkler, who was arrested in neighboring Torrance, California and charged with running a baby-sitting service out of the Coco Palms Motel that authorities described as a front for a sexual abuse ring. Children in the McMartin case recognized Winkler in news footage as the man they had known as the ‘Wolfman.’ The kids described Winkler as being a frequent visitor to the school, who oftentimes delivered drugs for use in abusive rituals, which were sometimes conducted in churches, a cemetery, or a crematorium. The Wolfman, conveniently enough, turned up dead on the eve of his trial, allegedly of a drug overdose.

Winkler was not the only one to miss his day in court in conjunction with the McMartin case. Judy Johnson, the first McMartin parent to lodge a complaint, never delivered her scheduled testimony. Her body was found sprawled naked on the floor of her home, her death said to be due to complications from her chronic alcoholism. Before her death, she was regularly derided by defense attorneys and their media allies as a deranged crank. In truth, Johnson was not known to have any mental problems, or a drinking problem, before learning of the unthinkable abuse her child had suffered. Considered a key prosecution witness, Johnson received frequent threats before her death and she was followed when she ventured out in public. Many of the other McMartin parents were openly skeptical of Johnson's stated cause of death.

A former Hermosa Beach police officer named Paul Bynum, who had been hired by the parents of victims as a private investigator, turned up dead on the eve of his scheduled testimony as well. His death by gunshot was ruled a suicide, though those close to Bynum dispute that finding. Among other things, Bynum may have testified about his examination of the tunnel excavation project conducted at the school site. This was, of course, the object of much derision by the media. The fact that the children repeatedly told stories of tunnels under the property by which they could be secretly transported to and from the school, and in which they were subjected to horrific abuse in a secret room, was frequently cited as 'proof' that the children's stories were fabrications. It was universally accepted that the tunnels did not actually exist, that being the consensus view of the media and law enforcement authorities. Nevertheless, while it is true that the investigation commissioned by the District Attorney's office found no evidence of tunnels, another investigation, ignored by the media, certainly did.

Many of the parents were not satisfied with the superficial examination by the DA's office and commissioned another investigation of the site when the property was sold in April 1990. To lead the project, they hired E. Gary Stickel, Ph.D., a highly regarded archeologist recommended to them by the Chair of the Interdisciplinary Program of the Archeology Department at UCLA. Stickel's résumé included serving as a consultant to George Lucas on the *Indiana Jones* movies. Also brought on board were several other technical specialists. As Stickel wrote in his report on the excavation, "by engaging a highly recommended professional archeological team, [the parents] hoped to bring scientific authority to whatever might be found or a definitive resolution for whatever was not to be found." And what the team found was precisely what the children, for the previous seven years, had been telling them they would find:

The project unearthed not one but two tunnel complexes as well as previously unrecognized structural features which defied logical explanation. Both tunnel complexes conformed to locations and functional descriptions established by children's reports. One had been described as providing undetected access to an adjacent building on the east. The other provided outside access under the west wall of the building and contained within it an enlarged, cavernous artifact corresponding to children's descriptions of a 'secret room.'

Both the contour signature of the walls and the nature of recovered artifacts indicated that the tunnels had been dug by hand under the concrete slab floor after the construction of the building...Not only did the discovered features fulfill the research prequalifications as tunnels designed for human traffic, there was also no alternative or natural explanation for the presence of such features...

If the stories of the children were bogus fantasies, there is no excuse for the tunnels discovered under the school. If there really were tunnels, there is no excuse for the glib dismissal of any and all of the complaints of the children and their parents.

This investigation was completed *before* the McMartin trials concluded, and yet this devastating evidence was never presented in court by the prosecution team. The existence of this detailed report—complete with photographs and maps of the tunnel complex—was known to the local and national press, but it was never reported. To this day, it is denied that any tunnels ever existed under the McMartin Preschool. The denial of the tunnels is necessary to maintain the illusion that the children were not credible witnesses, that illusion being an essential component of the cover-up. For if the children *were* credible, the implications run far deeper than the tunnels under the school. There are, for example, the stories told by the children of being pimped out as child prostitutes in private homes and businesses all over the community. They also spoke frequently of being photographed and videotaped while being abused. District Attorney Robert Philibosian publicly declared the McMartin Preschool to be an elaborate front for a massive child pornography operation. Twenty-three parents filed a civil lawsuit making the very same claim.

Other stories told repeatedly by the children were even more disturbing. They told of being forced to witness and participate in the ritual torture, killing and mutilation of animals and, on occasion, of human babies and children as well. They spoke of being forced to drink the blood and eat the flesh of the slaughtered corpses, of witnessing the beheading of infants, and of being forced to stab infants themselves. They told as well of being sealed in coffins with the mutilated

corpses. And they spoke of being subjected to every sort of depraved sexual activity imaginable, including necrophilia, coprophilia and bestiality.¹⁵ The abuse was of such stunning brutality that it is almost beyond human comprehension that anyone could inflict such physical and psychological torture on children. And yet these stories were soon being told by thousands of other kids across the country as preschool abuse cases spread like wildfire. Young children from all walks of life, and from all parts of the country, were all telling remarkably similar stories of horrific ritual abuse.

How was this possible? If they were all victims of ‘false memories,’ how vast a conspiracy would be required for therapists all across the country to implant the very same memories in all of these children? Experts have noted that the victimized children show a level of knowledge that defies rational explanation if the kids have not experienced what they claim to have experienced. For instance, these child victims can accurately describe the look, smell, texture and colors of human viscera. This is an ability, it has been argued, that very few adults possess, other than those who have been trained as surgeons or coroners. These children also display a remarkable level of knowledge of a wide variety of unconventional human sexual practices, including many acts that, again, most adults do not have knowledge or awareness of. If these children did not experience these things firsthand, then how *did* they gain such knowledge?

In February 1985, officer Sandi Gallant of the San Francisco Police Department submitted a report to her superiors noting the similarities in numerous ritual abuse cases. She had gathered evidence from fellow officers and police departments across the country and summarized the evidence referenced in the police reports submitted to her. An excerpt from her report reads as follows:

The information contained herein is distasteful and bizarre, to such a degree that one would choose to discredit it. However, research that I have done in this area has revealed that numerous cases of this type are surfacing around the country and in Canada. The similarities in the stories of each child victim used in these crimes tend to give credibility to the information revealed by others. Additionally, the psychiatrists and therapists who have been treating the victims state that the consistency

15 Barron's *Dictionary of Medical Terms* defines necrophilia as a “morbid liking or desire for dead bodies, esp. the desire to have sexual contact with a dead body.” Bestiality is defined as “sexual involvement of a human with an animal.” Coprophilia is defined by *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as “an abnormal, often obsessive interest in excrement, especially the use of feces for sexual excitement.”

of the stories and the explicit details revealed cause them to believe that these children are telling the truth. It is also the belief of each law enforcement officer who submitted information for this report that the victims are being truthful and that, in fact, children would be unable to make such stories up.

During my research, similarities began surfacing which indicate the strong probability that there exists a network of people in this country involved in the sexual abuse and possible homicides of young children. These cases appear to differ from isolated cases of abuse towards children in that the crimes mentioned here have been committed with one common goal in mind—that of mutilating and murdering children for ritualistic or sacrificial purposes. Many of the cases reported also reveal the possibility of child pornography beyond the normal type of ‘kiddie porn’ in that these children are photographed during rituals with some members in robes or other garb and candles, snakes, swords, altars and other types of ritualistic material being used.

Gallant requested that the report be sent on to the chief of police for him to review and then forward to the FBI. Following his review, however, the chief declined to submit the report. Gallant next tried to get the U.S. Department of Justice to review the paperwork, but she was rebuffed there as well.

As for the McMartin case, there has never been any question that the children there were horrifically abused. Though rarely noted in press reports, the jurors were clearly of the opinion that that was, in fact, the case. The hung juries and acquittals in the various proceedings were the result of the jury members’ inability to identify the perpetrators of the abuse, not the reflection of any belief that there wasn’t any abuse. The jurors attributed their inability to identify the perpetrators to the inept presentation of the prosecution’s case.

Also rarely noted in the reporting on the trials is that the matriarch of the McMartin family—Virginia McMartin—admitted on the stand that one of her own granddaughters believed that her own children had been molested at the school. Virginia McMartin, incidentally, was more than just your run-of-the-mill preschool operator. In the mid-1960s, she achieved a sort of semi-celebrity status in the childcare field, and traveled extensively as a consultant, including stops in New Zealand, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and England.

Another notable aspect of the McMartin trials is that the defense team was allowed to subject the child witnesses to the longest pretrial hearing in the nation’s history. Facing a battery of as many as seven rabid defense attorneys, the already severely traumatized children were verbally assaulted for weeks on end in

a deliberate attempt to break them. The state made little effort to protect these young victim/witnesses.

In the final analysis, the logical conclusion to be drawn from the McMartin case is that 460 kids did not all conspire to lie about the abuse they suffered. They also did not likely lie about their involvement in child prostitution and child pornography. They certainly did not lie about the tunnels under the school. They probably did not lie about their forced involvement in satanic rituals, in which adults sheathed in black ceremonial robes uttered chants. In fact, at least one such robe was seized from the home of a defendant. And perhaps most tragically, there is good reason to believe that they did not lie about the blood sacrifices either.

Chapter 5

It Couldn't Happen Here

Prosecutor Dan Casey: *"Did you exercise any kind of mind control over your wife in order to get her to have sexual contact?"*

Frank Fuster: *"If I had that power, you think I would use it against...? You know...I don't...I have never. I'm a normal human being."*

On August 8, 1984, Bobby Dean stood on the front lawn of the Fuster home in the Country Walk housing development—a picture-perfect, planned community of relatively upscale, suburban homes in Dade County, Florida. By all appearances, this was a small slice of paradise, an oasis untouched by the grim realities of American society. On this day, however, Dean had a loaded gun tucked in his waistband, and he fully intended to use it. He was there to finish the job that someone else had failed to complete on December 18, 1980, when an unidentified assailant had confronted Francisco Fuster Escalona (*aka* Frank Fuster) at his place of business and shot him once in the side of the head.

Fuster survived that attack, which he explained to the police as a botched robbery, though the officers thought it looked more like an attempted execution. Dean did not get the chance to make another attempt; police were on the scene in short order to arrest him. Fuster himself surrendered to police two days later in response to the issuance of an arrest warrant. He had been under investigation following accusations by neighborhood parents that Frank and his wife, Iliana, had been brutally abusing the children who were left in the trusted care of the Fuster's babysitting service, which was run out of their Country Walk home.

Fuster had, shall we say, rather questionable qualifications to run a daycare center. On January 16, 1969, Fuster fired two shots into the chest of a fellow motorist in New York City, killing him instantly. An off-duty police officer was, curiously enough, an eyewitness to the summary execution. Even more curiously,

Fuster chambered another round and pointed his gun directly at the armed officer—and yet was not shot. He was arrested though, and convicted and sentenced before the year was out. On Halloween day, he was sentenced to a ten-year prison term, but was back on the streets in less than four, receiving psychiatric care. In November 1982, he was convicted again, this time on charges of committing a lewd assault on a nine-year-old girl. Despite that being his second felony conviction, Fuster was sentenced to just two years probation. It was while on probation for the child molestation conviction that Fuster and his underage wife started the babysitting service.

Fuster's probation officer apparently had no problem with that business venture, even though it violated the terms of Frank's probation by bringing him into unsupervised contact with at least fifty kids, at least thirty of whom later reported being horrifically abused. Fuster's probation officer also managed to overlook the fact that Frank had self-terminated his court-ordered psychiatric treatment in August 1983. No one really seems to have been too concerned about Fuster's babysitting service, which—in addition to being run by a convicted murderer and child molester—was operating without proper licensing and in violation of local zoning laws, which stated that commercial enterprises were expressly forbidden in the residential community. Nevertheless, the service operated with the full knowledge of the entity managing the complex. In fact, Fuster's service used the name Country Walk Babysitting Service, implying that his was an officially sanctioned service provided by the management.

After Frank's past and present activities were exposed, the management company, Arvida, denied that it had ever any official links to the Fuster operation. That, of course, was not surprising, given that Arvida was a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Company, which had little interest in being perceived as having connections to a child molestation operation. The fact remains, however, that the company took no actions against Fuster for the illegal expropriation of the 'Country Walk' name or for violating zoning regulations. Dade County also took a hands-off approach to the Fuster business enterprise. Despite the fact that Frank lacked other required licenses, he was issued an occupational license to run the babysitting service.

Detective Donna Mezmarich was the first police investigator sent to look into the allegations being made by the Country Walk parents. She was openly skeptical of the charges before she even knew what they actually were. The parents felt that she came calling with an unmistakable attitude of disbelief. Nevertheless, enough evidence was obtained to issue an arrest warrant for Frank Fuster for probation violations. Considerably more evidence could have been gathered had police conducted a timely search of the Fuster home. Facing imminent arrest, Fuster was observed by his Country Walk neighbors hastily packing boxes into a

white van. Fearing the loss of valuable physical evidence, parents contacted Detective Meznarich—who failed to respond. She did execute a search warrant the next day, on a home largely—though not entirely—cleansed of incriminating evidence.

Once Fuster was safely in custody, the stories told by his child victims grew increasingly disturbing. They told of being forced to play “pee-pee” and “ca-ca” games. A photo was later produced at trial showing Fuster’s young son Jaime—one of the most severely abused of the victims—sitting in a bathroom smeared thickly with excrement. The children also told of being forced to drink “magic punch,” later revealed by Fuster’s wife to be a mixture of Gatorade, urine, and various drugs. It was revealed at trial that a close friend of the Fuster family owned a pharmacy, which provided a reliable source for drugs. This friend was particularly close to Fuster’s mother and uncle.

The young victims also told of having their lives threatened repeatedly, and of having their parents’ and siblings’ lives threatened as well. They had been compelled to play a game, they said, called “who’s gonna lose their head?” This game frequently ended with the ritual decapitation of an animal, typically a bird. Finally, perhaps inevitably, the children claimed that they were frequently photographed and videotaped, both while being sexually abused and during occult rituals. Fuster claimed to have never owned any video equipment, and none was found in the belated search of the Fuster home. Jaime Fuster though recalled seeing video equipment—as well as guns—being packed into the boxes that were loaded into the van just before Fuster’s arrest.

Some investigators have speculated that Fuster was in the business of producing and selling custom, made-to-order, child pornography videos. He certainly lived quite well for a self-employed mini-blind installer. He had no problem, for example, coming up with the down payment for his Country Walk home, and he maintained no fewer than six bank accounts. He was in the habit of making lump sum deposits of as much as \$20,000 in cash. Fuster apparently liked to screen home videos for the kids, one of which was said to be a snuff film that the children described as depicting two men butchering a woman in a bathtub and then eating her. Some of the kids also, as a side note, spoke of being hypnotized by Iliana Fuster, who they said wore a ‘hypnotizer’ on a chain around her neck.

The trial of Frank Fuster had notable parallels to the McMartin prosecutions, although it differed in significant ways as well. The Country Walk parents who actively and vocally worked to see Fuster brought to justice were subjected to death threats by phone, obscene messages in the mail, and dead chickens left on their doorsteps—similar to the harassment suffered by their counterparts in Manhattan Beach. Also like McMartin, the primary defense strategy was to bring in a hired-gun ‘expert’ of questionable qualifications to attempt to discredit the

children's testimony. The children had been brainwashed by the overzealous therapists, it was claimed, as the treacherous therapists were crucified as being the true guilty parties in what was cast as a 'witch hunt.'

The man originally slated to play the starring role for the defense was Ralph Underwager, at the time a prominent mouthpiece for a group calling itself VOCAL, for Victims of Child Abuse Laws. As the name implies, this group was largely composed of indicted and/or convicted pedophiles. Underwager had been present at the birth of the organization. The defense suffered a bit of a setback when it was revealed at a pretrial deposition that Underwager's credentials as an 'expert' in the field of child development were nonexistent. He was quietly dropped by the defense and replaced with Lee Stewart Coleman, who also had close ties to VOCAL. Coleman had played a key role in the unsuccessful prosecution of the defendants in one of the McMartin-linked preschools.

Coleman did not succeed in his mission in the Country Walk case. Fuster was found guilty on all fourteen of the counts brought against him. One reason for that is that the children were protected from the abusive pretrial treatment received by the McMartin kids. In addition, police and prosecutors—with some notable exceptions—seem to have actually made an effort to win the case. Why was this prosecution not subverted as so many others were? That is difficult to say, although the answer may lie in the make-up of the parents seeking justice for their children; among them were a police sergeant, a police lieutenant, two former state prosecutors, a former chief assistant state attorney, and a gun-toting vigilante named Bobby Dean.

In the end, Frank Fuster—the man who appeared at his pretrial hearing in what was described as a "catatonic trance"—was sentenced to be imprisoned until the year 2150. Not even the Santeria priest who attended the trial with Fuster's mother and uncle had the power to save him. And Arvida—which is to say, the Walt Disney Co.—paid \$6 million to seven of his victims. Even so, justice was not necessarily served. According to the victims, at least two other adults were involved in the abuse. The state knew the identity of at least one of them, but he was never charged with any crimes. Had he been, there is no telling where the investigation might have led; his wife had once run her own babysitting service.

With the heightened awareness of the issue of child abuse engendered by the high-profile Fuster case, a number of other cases surfaced in the Miami area. In the course of one investigation, police inadvertently stumbled upon a collection of hundreds of photographs of a convicted child pornographer engaged in sexual acts with young boys. The man was promptly arrested. Two days after his release on bond, he was found in a Miami hotel room with a bullet hole in his head. His death was, naturally, ruled a suicide. His timely suicide preempted an investigation

that could, it seems reasonable to conclude, have led to the elementary school that was directly across from his home/studio.

Another case that broke in the wake of Country Walk was that of Harold “Grant” Snowden, whose wife had also run a babysitting service. Dozens of kids had passed through her care over the course of a decade. It took two trials, but Snowden was ultimately convicted. In 1983, he had been named the South Miami Police Department’s “Officer of the Year.” Stepping up to handle the appeal of his conviction was F. Lee Bailey, who in the late 1960s had represented a U.S. Air Force Captain in South Carolina accused of molesting multiple child victims. Bailey will be revisited later in this book.

Years later, in August 2002, Florida authorities issued a warrant for the arrest of a former minister and radio evangelist named Troy Cecil Snowden. A search of his Cape Coral home had yielded weapons, child pornography and other unspecified items.

Chapter 6

Finders Keepers

“People want to believe that I am at the centre of everything. They are mistaken...I did things of which I was not the driving force. I was used as an instrument by others, who were themselves used as instruments by others.”

—Marc Dutroux

Just a few years after the conviction of Frank Fuster, another child exploitation case surfaced briefly in the state of Florida. On February 7, 1987, not long before the Larry King and Craig Spence operations were exposed, the *Washington Post* ran an interesting story that, at the time, did not seem to have any particular national significance. The article concerned a case of possible kidnapping and child abuse, and read in part as follows:

Authorities investigating the alleged abuse of six children found with two men in a Tallahassee, Fla., park discovered material yesterday in the Washington area that they say points to a 1960's style commune called the Finders, described in a court document as a 'cult' that allegedly conducted 'brainwashing' and used children 'in rituals.'

D.C. police, who searched a Northeast Washington warehouse linked to the group removed large plastic bags filled with color slides, photographs and photographic contact sheets. Some photos visible through a bag carried from the warehouse at 1307 Fourth St. NE were wallet-sized pictures of children, similar to school photos, and some were of naked children.

D.C. police sources said some of the items seized yesterday showed pictures of children engaged in what appeared to be 'cult rituals.' Officials of the U.S. Customs Service, called in to aid in the investigation, said that the material seized yesterday includes photos showing

children involved in bloodletting ceremonies of animals and one photograph of a child in chains.

Customs officials said they were looking into whether a child pornography operation was being conducted... Their links to the D.C. area have led authorities into a far-reaching investigation that includes the Finders—a group of about 40 people that court documents allege is led by a man named Marion Pettie—and their various homes, including the duplex apartment building in Glover Park, the Northeast Washington warehouse and a 90 acre farm in rural Madison County, Va....

The children, identified in a court document only by the first names of Honeybee, John, Franklin, Bee Bee, Max and Mary, were described as 'dirty, unkempt, hungry, disturbed and agitated.' They had been living in the rear of the van for some time, the document said. Yesterday, police spokesman Hunt said one of the children, a 6 yr. old girl, 'showed signs of sexual abuse'...

Five of the children were uncommunicative, according to police, and none seemed to recognize objects such as typewriters and staplers. However, the oldest was able to give investigators some information. She said that the two men 'were their teachers,' according to Hunt...

Before their arrests in the park, [the two adult caretakers] had told police that they were teachers from Washington 'transporting these children to Mexico and a school for brilliant children,' according to Hunt. When police asked the men where the children's mothers were they said they were being weaned from their mothers.

It was nearly seven years before the press revisited the Finders case, with the follow-up provided by *U.S. News and World Report*. Most likely, the strange saga of the Finders would have disappeared forever if not for the rumors surrounding the case that just would not seem to go away. These rumors were addressed in the *U.S. News* report as follows:

One of the unresolved questions involves allegations that the Finders are somehow linked to the Central Intelligence Agency. Customs Service documents reveal that in 1987, when Customs agents sought to examine the evidence gathered by Washington, D.C. police, they were told that the Finders investigation 'had become an internal matter.'

The police report on the case had been classified secret. Even now, Tallahassee police complain about the handling of the Finders investigation by D.C. police. ‘They dropped this case,’ one Tallahassee investigator says, ‘like a hot rock.’ D.C. police will not comment on the matter. As for the CIA, ranking officials describe allegations about links between the intelligence agency and the Finders as ‘hogwash,’ perhaps the result of a simple mix up with D.C. police. The only connection, according to the CIA: A firm that provided computer training to CIA officers also employed several members of the Finders.

It should probably be noted here that the firm that supplied the training to CIA officers didn’t just employ several members of the Finders, but appears to have in fact been a wholly owned subsidiary of the Finders organization. It should also be noted that the CIA does not, as a general rule-of-thumb, assign the training of its officers to outside contractors, unless, that is, the ‘private’ firm utilized in such a capacity is a CIA front. In the last paragraph of the *U.S. News* report, more intriguing connections to Langley are revealed: “the CIA’s interest in the Finders may stem from the fact that [group leader Marion Pettie’s] late wife once worked for the agency and that his son worked for a CIA proprietary firm, Air America.” Aside from acknowledging these by then widely known (in Washington) CIA connections, the *U.S. News* reporters did their very best to bury the Finders story once and for all:

The case is almost seven years old now, but matters surrounding a mysterious group known as the Finders keep growing curiouiser and curiouiser.

In early February 1987, an anonymous tipster in Tallahassee, Fla, made a phone call to police. Two ‘well dressed men’ seemed to be ‘supervising’ six disheveled and hungry children in a local park, the caller said. The cops went after the case like bloodhounds, at least at first. The two men were identified as members of the Finders. They were charged with child abuse in Florida. In Washington, D.C., police and U.S. Customs Service agents raided a duplex apartment building and a warehouse connected to the group.

Among the evidence seized—detailed instructions on obtaining children for unknown purposes and several photographs of nude children.

According to a Customs Service memorandum obtained by *U.S. News*, one photo appeared ‘to accent the child’s genitals.’ The more the

police learned about the Finders, the more bizarre they seemed: There were suggestions of child abuse, Satanism, dealing in pornography and ritualistic animal slaughter.

None of the allegations was ever proved, however. The child abuse charges against the two men in Tallahassee were dropped; all six of the children were eventually returned to their mothers, though in the case of two, conditions were attached by a court. In Washington, D.C., police began backing away from the Finders investigation. The group's practices, the police said, were eccentric—not illegal.

The article closed by complaining, “some of the rumors can last an awfully long time.” Indeed they can, though they have had to circulate outside of the media, which has never again mentioned the case. That does not mean, however, that there is no additional information available on the subject. As the *U.S. News* reporters noted in their report, there is a certain Customs Service memorandum that was written at the time of the original 1987 investigation. As that document was in the hands of the *News* reporters at the time the story was written, as they readily acknowledged, it should logically follow that any pertinent information contained therein would have been faithfully reported. And as we know, the *News* concluded: “none of the allegations was ever proved.” Still, it might be instructive to review the document to see what kind of “eccentric—not illegal” practices it was that the group was involved in.

The memo in question is actually a series of memos that were written by U.S. Customs Service Special Agent Ramon J. Martinez. In the officer's own words, this is what he observed while participating in the investigation:

On Thursday, February 5, 1987, this office was contacted via telephone by Sergeant JoAnn VanMeter of the Tallahassee Police Department, Juvenile Division. Sgt. VanMeter requested assistance in identifying two adult males and six minor children ages 7 years to 2 years.

The adult males were tentatively identified by TPD as Michael Houlihan and Douglas Ammerman, both of Washington, D.C. who were arrested the previous day on charges of child abuse.

The police had received an anonymous telephone call relative two well-dressed white men wearing suits and ties in Myers Park, (Tallahassee), apparently watching six dirty and unkempt children in the playground area. Houlihan and Ammerman were near a 1980 Blue Dodge van bearing Virginia license number XHW-557, the inside of

which was later described as foul-smelling, filled with maps, books, letters, with a mattress situated to the rear of the van which appeared as if it were used as a bed, and the overall appearance of the van gave the impression that all eight persons were living in it.

The children were covered with insect bites, were very dirty, most of the children were not wearing underwear and all of the children had not been bathed in many days.

The men were arrested and charged with multiple counts of child abuse and lodged in the Leon County Jail. Once in custody the men were somewhat evasive in their answers to the police regarding the children and stated only that they both were the children's teachers and that all were enroute to Mexico to establish a school for brilliant children...

U.S. Customs was contacted because the police officers involved suspected the adults of being involved in child pornography and knew the Customs Service to have a network of child pornography investigators, and of the existence of the Child Pornography and Protection Unit. SS/A Krietlow stated the two adults were well dressed white males. They had custody of six white children (boys and girls), ages three to six years. The children were observed to be poorly dressed, bruised, dirty, and behaving like wild animals in a public park in Tallahassee...SS/A Krietlow was further advised the children were unaware of the function and purpose of telephones, televisions and toilets, and that the children had stated they were not allowed to live indoors and were only given food as a reward...

Upon contacting Detective Bradley, I learned that he had initiated an investigation on the two addresses provided by the Tallahassee Police Dept. during December of 1986. An informant had given him information regarding a cult, known as the 'Finders' operating various businesses out of a warehouse located at 1307 4th St., N.E., and were supposed to be housing children at 3918/3920 W St., N.W. The information was specific in describing 'blood rituals' and sexual orgies involving children, and an as yet unsolved murder in which the Finders may be involved. With the information provided by the informant, Detective Bradley was able to match some of the children in Tallahassee with names of children known or alleged to be in the custody of the Finders. Furthermore, Bradley was able to match the tentative ID of the adults with known members of the Finders. I stood by while Bradley consulted with AUSA Harry Benner and obtained search warrants for the two premises. I advised acting RAC SS/A Tim

Halloran of my intention to accompany MPD on the execution of the warrants, received his permission, and was joined by SS/A Harrold. SS/A Harrold accompanied the team which went to 1307 4th St., and I went to 3918/20 W St.

During the execution of the warrant at 3918/20 W St., I was able to observe and access the entire building... There were several subjects on the premises. Only one was deemed to be connected with the Finders. [He] was located in a room equipped with several computers, printers, and numerous documents. cursory examination of the documents revealed detailed instructions for obtaining children for unspecified purposes. The instructions included the impregnation of female members of the community known as the Finders, purchasing children, trading, and kidnapping. There were telex messages using MCI account numbers between a computer terminal believed to be located in the same room, and others located across the country and in foreign locations. One such telex specifically ordered the purchase of two children in Hong Kong to be arranged through a contact in the Chinese Embassy there. Another telex expressed interest in 'bank secrecy' situations. Other documents identified interests in high-tech transfers to the United Kingdom, numerous properties under the control of the Finders, a keen interest in terrorism, explosives, and the evasion of law enforcement. Also found in the 'computer room' was a detailed summary of the events surrounding the arrest and taking into custody of the two adults and six children in Tallahassee the previous night. There were also a set of instructions which appeared to be broadcast via a computer network which advised the participants to move 'the children' and keep them moving through different jurisdictions, and instructions on how to avoid police attention...

On Friday, 2/6/87, I met Detective Bradley at the warehouse on 4th Street, N.E. I duly advised my acting group supervisor, SS/A Don Bludworth. I was again granted unlimited access to the premises. I was able to observe numerous documents which described explicit sexual conduct between the members of the community known as Finders. I also saw a large collection of photographs of unidentified persons. Some of the photographs were nudes, believed to be of members of the Finders. There were numerous photos of children, some nude, at least one of which was a photo of a child 'on display' and appearing to accent the child's genitals. I was only able to examine a very small amount of the photos at this time. However, one of the officers presented me with a photo album for my review. The album contained a

series of photos of adults and children dressed in white sheets participating in a 'blood ritual.' The ritual centered around the execution of at least two goats. The photos portrayed the execution, disembowelment, skinning and dismemberment of the goats at the hands of the children. This included the removal of the testes of a male goat, the discovery of a female goat's 'womb' and the 'baby goats' inside the womb, and the presentation of a goat's head to one of the children.

Further inspection of the premises disclosed numerous files relating to activities of the organization in different parts of the world. Locations I observed are as follows: London, Germany, the Bahamas, Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Africa, Costa Rica, and 'Europe.' There was also a file identified as 'Palestinian.' Other files were identified by member name or 'project' name. The projects appearing to be operated for commercial purposes under front names for the Finders. There was one file entitled 'Pentagon Break-In,' and others referring to members operating in foreign countries. Not observed by me but related by an MPD officer were intelligence files on private families not related to the Finders. The process undertaken appears to be have been a systematic response to local newspaper advertisements for babysitters, tutors, etc. A member of the Finders would respond and gather as much information as possible about the habits, identity, occupation, etc., of the family. The use to which this information was to be put is still unknown. There was also a large amount of data collected on various child care organizations.

The warehouse contained a large library, two kitchens, a sauna, hot-tub, and a 'video room.' The video room seemed to be set up as an indoctrination center. It also appeared that the organization had the capability to produce its own videos. There were what appeared to be training areas for children and what appeared to be an altar set up in a residential area of the warehouse. Many jars of urine and feces were located in this area.

Contrary to the claims of *U.S. News*, running an international terrorist organization specializing in the trafficking of children is definitely more than just "eccentric." Unless, that is, the organization doing the trafficking is run by the Central Intelligence Agency. Group leader Marion Pettie shed additional light on his non-connections to the agency in an interview with *Steamshovel Press* in 1998. Recounting the history of his group, Pettie reminisced: "Going back to World War II, I kept open house mainly to intelligence people in Washington. OSS people passing through, things like that." Pettie was not, mind you, an intelligence

asset himself. In fact, he has spent his entire life serving as a counter-spy. As a private citizen, he has taken on the job of monitoring the agency. As for his wife, Pettie claims that he sent her “in as a spy, to spy on the CIA for me. She was very happy about it, happy to tell me everything she found out. She was in a key place, you know with the records, and she could find out things for me.” Presumably, the same applies to Pettie’s son.

Pettie sums up his relationship with CIA by acknowledging that there “are some connections, but not to me personally.” Interestingly enough though, the group that claimed no direct connection to the intelligence community quite obviously had very powerful people within that community protecting it. As the final Customs Service memo reveals:

On Thursday, February 5, 1987, Senior Special Agent Harrold and I assisted the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) with two search warrants involving the possible sexual exploitation of children. During the course of the search warrants, numerous documents were discovered which appeared to be concerned with international trafficking in children, high tech transfer to the United Kingdom, and international transfer of currency.

On March 31, 1987, I contacted Detective Jim Bradley of the Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). I was to meet with Detective Bradley to review the documents seized pursuant to two search warrants executed in January, 1987. The meeting was to take place on April 2 or 3, 1987.

On April 2, 1987, I arrived at MPD at approximately 9:00 a.m. Detective Bradley was not available. I spoke to a third party who was willing to discuss the case with me on a strictly ‘off the record’ basis.

I was advised that all the passport data had been turned over to the State Department for their investigation. The State Department, in turn, advised the MPD that all travel and use of the passports by the holders of the passports was within the law and no action would be taken. This included travel to Moscow, North Korea, and North Vietnam from the late 1950s to mid 1970s.

The individual further advised me of circumstances which indicated that the investigation into the activity of the Finders had become a CIA internal matter. The MPD report has been classified SECRET and was not available for review. I was advised that the FBI had withdrawn from the investigation several weeks prior and that the FBI Foreign Counter Intelligence Division had directed MPD not to advise the FBI Washington Field Office of anything that had transpired.

The initial arrest of the Finders in Tallahassee went almost completely unnoticed by the media. So too did another arrest in that same state in August 2000, just before Florida gained newfound fame as the land of the 'hanging chads.' The arrested man was Wayne Camolli, and the charge was operating an on-line child pornography site. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the West Palm Beach home in which Camolli was arrested, not unlike the Finders' van, "was filled with so much rotting garbage, trash and cat feces that the agents had to borrow oxygen masks and hazardous materials suits from the county fire department to carry out the search." Seized in the raid were numerous videotapes and a computer. What makes Camolli's arrest of significance here is that, as the *Times* noted, it was initiated by police "investigating Belgium's most notorious pedophile murder case." It seems that Camolli had close connections to "Felix DeConinck, a suspect in the kidnapping and molestation of a 14-year-old girl...[and] DeConinck in turn had links to Marc Dutroux."

And so it is that we end up right back where we began, with the case of the 'Belgian Beast.' The brief *Times* report closed with these words: "U.S. officials couldn't elaborate on the connection between DeConinck and Dutroux, but said they were part of the same 'child pornography, molestation and murder investigation.'" It is unlikely that the press will ever revisit the case of Wayne Camolli. Tellingly, the *L.A. Times* article quickly disappeared from the newspaper's online archives. As with so many other cases, the final words of the U.S. Customs Service memorandum on the Finders investigation will likely provide the epitaph for this case as well:

No further information will be available. No further action will be taken.

The *Guardian* reported in January 2001 that Interpol, the international police agency, "has agreed to set up an electronic library of child sex victims at its headquarters in Lyon, France." The first images that were to be processed into that database were 750,000 photos seized by British authorities in the Wonderland raids. In April 2003, Britain's *The Register* reported that the U.S. Justice Department was setting up an even larger database:

A huge database system designed to find sexually abused children is under development in the US...The US Justice Department's Child Victim Identification Program will include a catalogue of thousands of illicit pictures seized from suspects and collected from the Web. This

could make the Justice Department the “owner of the world’s largest collection of child pornography,” *AP* reports.

According to that *AP* report, child pornography investigators in several countries had already contributed images to the database, as had “the FBI, Secret Service, Postal Inspection Service and exploited-children groups.” The goal is for the system to “eventually include most of the illicit photographs in circulation on the Internet.” Advanced image recognition software will be utilized in an attempt to match and identify the children in the photographic images, which will, as *The Register* noted, make it easier “to identify and locate sexually abused children.” That is certainly an encouraging development, if, that is, it represents a sincere effort by law enforcement personnel to gather evidence against the child exploitation rings and aid the physically and emotionally ravaged victims.

However, there could also be a very sinister goal being pursued. Researcher Arlene Tyner, who has spent a considerable amount of time interviewing and corresponding with victims of mind control operations, noted in a *Probe* magazine article that some of these victims “were turned over to military/CIA doctors by pedophile fathers or other sexually abusive relatives. CIA officials also blackmailed family members known to produce ‘kiddie porn’ in order to gain control of their already abused and psychologically fragmented children.” It is certainly within the realm of possibility that the high profile child pornography raids in recent years, which invariably result in relatively few arrests and even fewer prosecutions and convictions, are not intended to punish the victimizers, but to identify and compromise them. And is it not inconceivable that the databases being compiled will be utilized as something of a recruitment list to identify those persons who have been ‘preconditioned,’ so to speak, for future mind control operations?

One thing can be stated with certainty about the thousands of victims of today’s child pornography and child prostitution rings: some day, many of them will come forward to tell harrowing stories of their early childhood abuse. They will speak of acts of depravity committed against children that are so heinous as to be almost beyond human comprehension. And yet, as difficult as their stories will be to believe, they will be documented by the images stored in Interpol’s computers, and in the U.S. Justice Department’s computers.

But how many of these victims will be believed?

PART II

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HENRY

"You don't understand me. You are not expected to. You are not capable of it. I am beyond good and evil. Legions of the night, night breed, repeat not the errors of the Night Prowler and show no mercy."

—Richard "The Night Stalker" Ramirez

"There are other 'Sons' out there—God help the world."

—David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz

"What about your children? You say there are just a few? There are many, many more, coming in the same direction. They are running in the streets—and they are coming right at you!"

—Charles Milles Manson

*"The really scary thing is that there are a lot of people who are not in prison, a **lot** of people who are not in prison, who were **far** more successful than I."*

—Theodore Robert Bundy

"All across the country, there's people just like me, who set out to destroy human life."

—Henry Lee Lucas

Chapter 7

Sympathy for the Devil

“Henry is an unusual prisoner. He’s been given a high security cell and a few special amenities...”

—Jim Boutwell, Sheriff of Williamson County, Texas

On June 30, 1998, Henry Lee Lucas—arguably the most prolific and certainly one of the most sadistic serial killers in the annals of American crime—was scheduled for execution by the state of Texas. Given the advocacy of the death penalty by then-Governor George W. Bush, things were not looking good for Henry. Bush had not granted clemency to any condemned man throughout his tenure as governor. In fact, no governor of any state at any time in the history of the country had carried out more judicial executions than Governor Bush. So Texas was definitely not the place to be for a man in Henry’s position. And considering the nature of Lucas’ crimes, it seemed a certainty that nothing would stand in the way of his scheduled execution.

Henry did not attract any high-profile supporters, the way that Karla Faye Tucker did. Then again, even personal appeals to Bush from the likes of Pat Robertson failed to dissuade the governor from proceeding on schedule with Miss Tucker’s execution. There was nothing to indicate that Henry would fare any better, particularly since his crimes were of a particularly brutal nature, involving rape, torture, mutilation, dismemberment, necrophilia, cannibalism, and pedophilia. His tally of victims ran as high as 300–600 by some accounts—including Henry’s own, at times—though such figures are likely inflated. What seems certain is that Lucas—frequently working with erstwhile partner Ottis Toole, a self-described arsonist and cannibal—savagely murdered dozens of victims of various ages, races, and genders. All indications were then that Henry’s execution was a foregone conclusion.

Then a most remarkable thing happened. On June 18, just twelve days before Henry’s scheduled demise, Governor Bush made a special request that the Texas

State Board of Pardons and Paroles, whose members were all Bush appointees, to review Henry's case. Strangely enough, eight days later the Board uncharacteristically issued a recommendation that Henry's execution *not* take place. The next day, just three days short of Henry's scheduled exit from this world, Lucas became the first—and ultimately the only—recipient of Governor Bush's 'compassionate conservatism.' The official rationale for this act of mercy was that the evidence on which Lucas was sentenced did not support his conviction. There was a possibility, said the Board, that Henry was in fact innocent of the crime for which he was convicted.

The problem here is that many of the 150+ death-row inmates who did not receive special gubernatorial attention prior to their executions had evidence supporting their claims of innocence, and yet their appeals to the governor were met with scorn and mockery. So why had Bush suddenly developed a keen interest in not executing innocent convicts? And why, once Henry's life was spared, did he promptly lose this passing interest and begin once again rubber-stamping every execution order that crossed his desk—including one for a great-grandmother in her sixties who was convicted of killing her chronically abusive husband? And why is it that Henry was granted full clemency, rather than a temporary stay during which his case could have been reviewed? That is exactly what Bush did in the case of convicted murderer Ricky Nolen McGinn. Tellingly, the proliferation of press reports on the McGinn case made no mention of the governor's earlier actions on behalf of Lucas.

And what if Lucas was in fact falsely convicted, and what if his innocence was so obvious that the governor had no choice but to commute Henry's sentence? What then does that say about the Texas criminal justice system and the ease with which it sends innocent men to their deaths? Are we to believe that Henry's case was an isolated one and that none of the other men put to death during Bush's reign had equally credible claims of innocence? And what are we to make of the rather peculiar fact that while Henry has been convicted of no fewer than eleven homicides, the only death sentence he ever received was the one that the governor had no problem setting aside? Maybe Henry just had uncannily good luck. He had at one time been scheduled to stand trial for four additional homicides—crimes for which his partner had already been convicted. The trial, however, was canceled on economic grounds, said to be a waste of taxpayer money since Henry was already scheduled to die.

Was Henry just extraordinarily lucky to have his only death sentence set aside by a governor who handed out but one commutation? Or was there something more at work in the Lucas case? Surely there had to be some reason why Bush would take uncharacteristic actions to spare the life of a man who had led a life of such brutality. And this was certainly not the first time the criminal justice system

had shown such inexplicable leniency towards Lucas. The first big break for Henry came in June 1970, when he was released early from a sentence he was then serving following his first murder conviction. Sentenced to 20–40 years, Henry was released after serving ten, just after he appeared before the parole board and explained to them that he was not ready to return to society and would surely kill again if released. As Henry told it, the questioning went something like this: “Now, Mr. Lucas, I must ask you, if we grant your parole, will you kill again?” Henry: “Yes, sir! If you release me now, I will kill again.”

Nevertheless, the board decided that ten years was an adequate amount of time to serve for the crime of killing his mother. Within a year of his release, Henry found himself back in prison after attempting to abduct a young girl. Despite his prior criminal record—which began long before the killing of his mother—Lucas served just four years before again being granted an early release, this time in August 1975. Beginning shortly thereafter, and continuing for nearly eight years, Henry and his new friend, Ottis, committed an untold number of lurid murders. Henry was finally arrested in October 1982 on suspicion of committing two murders, but he was promptly released. He was not arrested again, for the last time, until June 1983.

After the final arrest, Henry was taken on tour, so to speak, by various law enforcement officials around the country, during which time he confessed to committing some 600 murders in 26 states. There were various charges made at the time that Henry was being used by his escorts to clear troublesome, unsolved murders in places he had never even been. That quite likely was the case. Henry seemed to have a very chummy relationship with his captors, particularly the Texas Rangers, and provided a valuable service to them by taking the rap for an amazing array of murders. That alone, however, does not explain the personal attention given to Henry’s case by Governor Bush.

For that, we need to look at some of the more infrequently noted details of Henry’s life history, many of which have been provided by Lucas himself. Henry, as it turns out, has some interesting tales to tell. Just a couple years into his incarceration, he told his story in a book written for him by a sympathetic author. The book, entitled *The Hand of Death: The Henry Lee Lucas Story*, tells of Henry’s indoctrination into a nationwide satanic cult. Lucas claimed that he was trained by the cult in a mobile paramilitary training camp in the Florida Everglades. His training, he said, included instruction in abduction and arson techniques, as well as in the fine art of killing, up close and personal. Henry further claimed that leaders of the camp were so impressed with his handling of a knife that he was allowed to serve as an instructor. Following his training, Henry claimed that he served the cult in various ways, including as a contract killer and as an abductor of children, whom he delivered to a ranch in Mexico near Juarez. Once there,

they were used in the production of child pornography and for ritual sacrifices. Henry has said that this cult's operations were based in Texas, and included trafficking in children and drugs, among other illegal pursuits.

What Henry claimed, essentially, is that what appeared to be the random work of a serial killer was in fact a planned series of crimes often committed for specific purposes. Some of the murders were political hits, according to Henry, including assassinations of foreign dignitaries, local politicians and wealthy businessmen. This was not true for all of Henry's crimes. Some he did just because that is what he liked to do. And it was the one thing that he was really good at. The beauty of this arrangement was that it allowed Henry to conceal the true motive for many of his crimes. Those performed as contract hits looked like all of his murders—senseless and random acts of violence.

In Henry's version of events, it was Toole who was responsible for Henry's recruitment and training by the cult, and for many of the pair's exploits thereafter. Interestingly, in all the standard biographies of the pair, Toole is said to have been Henry's severely retarded, and decidedly junior, partner. It is quite clear though from reading an interview granted by Toole to a journalist (of sorts) that he was not by any means retarded. Uneducated, no doubt, but certainly not severely retarded. Ottis was able to express himself quite clearly, though perversely, and displayed a substantial level of knowledge about the practices of Satanism—which isn't really surprising given that he was, as Joel Norris has written, "raised as 'the Devil's child' by his Satanist grandmother."

Toole has described a childhood that was complete with all the trappings of satanic ritual abuse. He has told of being forced to have sex with numerous family members and others—including his father, his stepfather, his stepfather's friends, and his older sister Drusilla. His grandmother, who lived with Ottis' father as man and wife, although they were actually mother and son, is said to have been a member of a multi-generational death cult. Toole once explained to an interviewer how he had "been involved in all this since I was a child, through the cult, you know." He has spoken of having urine poured on him, of eating dog meat, and of watching two cats fight to their death while their blood dripped down upon him. Ottis also had this to say of his childhood years: "I used to go with my grandmother into graveyards—we used to dig up all kinds of bones—and she used to take the bones and do devil worship." He has also told of once being forced into a grave to pluck the bones from a freshly rotting corpse. Young Ottis was also frequently dosed with barbiturates, and he has said that he "used to hear voices."

Toole's older sister, Drusilla, spent time in a mental hospital, after which she reportedly committed suicide. Her children were placed in the care of their Uncle Ottis and his friend Henry Lee Lucas. Two of them, Frieda and Frank Powell,

accompanied the pair on their homicidal wanderings and were forced to witness, and at times participate in, the rape, killing and mutilation of the victims. Frieda (*aka* Becky) ended up scattered in a field after suffering years of sexual abuse at the hands of Henry and Ottis. Frank fared slightly better; he was committed to a mental hospital. A third sibling, Sarah Pierce, who shared with her Uncle Ottis a passion for arson, was convicted and imprisoned for indulging her passion.

Lucas also suffered through an incomprehensibly abusive childhood. In fact, when it comes to early childhood abuse, there are few parents of future serial killers who can compare to Viola Lucas, Henry's mother. So severe was her physical abuse of young Henry that he once slipped into a coma for a day following a particularly brutal beating. On another occasion—through a combination of abuse and neglect—Henry lost one of his eyes. Viola was, as is the case with the mothers of many serial killers, a prostitute. She routinely entertained her customers in the presence of Henry, who was compelled to watch. Viola also dressed young Henry up as a girl for the first seven years of his life and prostituted him out to her customers. Toole has also spoken of being forced to dress as a girl.

Though Henry and Ottis may represent extreme cases, their horrific childhoods should not come as much of a surprise to most readers. That serial killers have suffered abusive childhoods has become something of a cliché. It is a fact that is acknowledged in most serial killer biographies, though it is usually followed by the caveat that such a childhood history does not excuse subsequent actions. Western society preaches that we are ultimately responsible for our own actions. Scapegoating society, or a horrendously abusive childhood, is simply not acceptable. Do we not all, after all, act of our own free will, regardless of our past?

That is certainly what we have been conditioned to believe. But what if we do not all act of our own free will? What if a lifetime of being bombarded with propaganda has, to some extent, deprived us all of that ability? And what if some of us have been completely robbed of the ability to exercise free will? And what if suffering through a chronically abusive childhood lays the groundwork for that to occur? What if Viola Lucas was right when she told young Henry: "I'm going to teach you the beauty of pain and you're going to be my slave for the rest of your life." And what if Henry could only break the bonds of that slavery by killing dear old mom? And, finally, what if by killing her, Lucas only succeeded in acquiring a new slave-master?

What are we to make of Henry's bizarre tale of being a contract killer? And what of Henry's other stories, including the one about being a close friend of Jim Jones of the People's Temple? Henry claimed on numerous occasions that it was he who was taken on a chartered plane to Guyana to personally deliver the cyanide to Jones that was allegedly used in the now infamous Jonestown massacre. What are we to make of such stories? Could Henry have been telling the

truth about being a contract killer? And if so, did the contracts he was receiving have some kind of government connection? Though Henry did not address the subject in his book, the training camp, as he described it, clearly had military connections. And Henry has explicitly stated that the cult included among its members various socially prominent individuals, including high-level politicians.

Could that be the reason for the actions taken by Governor George W. Bush in June 1998?

“They think I’m stupid, but before all this is over everyone will know who’s really stupid. And we’ll see who the real criminals are.”

—Henry Lee Lucas

Chapter 8

Henry: Portrait of an MK-ULTRA Assassin?

“[It is] being like a movie star...you’re just playing the part.”

—Henry Lee Lucas, describing what it is
like to be a serial killer

A U.S. Navy psychologist...claims that the Office of Naval Intelligence had taken convicted murderers from military prisons, used behavior modification techniques on them, and then relocated them in American embassies throughout the world...The Navy psychologist was Lt. Commander Thomas Narut of the U.S. Regional Medical Center in Naples, Italy. The information was divulged at an Oslo NATO conference of 120 psychologists from the eleven nation alliance...The Navy provided all the funding necessary, according to Narut.

Dr. Narut, in a question and answer session with reporters from many nations, revealed how the Navy was secretly programming large numbers of assassins. He said that the men he had worked with for the Navy were being prepared for commando-type operations, as well as covert operations in U.S. embassies worldwide. He described the men who went through his program as ‘hit men and assassins’ who could kill on command.

Careful screening of the subjects was accomplished by Navy psychologists through the military records...and many were convicted murderers serving military prison sentences.

So said the *Napa Sentinel*, in a series of articles published in August-November, 1991. Anyone familiar with the intelligence community’s long-standing obsession

with the concept of mind control will immediately recognize what Dr. Narut was describing as an MK-ULTRA project. The existence of this particular manifestation of the project was first reported by British journalist Peter Watson of the *Sunday Times*, who attended the conference and interviewed Dr. Narut, who told him that they looked for candidates who had shown a proclivity for violence. This was at a time when numerous pseudo-investigations of the intelligence community were being undertaken, including those by the Rockefeller, Pike, and Church Committees. Narut told Watson that he was revealing what was obviously highly classified information only because he assumed that it was about to surface anyway.

As it turned out, Narut seriously overestimated the interest of the various committees in practicing full disclosure. After making his unauthorized comments, Narut promptly disappeared from public view. He reappeared briefly to make a feeble attempt at retracting his prior statements, but at that point, it was a little too late. Watson went on to expand upon his initial research to produce a book, *War on the Mind*, which was one of the better books from the late 1970s on the subject of mind control and psychological warfare research by the intelligence community. Walter Bowart referenced Watson's work as well, in his difficult-to-find *Operation Mind Control*. So this cat, once let out of the bag, proved rather difficult to stuff back inside.

The intelligence community, it seemed, was recruiting from prisons to make use of the natural talents of convicted killers to produce the fabled 'Manchurian Candidates'—otherwise known as mind controlled assassins. The operation described by Narut involved killers drawn from military prisons, though there is a good possibility that parallel programs were being conducted in civilian prisons as well. Prisons, after all, have provided fertile ground for any number of MK-ULTRA sub-projects for decades. As the *Napa Sentinel* article noted, "Mind control experiments...permeate mental institutions and prisons." That was particularly true in the 1960s and 1970s.

The NATO conference at which Dr. Narut dropped his bombshell was held in July 1975. Strangely enough, the very next month, August 1975, Henry Lee Lucas was released early from prison to begin his eight-year reign of terror. Strangely enough, during his prior ten-year prison stay, Henry spent *four-and-a-half* of those years in a mental ward. Throughout that time, he received intensive drug and electroshock treatments. He later described that period of incarceration as a "nightmare that would not end." During that time, he complained constantly about hearing voices in his head, taunting him day and night. This was ostensibly the reason for his confinement in the mental ward, though it could just as well have been the result of his confinement and treatment. Henry later spent additional time in an institution in 1980, in the midst of his killing spree.

Is it possible that Henry was recruited and programmed while in prison, so that he could later be used by the so-called Hand of Death cult? Lucas himself said that he emerged from prison a changed man: before his incarceration, he killed only in the heat of the moment, but when he re-entered society it was with a cold-blooded determination and the professed desire to kill as many people as possible. And he certainly had shown a voracious appetite for violence, enough so to make him a very attractive candidate for an assassin-training program. Indeed, Henry is just the kind of man who would be considered a valuable asset by the intelligence community.

For anyone who doubts that the CIA (or any other of the numerous interwoven intelligence agencies) would recruit such a man, it is important to remember that we are talking here about the same agencies that recruited some of the most notorious war criminals of the Third Reich—men like Klaus Barbie, Joseph Mengele, Adolph Eichmann, Otto Skorzeny, and Reinhard Gehlen. Henry's depravity pales in the shadows of men such as those. Lucas probably couldn't even hold his own against some of the organized crime figures—like Lucky Luciano, Meyer Lansky and Santos Trafficante—who were likewise recruited by the U.S. intelligence community. Or against the numerous thugs that the CIA has propped up as dictators around the world—men such as Somoza, Pinochet, Duvalier and Pahlavi, to name just a few.

In the company of such men, Henry would be just one of the boys—no less valuable an asset than, say, Dan Mitrione, the CIA torture aficionado who was a boyhood friend of the infamous Jim Jones. Mitrione—known for having homeless persons kidnapped for the purpose of giving torture demonstrations to South American security forces in his sound-proof, underground chamber of horrors—was hailed as a hero and martyr when he himself was tortured and killed. Frank Sinatra and Jerry Lewis even flew into his hometown and performed a benefit show to raise money for the widow of such a great American. So in the world of spooks, Henry would be in good company, as would his partner, Ottis Toole, who would not even have the distinction of being the only cannibal recruited by the CIA. As Douglas Valentine revealed in *The Phoenix Program* (the CIA's assassination, torture and terror program waged against the people of Vietnam), the Phoenix teams consisted of U.S. Navy SEALs working with "CTs," described by one participant as "a combination of ARVN deserters, VC turncoats, and bad motherfucker criminals the South Vietnamese couldn't deal with in prison, so they turned them over to us." The spooks were only too happy to employ the services of these men, who "taught [their] SEAL comrades the secrets of the psy-war campaign." So depraved were the agency recruits that some of them "would actually devour their enemies' vital organs." All in a day's work for America's premier intelligence agency.

Also included in the CIA rogues' gallery of distinguished alumni, according to a number of researchers, is Lucas' self-described "close friend," the aforementioned Jim Jones. What then are we to make of Henry's professed connection to the tragic People's Temple? Several investigators have documented that the Jonestown massacre was not by any means a case of mass suicide, as was reported by the U.S. press. It was in fact a case of mass murder. The Guyanese coroner, Dr. C. Leslie Mootoo, concluded that only a handful of the 913 victims at Jonestown died by means of suicide on that fateful day. All of the rest were summarily executed, some by lethal injection, some by strangulation, and some simply shot through the head. It is apparent then that if Lucas was in fact at Jonestown at the time of the mass murder, he was quite likely doing considerably more than just serving as a delivery boy. A man of Henry's talents would be an invaluable asset in a clean-up operation of that type. And what was being cleaned up was, of course, itself an MK-ULTRA project—complete with vast stockpiles of drugs, sensory deprivation equipment, and a band of zombie-like assassins who gunned down Congressman Leo Ryan's entourage just before the massacre (thus necessitating the clean-up operation).

It is strange then that Henry would claim a connection to a man whose operation was notable primarily for being a breeding ground for mind control, assassins, and mass murder.

Several years after the publication of Henry's book, journalist Maury Terry told a story with chilling parallels to the one told by Henry and Ottis. What Terry revealed, in *The Ultimate Evil*, is that the murders attributed to the Son of Sam and the Manson Family, as well as numerous other interconnected killings, including possibly the Zodiac murders, were not what they appeared to be. Rather than the random work of serial/mass murderers, many were actually contract hits carried out for specific purposes by an interlocking network of satanic cults. In other words, they were professional hits orchestrated and disguised to look like the work of yet another 'lone nut' serial killer. That is, of course, exactly what Henry claimed his crimes to be, several years before Terry published his compellingly documented work.

Terry's book has been unfairly maligned by much of the media. His contention is that David Berkowitz had nothing to do with the planning of the killings; he was just one of several gunmen. Berkowitz was essentially a patsy who took the fall to protect the rest of the cult, particularly those members who travel in the upper strata of society. That scenario has been roundly ridiculed. Many of Terry's critics have pointed to the fact that Ed Sanders' *The Family*, which in a sense laid the groundwork for Terry's later work, was recalled by its publisher and reissued *sans* two crucial chapters. That is purported to be proof that the allegations both authors make, particularly the allegations regarding the

Process Church, are without substance. What such critics unerringly fail to mention is that it was only the U.S. publisher that bowed to pressure to recall the book. The book's publisher in the UK, on the other hand, stood behind the book and its author—a decision that withstood legal challenges.

Terry's numerous critics also unerringly fail to mention that Queens' District Attorney John Santucci reopened the Son of Sam case in 1979 after concluding that Berkowitz did not act alone: "I believe David Berkowitz did not act alone—that in fact others did cooperate, aid and abet him in the commission of these crimes." Among other things, Santucci pointed out "the sketches of the individuals—the composites—were at wide divergence from Berkowitz." And indeed, they were. In fact, the sketches were "at wide divergence" from one another; as the *New York Post* noted, "the identikit drawings of the NYPD, which some say are better than photographs, give seven different looks to the killer." Santucci also noted, as did the *Post*, that "an unusual number of people" who were connected to the case, and who were identified by Berkowitz as being complicit in the crimes, "are no longer living." Berkowitz, by the way, had a number of interesting connections. Police found numerous telephone numbers scrawled on the walls of his apartment, including: the unlisted, private home numbers of prominent doctors living on Long Island; the number for a large Scientology training center in Florida; and the number for the Montauk Golf and Racquet Club, an exclusive country club on Long Island that lies adjacent to a purportedly closed military base that has been tenuously linked by researchers to ongoing mind control operations.

A more recent case, unreported in the American press, closely mirrors the scenario portrayed by Terry—complete with a patsy taking the fall for the crimes of the socially prominent and a trail of dead witnesses/accomplices. In 1994, a farm-hand named Pietro Pacciani was convicted of fourteen serial killings committed in Italy's Tuscan woods. In April 2001, the UK's *The Times* reported that the case had "returned to haunt Italy—and in a new, even more sinister guise...police in Florence have reopened the case 'in the light of new evidence.' And the evidence suggests that while Pacciani may indeed have carried out the murders, or some of them, the real masterminds behind the gruesome killings were a group of 'high society satanists' who carried out—and perhaps still carry out—'weird rituals that beggar belief' behind the respectable facades of their Tuscan villas, led by a 'distinguished doctor' with a 'sick and twisted mind.'"

In August 2001, the *Guardian* added: "Police now believe that a group of between 10 and 12 wealthy, sophisticated Italians orchestrated ritualised murders over the course of three decades and got away with it, allowing their careers and reputations to blossom to this day." These unidentified suspects were described as an "occult group which directed the...murders." The *Times* article noted that

Pacciani's "conviction was overturned on appeal, but he was about to be retried—which is possible under Italian law—when he died, supposedly of a heart attack." According to the investigating magistrate on the case, Paolo Canessa, Pacciani's death was definitely not due to natural causes: "Someone was prescribing medicine that killed rather than cured Pacciani."

Pacciani's defense attorney, Carmelo Lavorino, has noted that, at the time of Pacciani's death, "he wasn't in any danger." He has also said that evidence at the scene suggested that Pacciani had been dragged by his feet after his death. The most likely explanation is obviously that Pacciani was eliminated, as the *Guardian* put it, "lest he reveal the real monster, or monsters." According to the *Times*, a number of other suspicious deaths have surrounded the case: "Renato Malatesta, Pacciani's close friend, was found hanging in a stable with his feet still resting firmly on the ground...Malatesta's daughter Milva was found dead with her three-year-old son in a burnt-out Fiat Panda...another burnt-out car was found containing the body of Milva Malatesta's lover, Francesco Vinci, another Pacciani acquaintance...A year later came the murder of Anna Milva Mettei, a local prostitute who had had an affair with Vinci's son, whose body was also burnt."

Investigators have now come to the belated realization that a large network of people were involved in the killings, some "studying the most likely spots in which to strike," while others served "as lookouts. They all took orders from one person who...then took part himself in the actual killings and mutilations." Investigators also now believe "the female body parts [the left breasts and the genitals] were used in black masses at night in remote Tuscan farmhouses." Among those now being sought by authorities is a "'mystery woman,' perhaps a member of the doctor's circle, who beat up Pacciani's elderly wife in January 1996, knocked her out with sleeping pills and searched the house from top to bottom." Also sought is an artist who Pacciani worked for as a gardener, and whose home was found to contain incriminating evidence. He disappeared just days before the trial began and he is believed to be hiding out in, of all places, Belgium.

By September, yet more of the cover-up was unraveling. The *Observer* dropped a bombshell: "The 'Monster of Florence' may have been a Satanic sect bankrolled by the secret service." Suspects by then included "a doctor, ambassador and an artist." Pacciani's death was "being treated as a murder," and questions were being raised about his unexplained wealth—which included two houses and more than \$75,000 in cash. Michele Giuttari, the investigating magistrate on the case, who has received death threats, has said that the Monster of Florence was not Pacciani, but a "cultured man of great professional success, esteemed and powerful, but with psychopathic hidden impulses. It makes you wonder how many Jekylls and Hydes there are in civilised cities like Florence." Indeed, it does.

Consider the “civilised” city of Auxerre, France. In late March 2002, the *Guardian* ran a brief report by correspondent Jon Henley that began as follows:

The French justice ministry took disciplinary action yesterday against three prosecutors involved in the case of an alleged serial killer who escaped prosecution for more than 20 years.

The justice minister, Marylise Lebranchu, sacked one prosecutor, Daniel Stilinovic, and transferred another, Jacques Cazals, from his post in the Paris public prosecutor’s office, for their negligence in the case of Emile Louis...

A third, retired, prosecutor, Rene Meyer, was stripped of his honorary title. All three magistrates worked in the northern Burgundy city of Auxerre in the 1980s and 1990s and were found guilty by a disciplinary panel of a range of serious errors, including “lack of professional honour.”

Fifteen months before that report, Emile Louis had confessed to murdering seven mentally handicapped women who had disappeared without a trace between 1977 and 1979. He had subsequently withdrawn his confession and asserted that the girls had been “abused, abducted and finally killed by a ring of high-ranking local men.” At the time of the women’s disappearances, investigations had been hastily dropped and the missing women listed as runaways. It was not until more than two decades later, following Louis’ confession, that a serious inquiry was made into the fate of the missing girls. That inquiry led to what the *Guardian* referred to as “further, even more disturbing discoveries”:

The chief prosecutor in Auxerre, Suzanne le Queau, said late last year that almost all the inquiries into the cases of about 30 young women who vanished in Burgundy over the past 30 years had been either mysteriously shelved or deliberately mishandled.

Moreover, the files relating to most of the criminal inquiries shelved in Auxerre between 1958 and 1982—including 17 missing young women—had been either stolen or destroyed, and a dozen post-1982 inquiries involving missing young women for which the files still remained had all been inexplicably dropped.

Lawyers for the victims’ families are talking of a sex ring which abducted, raped and murdered up to 30 girls in the 70s and 80s and was powerful enough to stifle any subsequent investigation. A full

inquiry into what may prove the biggest cover-up in French legal history is under way.

In July 2002, the Monster of Florence case was in the news once again. A series of profaned corpses were turning up, and there were indications that these crimes, committed against the corpses of the elderly, were linked to the case. The first such corpse had been discovered the previous month, on the summer solstice. A report in the *Sunday Herald* indicated that the satanic rites performed in conjunction with the Monster of Florence killings had been conducted at a senior citizen's home where Pacciani had once worked as a gardener. Resident's at the home at that time included the father of Florence's deputy attorney. Some of the profaned corpses surfacing in the summer of 2002 were also connected to the home.

Also revealed in the *Herald* report was that, in 2001, police had raided the home of Aurelio Mattei, a psychiatrist for the French secret services. In 1992, Mattei authored a book that alluded to evidence in the Monster case that was not uncovered by investigators until a decade later. The home of Francisco Bruno, a criminologist and prominent television talking-head, was also raided. Bruno's name was on one of the drug prescriptions that killed Pacciani. Any additional information on the case may be difficult to obtain, since the *Herald* report also noted that police had issued a news blackout on the ongoing investigation. It seems quite likely, however, based on the evidence that has surfaced, that Pacciani was in fact a fall-guy for a cult of powerful individuals.

In May 2003, the UK's *Guardian* reported that convicted French serial killer Patrice Alegre was "not the lone psychopath he was made out to be at his trial last year," according to the sworn statements of former prostitutes. "He is alleged to have acted for most of the 1990s as the leader of a sado-masochistic sex ring, supplying women and drugs for debauched, and at times violent, evenings frequented by senior policemen, judges, businessmen, sports personalities and politicians." The claims surfaced "during a police investigation into allegations that Patrice Alegre, a serial killer who is serving a life sentence for killing five women, was for years offered illegal protection by corrupt police and magistrates in the south-western city of Toulouse."

According to a *BBC* report, Alegre, a policeman's son and an employee of the police department's cafeteria, "is also under investigation in connection with a criminal network in Toulouse said to have involved minors and cocaine." Other allegations, as recounted by the *Observer*, involved "white slavery, sado-masochism, rapes, sex with minors, drug dealing and appalling brutality—all in the heart of the government of one of France's most historic and most civilised cities." It is alleged that these crimes were committed at "Toulouse's Palais de

Justice and...at a chateau owned by Toulouse council.” Toulouse’s prosecutor-general, Jean Volff, was fired for “covering up links between senior officials and the exploitation of vulnerable girls.” Three judges were scheduled for questioning about “acts of torture and barbaric acts, pimping and rapes of under-age girls.”

Alegre claimed that at least some of the murders he committed were ordered by some of Toulouse’s most prominent citizens. The killings, he said, served to silence witnesses and eliminate blackmail threats arising from what the *Guardian* described as “somasochistic orgies involving politicians, judges and police.” Two former prostitutes who had been recruited by Alegre for some of those parties corroborated his allegations. One judge admitted that there was “some truth” to the story told by the two women of “an official cover-up of Alegre’s crimes.” Another judge “has admitted to drinking with Alegre,” who is known to have run Toulouse’s prostitution business in the early 1990s.

As the investigation progressed, Dominique Baudis, a former television host, found himself at the center of the scandal. He was perhaps the most prominent politician in Toulouse, having served as mayor from 1983 to 2001, preceded by his father from 1971 to 1983. Baudis was named as one of the four powerful figures that reportedly ordered the murders. The other three were not named, but one was said to be a high-ranking police officer, and another a senior magistrate. Baudis reportedly owned a lake house, equipped with hidden cameras, where somasochistic orgies were held. The French periodical *Le Monde* sought to assure readers that the accusations arising from the orgies were “not about simulated acts of torture and erotic games among consenting adults. This was real torture, accompanied by other degrading acts, committed against prostitutes, some of whom were under age.”

By early June 2003, the *Sunday Herald* was fretting over the potential fallout from the investigation: “Such is the damage to the police, the judicial system and the municipal administration that some have suggested the underpinnings of the state and its democratic institutions are under threat...Magistrates, politicians, journalists, businessmen, policemen and sportsmen are lining up to be questioned as part of the inquiry.” Police were under fire, scrambling to explain why many of Alegre’s murder victims had been officially listed as suicides. The investigation was being expanded to include twenty additional cases. And a French magazine, as the *Guardian* reported, had “revealed allegations that the former mayor, Dominique Baudis, had a sexual relationship with the murderer, Patrice Alegre.”

Also in June 2003, Michel Barrau was appointed as the prosecutor-general for the case. His appointment immediately raised concerns among lawyers, according to the *Observer*, owing to the fact that Barrau had previously been “credited with stopping an investigation into corruption among senior right-wing politicians in

Paris before last year's general election." Barrau was, in other words, no stranger to political cover-ups. Before the month was out, the evidence in the case, according to a *Reuters*' headline, had "evaporated." Alegre reneged on his confession after one of the prostitute witnesses purportedly admitted lying about seeing senior officials at S&M orgies. She was promptly jailed, recalling the jailing of witnesses in the Franklin case: "one of two prostitutes who accused Alegre of procuring young women for politicians to chain to walls and abuse in sadomasochistic orgies has been placed behind bars as judges investigate the authenticity of her story." With the cover-up firmly in place, the European media moved on to other things.

Henry Lee Lucas' story then, as bizarre as it may initially appear to be, is certainly not without precedents or parallels. Other events that have transpired since Henry first began telling his tales of The Hand of Death lend further credence to various aspects of his story. For example, the 'Finders' case, discussed in Chapter 6, illustrated that there are in fact coordinated efforts by networks of individuals to transport abducted children to clandestine locations in Mexico. Of course, Henry could have just been making lucky guesses when he talked about the networks of satanic cults running murder-for-hire operations and child abduction rings. And there could be nothing to the fact that Toole, who was convicted in the state of Florida, shared with Henry the fate of having his death sentence commuted. Florida is, of course, a state that is also overly zealous in its application of the death penalty, although not zealous enough to execute the likes of Ottis Toole.

In any event, it's interesting to note that both of these men had their death sentences set aside in a state that was, until January 2001, run by a member of the Bush family. It is interesting also to take note of the case of the man known as the "Railroad Killer," Rafael Resendez-Ramirez. On July 13, 1999, Ramirez was reported to have walked across a bridge from Juarez, Mexico into El Paso, Texas and turned himself in. At the time, he was wanted for a string of nine alleged serial killings. Mirroring the circumstances surrounding Henry's final arrest, Ramirez had been taken into custody several weeks prior by the U.S. Border Patrol, only to be promptly released—despite his presence on FBI most-wanted lists, and despite the issuing of alerts to the immigration service, and despite the fact that a nationwide manhunt was underway.

Between this detainment and his surrender, Ramirez claimed four more victims. Apparently, he still had a little work left to complete. Having done so, Ramirez then made the incomprehensible decision to surrender to Texas authorities. Crossing the border into Texas, Ramirez left a country with no death penalty and entered the execution capital of the Western world. The *Los Angeles Times*, in reporting on his surrender, noted he was "adamant he wanted to surrender to a Texas Ranger," and "he had not requested an attorney and was cooperating with

detectives.” In the same article, it is noted that authorities say Ramirez is “strikingly intelligent.”

Strikingly intelligent? Not based on the actions he took on July 13, 1999. But then again, perhaps Ramirez knows something about the Texas criminal justice system that the rest of us do not. Interestingly enough, Lucas was reportedly fascinated by the Ramirez case. While the manhunt was underway, he told the *Houston Post*: “I follow his case on the TV...I’d like to meet him.” They presumably would have much to talk about.

Ramirez, by the way, was born in Matamoros, Mexico and, according to his mother, was raised there outside of the home by non-family members.

“At some time I have start(ed) to hear funny voices, like a person calling me, but no one call me.”

—Rafael Resendez-Ramirez, in a letter to a reporter
in Houston following his surrender to authorities

“Can I tell you who really I am, with all the secrecy that’s in the family? I only have one purpose in life, and that’s to express some of my views and some of the views that I have been instructed—anything that can put down Christianity, anything that can put down democracy, anything that can put down freedom.”

—Rafael Resendez-Ramirez, delivering his closing
argument to a jury in St. Louis, March 1989

Chapter 9

Rancho Diablo

“No one wants to believe the cult story. The TV people cut it out. The writers don’t write about it.”

—Henry Lee Lucas

One of the more compelling aspects of Henry’s story was his contention that he had ties to cult-run ranches just south of the U.S. border. In 1989, just such a ranch was excavated in Matamoros, Mexico—just south of Brownsville, Texas—yielding the remains of fifteen ritual sacrifice victims. The Matamoros case so closely paralleled the stories told years earlier by Lucas that some law enforcement personnel in Texas chose to take a closer look at Henry’s professed cult connections. In fact, Jim Boutwell—the sheriff of Williamson County, Texas—later told a reporter that investigators had *verified* that Lucas was indeed involved in cult activities.

Following the discovery in Matamoros, Clemmie Schroeder—identified as Henry’s spiritual adviser—sent to the state attorney general a map Lucas had drawn for her in 1985 that identified locations where murder, kidnapping and drug-running operations were conducted. She told a reporter for the *Brownsville Herald*: “Henry told me there were a lot of different cults in Mexico who were involved in satanic worship and everything. I found the map and realized he had marked this cult and drug ring near Brownsville.” The attorney general’s office chose not to take any action. In an interview conducted following the exposure of the Matamoros cult, Ottis Toole claimed that it was not the specific ranch with which he and Henry were associated, but he also emphasized that there were many such interconnected operations along the Texas/Mexico border.

Though downplayed in most press reports, the Matamoros cult was largely an American entity. Its leader was Adolfo Constanzo, a Cuban-American born in Miami, Florida and raised in Miami and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Its ‘high priestess’ was Sara Aldrete, an honor student at Southmost Texas College in

Brownsville. One of the cult's top lieutenants, Serafin Hernandez Garcia, also lived in Brownsville and attended Southmost—as a law-enforcement major. Serafin's grandfather was the owner of Rancho Santa Elena, where the cult performed its ritual sacrifices and buried many of its victims. Another cult member, drug baron Elio Hernandez Rivera, also hailed from Brownsville. Yet another lived in Weslaco, Texas.

Constanzo has been described by chronicler Clifford Linedecker as a “thoroughly ruthless and malevolent genius with a messianic ability to command the loyalty and blind obedience of followers who joined him, zombie-like, in a loathsome blood feast of dope dealing, terror, torture, and human sacrifice”—a description that sounds as though it were written with Charles Manson in mind. Born November 1, 1962 to a fifteen-year-old Cuban immigrant (likely an under-age prostitute), Constanzo was blessed by a Palo Mayombe high priest at the age of six months and declared “the chosen one.” Until the age of ten, he was trained by satanists in San Juan and Haiti, before returning to Miami in 1972. Back in Florida, Constanzo was mentored by another satanic high priest who taught him, among other things, the art of grave robbing. His mother, meanwhile, busied herself with being arrested some thirty times. But as Michael Newton has written, the “charges never seemed to stick, and she always escaped with probation.” Dade County neighbors considered Constanzo's mother to be a “witch” or a “sorceress.” Authorities once found her living in a vacant, dilapidated apartment that was heavily smeared with blood, feces and urine. She was charged with trespassing and child neglect.

By mid-1984, Adolfo had moved to Mexico City, where he served as something of a ‘psychic to the stars,’ earning extravagant fees and living quite lavishly. His fastidiously neat and orderly home in a high-dollar suburb of Mexico's capital city was, interestingly enough, located directly across from an elementary school. Described as having a magnetic personality, Constanzo attracted an array of famous and colorful people—including entertainment stars, fashion models, transsexual nightclub performers, politicians, businessmen, crime lords, police officials and civil servants. One of his followers was Irma Serrano—a singer/actress and the high-profile mistress of a former president of Mexico. Another admirer was Florentino Ventura, the head of the Mexican branch of Interpol. Ventura was such a devoted disciple that he considered himself to be Constanzo's ‘godson.’ He allegedly killed himself in Mexico City on September 17, 1988, after killing his wife and another woman. Strangely though, all three were killed with the same burst of gunfire.

The Matamoros cult was first exposed in early April 1989. Police searching the ranch on April 1 discovered drugs and occult paraphernalia. Returning on April 9, authorities arrested four members of the cult, all of who were members of the

Hernandez drug family. Two days later, the first bodies were exhumed from Rancho Santa Elena. Some of the victims had been beheaded, while others had been grotesquely disfigured by machete blows to the head. Brains, hearts, lungs and other internal organs had been cut or torn from many of the bodies, and some of these were found stewing in cauldrons in a shed at the ranch. Spines had been ripped from the decomposing corpses to fashion ceremonial necklaces. One victim was reportedly boiled alive, another skinned alive; all were mutilated to varying degrees.

These victims included the owner and secretary of a company that served as a front for a cocaine-processing lab, an informant for the Federales and his mistress, two federal narcotics officers, three former police officers, and the American nephew of a U.S. Customs agent. There were also a number of law enforcement personnel within the cult, including Salvador Vidal Garcia, a Mexico City Federal Judicial Police agent who was in charge of narcotics investigations. Juan Benitez, the Commandante of the Federal Judicial Police, claimed that there “were another six agents involved, but we have no proof at this time to bring charges.” In addition to the victims found at the ranch, the cult was also said to be responsible for the deaths of at least seven members of a drug trafficking family who were killed in a mass slaughter because they had evidence of police complicity in the drug trade that they had threatened to expose. That massacre occurred on, of all days, *Walpurgisnacht* of 1987. The victims’ bodies showed clear signs of sadistic torture. Fingers, toes and ears had been removed and genitals had been excised. Two brains were missing and a portion of a spine had been ripped from one of the bodies.

On April 17, Serafin Hernandez Rivera—said to be the patriarch of the cult—was arrested in Houston, Texas. The next day, just two days shy of Hitler’s birthday, a U.S. grand jury issued indictments for the still-at-large Constanzo and ten of his followers on various drug trafficking charges. Three days later, on April 21, Mexican authorities formally charged the four captured cultists with multiple counts of murder, kidnapping and drug trafficking. Just two days after that, a large contingent of heavily armed Mexican Federales burned down the death shed at Rancho Santa Elena, destroying a wealth of valuable evidence. Constanzo and most of his followers remained in hiding and the subjects of a massive manhunt. On May 6, police searching for a missing child are said to have inadvertently stumbled upon the apartment hideaway of Constanzo and four of his followers in Mexico City. Shots were allegedly fired from the apartment, which resulted in nearly 200 police officers virtually instantaneously surrounding the building.

A ferocious gun battle ensued, with thousands of rounds fired in a forty-five-minute exchange. Amazingly though, none of the cultists were shot and only one officer was wounded—and that was in the initial gunfire that came from the

apartment. Constanzo and his male lover were reportedly executed in a closet on the orders of the high priest himself. The three survivors were captured alive and charged with a multitude of crimes. Reports immediately surfaced claiming that Constanzo had faked his death, by substituting the body of another cultist. The two bodies in the closet had been riddled with automatic weapon fire, making identification difficult. Mexico City newspapers carried reports of witnesses claiming that two men had been seen fleeing the scene of the shoot-out. The body identified as Constanzo's was claimed by U.S. consular officials—allegedly acting on behalf of Constanzo's mother—and flown to Miami to be promptly cremated.

As the investigation proceeded, reports on the case grew more disturbing. Police reported finding blood-spattered altars in the homes of many of the suspected cultists, and Mexico City newspapers openly speculated that human infants had been ritually sacrificed by the group. Some reporters opined that babies might even have been bred specifically for that purpose. Michael Newton has reported that from 1897–1989, there were seventy-four unsolved ritual homicides in Mexico City; fourteen of those victims were infants. Other reports noted that in custody, high priestess Sara Aldrete displayed what Linedecker described as “signs of a split personality. As the days wore on, three separate personas became evident.” A U.S. Customs agent told the *Houston Chronicle* that she clearly had a “dual personality.” Like most of the other cultists, Aldrete, who had married on Halloween day, 1983, had links to the Hernandez drug family. A particularly compelling report in the *Brownsville Herald* revealed that the drug trafficking Matamoros cult was part of a massive, hemisphere-wide, drug trafficking network: “federal agents have established a pattern of drug trafficking from the Hernandez family in Matamoros to top Chicago mob bosses.” Interestingly enough, Constanzo was reportedly sighted in Chicago during the time that he was the focus of the manhunt, but those reports were scoffed at by authorities.

In the wake of the Matamoros case, two members of the Texas state legislature, Senator J.E. Brown and Representative Sam Johnson, introduced a bill aimed at combating cult-related ritual crime, which they asserted was a burgeoning problem in Texas and elsewhere in the country. After a decade had passed, the problem had not abated, as became evident when yet another excavation was begun, at a ranch near Juarez, Mexico. That property was, strangely enough, located precisely where Henry Lee Lucas had claimed that the ‘Hand of Death’ cult maintained a ranch. The first reports on the Juarez ranch surfaced on December 1, 1999, less than five months after Resendez-Ramirez had surrendered to U.S. authorities at a location on the U.S. border very near the ranch; a *Los Angeles Times* report noted that the “clandestine burial grounds [were] practically within sight of the U.S. border.”

Early reports indicated that authorities anticipated exhuming between 100 and 300 bodies from mass graves on the ranch, including twenty-two missing U.S. citizens and a number of former FBI and DEA informants. The investigation was quickly expanded to include at least three more possible burial grounds in the area. U.S. authorities, perhaps having learned a lesson from the well-publicized Matamoros case, immediately moved in to take charge of the investigation. The brazen violation of Mexico's sovereignty was roundly condemned by the Mexican press. A group of irate Mexican Senators grilled the country's foreign minister on the FBI's aggressive role in the investigation and loudly denounced the fact that exhumed bodies were being transferred to the U.S. for forensic examination. By mid-December, with the U.S. firmly in control of the case and with all evidence being clandestinely transferred onto U.S. soil, Mexico's attorney general was claiming that the early reports had been wildly off the mark. The new reports claimed that only nine bodies had been found at the three separate burial sites and no more were expected to be uncovered. Press coverage of the case almost immediately ceased, after the media had assured everyone that 'there's nothing to see here, folks.'

The final report carried by the *Los Angeles Times* maintained that some victims had "reportedly disappeared after being detained by men in Mexican police uniforms, raising questions about the extent of police corruption in Mexican law enforcement." Peter Smith, the director of Latin American studies at UC San Diego, echoed that sentiment: "The clandestinity raises the issue of potential complicity on the part of local or state authorities." Not surprisingly, reports made no mention of the extent of police corruption in *American* law enforcement.

Officials were quick to claim that there was no connection between the bodies exhumed at the ranch and the unsolved murders of hundreds of young women in the Juarez area. There is no consensus on the number of women that have been brutally raped, tortured and murdered since the killings began in 1993, but estimates run as high as 500, with hundreds more reportedly missing and possibly dead.

As the website *Americas.org* recalled, "Free trade supporters once claimed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would turn Ciudad Juarez into the city of the future." And perhaps that is exactly what the city has become—a city where NAFTA's 'free trade' rules ensure that "a company's right to profit trumps the rights of government and the protection of citizens."

In the 1960s, the Mexican government offered Western corporations a sweet-heart deal: build factories on the Mexican side of the border to manufacture and/or assemble goods, operate with wanton disregard for environmental and labor laws, and, to top it off, pay no local taxes. So-called *maquiladoras*, which

had previously been known as sweatshops, soon began to dot the U.S./Mexico border. Before long, they numbered in the hundreds. The highest concentration of those maquiladoras is in Juarez, which currently is home to about 500 factories employing 200,000 workers. About 80% of the factories in Juarez are American owned.

As the labor-intensive maquiladoras proliferated, the populations of border cities like Juarez quickly swelled. But as the population grew, there was no corresponding investment in the cities. As the *Observer* noted, there has been “no attempt to create infrastructure—no roads or housing. Taxation is voluntary for companies, and most pay none.” According to official estimates, the population of Ciudad Juarez has tripled, to 1,200,000; unofficial estimates run as high as 2,000,000. Many of the new arrivals are young women, since the workforce employed by the maquiladoras is 70% female. Most of these young women end up living in the shantytown neighborhoods that have sprung up in cities like Juarez. These neighborhoods have no real roads, no street names, no addresses, no utilities, and no public services. Violence is endemic. Drug lords rule the streets. According to *La Prensa*, life in Juarez is “punctuated by narco-related executions and kidnappings in broad daylight committed by death squads working for the lords of the lucrative trade.” The *Guardian* described Juarez as “a city associated with grinding poverty and home to one of Mexico’s foremost drug trafficking organizations.”

It is against this backdrop that the murders have been committed. Most of the victims have been maquiladora workers. Some of them have disappeared while traveling alone late at night, after having their work shifts changed at the last minute, or after being locked out for arriving at work late. Recent reports reveal that eerily similar murders are now occurring in other maquiladora towns along the U.S./Mexico border, including Chihuahua City, Nueva Laredo and Matamoros. Many of the Juarez victims have had ‘modeling’ photographs taken of them while they were at work in the factories. Some circumstantial evidence suggests a disturbing scenario: the photographs, taken by ‘recruiters’ working within the maquiladoras, are arranged in albums that are then used as catalogues from which victims are selected.

The first Juarez victim’s body, by most accounts, was found on January 23, 1993. The first suspect, Abdel Latif Sharif Sharif, was arrested two years later, in 1995. Sharif had an interesting history—one with close parallels to many other alleged serial killers, as will be seen in later chapters.

Born in Egypt in 1947, Sharif was reportedly sexually abused as a child, including being frequently sodomized by his father and other male relatives. In his early twenties, Sharif immigrated to the United States, landing first in New York City and then in New Hope, Pennsylvania. By 1981, he was living in Palm

Beach, Florida, where he worked as a chemist and engineer. In May of that year, Sharif beat and repeatedly raped an unidentified 23-year-old woman. For those offenses, he received only probation. In August of the same year, he was charged with another rape. He was again convicted, but he served just 45 days. The next year, he was married briefly in Gainesville, Florida, until he beat his bride unconscious. She divorced him shortly after that. In March 1983, Sharif beat and repeatedly raped yet another victim. In January 1984, while awaiting sentencing, he managed to escape, but he was soon recaptured and, on January 31, sentenced to serve twelve years. Not quite six years later, in October 1989, Sharif was paroled. At that time, he was to be deported, but instead he was allowed, for unexplained reasons, to remain in the country.

Sharif quickly found work in Midland, Texas at Benchmark Research and Technology. While employed and living in Texas, the thrice-convicted rapist was photographed shaking hands with Senator Phil Gramm, in addition to being singled out for praise by the U.S. Department of Energy. In 1991, while still on parole, Sharif was arrested for drunk driving. He suffered no apparent repercussions for that offense. By 1993, he was once again facing charges of holding a woman captive and raping her repeatedly. In May of the following year, the state of Texas inexplicably agreed to drop all charges against the repeat offender if Sharif voluntarily left the country. He promptly moved to an exclusive residential neighborhood in Juarez and went to work at Benchmark's maquiladora. In October 1995, Sharif was arrested by Mexican authorities and charged with rape. He was convicted and given a thirty-year sentence, but the bodies of young women continued to pile up in and around Juarez.

Next to be arrested were a gang of nightclub workers known as The Rebels, who were allegedly being paid by Sharif to continue the killings. The gang was led by Armendariz Diaz, also known as *El Diablo*. All members of the gang later claimed that they had been tortured by police to coerce their confessions. In early 1999, five members of another gang—The Toltecs, led by Jesus Guardado Marquez, also known as *El Dracula*—were arrested and accused of collaborating with Sharif. The gang confessed to fifteen of the murders, but later recanted, claiming that torture by the police had produced the confessions. The arrests of the two gangs failed to slow the pace of the killings and disappearances.

After the arrest of The Toltecs, the FBI sent some of its famed 'profilers' to Juarez. Among them was Robert Ressler, who advanced the dubious theory that the murders were the work of Resendez-Ramirez. The arrest of Ramirez in July 1999, however, had not put a stop to the killings. Before the year was out, more young women would go missing, more bodies would surface, and the mass graves at the ranch would be discovered.

On November 6 and 7, 2001, eight bodies were discovered in a vacant lot just 300 yards from the headquarters of the Association of Maquiladoras. Confessions were quickly obtained from two bus drivers, Victor Javier Garcia and Gustavo Gonzalez Meza, also known as *El Cerillo* and *La Foca*. Following the pattern set with previous suspects, police reportedly obtained the confessions through the use of torture. The two men had visible burn marks on their bodies, marks that Oscar Maynez Grijalva, the chief forensic investigator on the case, determined had been made with stun guns used by the police.

Maynez thoroughly searched a van that the bus drivers had purportedly used to abduct women, and he found no evidence to support the allegations. According to Maynez, he was then asked “to help plant evidence against two bus drivers who were charged with the murders. A couple of police officers brought us items for us to put in the van they said was used to abduct the women.” Maynez refused to take part in the framing of the suspects, and, in January 2002, he resigned in protest over the handling of the case. He has said that he now believes that some police are involved in the murders. The outspoken Maynez has reported receiving death threats intended to silence him.

Also in January 2002, Jorge Campos Murillo, a federal deputy attorney in Mexico City, told reporters that “juniors”—the sons of wealthy, powerful Mexican families—were connected to the killings. Campos was promptly transferred and he now refuses to discuss the Juarez case, which next landed in the lap of Irma Rodriguez Galarza. Rodriguez’ daughter and husband were gunned down on the family’s porch with AK-47 assault rifles.

Campos is not alone in linking the Juarez murders to the sons of the rich and powerful. The UK’s *Observer* has reported that those involved in the killings come from prominent families that “include landowners, major drug dealers, construction barons, energy suppliers—and officials in both government and the police.” A spokeswoman for a victim’s group noted that the killers “take no trouble to cover up evidence, like most murders. With these, the evidence is brazen, right there, every time.” The killers, in other words, have no fear of the police. The *El Paso Times* alleged that the guilty parties are “prominent men who cross the border regularly, are involved in major businesses, are associates of drug cartels and have ties to politicians in President Vicente Fox’s administration.” According to some Mexican officials, six people from the Juarez-El Paso area are having the women abducted for orgies, after which (or perhaps during which) they are killed.

On February 5, 2002, Mario Escobedo, Jr., the attorney representing Gonzalez (one of the two truck drivers), was killed by police. Escobedo was reportedly pursued at night by police in unmarked vehicles, until the attorney lost control of his car and crashed. He was then cut down in a hail of police

gunfire. Escobedo's partner, Dante Almarez, reported that he was advised to "drop the case, [or] we'll kill you the same way we did Escobedo."

In August 2002, *PBS* aired the documentary film "Senorita Extraviada," produced by Lourdes Portillo. The film revealed that some of the victims were missing for long periods before their deaths. Some of the their bodies display evidence of ritual sacrifice. In many cases, the only remains that are ever found are clothes and bones, and the bones are often mismatched. Frequently these bones are found in far less time that it would take a corpse to be reduced to a skeleton. Sometimes these skeletal remains show up in areas that have just recently been searched. Juarez police have refused to investigate a number of viable leads, and they have deliberately destroyed evidence, including more than 1,000 pounds of victims' clothing that was burned. One female witness, who was arrested and then raped in prison, told the filmmakers that her captors had showed her photos of a woman being gang-raped and beaten, and then doused in gasoline and burned alive.

Some of the victims have indeed been burned alive. Others have been strangled, stabbed, bludgeoned and/or shot. According to *Americas.org*, "When they're not skeletal remains, most of the women's bodies are found in the nearby desert with evidence of torture and gang rape. Forensics evidence shows many are kept alive during this for days or longer. The bodies are usually mutilated, laid out in cross formation, and branded with signature carvings on various parts of their bodies." Some reports hold that many of the recovered bodies exhibit similar slashing wounds to the breasts. A March 2002 report in the *Guardian* claimed "there are patterns of mutilation that have not been publicly released that could indicate narco-satanic rituals."

In October 2002, the bodies of two more victims surfaced. Three months later, in January 2003, three more were discovered. Not long after that, on February 8, almost a year to the day after his attorney had been gunned down, Gustavo Gonzalez Meza died in custody following a relatively routine hernia operation. Both Gonzalez and his wife had reported receiving death threats. Just over a week after his death, four more bodies were discovered. Police refused to acknowledge one of the bodies, despite the fact that reporters and other witnesses viewed it.

In May 2003, the Juarez murders, which had been almost entirely ignored by the Western media for a full decade, were suddenly in the news. A flurry of reports pitched the theory that the killings were the work of an organ trafficking ring, possibly with cult connections. New Zealand's *One News* reported that as many as 90 women may have been killed by the ring. Some of their organs, it was claimed, were brought to the States by an unidentified American. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* told of federal investigators "looking into claims that some

of the dozens of women slain in the border city of Ciudad Juarez over the last decade may have been killed for their internal organs.” A *Reuters* report listed the following as possible motives for the murders: “Satanic rituals, organ trafficking and snuff movies where women are kidnapped, sexually assaulted and then murdered on camera.” The *Guardian* spoke of “evidence indicating the women may have been victims of an international organ trafficking ring...Police also were investigating the possibility that certain mutilations—breasts were cut off on a few of the victims, and some had scars cut in designs—might indicate the involvement of a religious cult.”

Skepticism of those theories, however, was expressed by Oscar Maynez, the former head of the Ciudad Juarez forensics office and one of the very few voices of conscience in this story. According to the *Journal-Constitution* report, Maynez “said he never saw any evidence of missing organs in the bodies he examined when he worked on the case.” Whether accurate or not, the official proclamations, and the accompanying news reports, served to federalize the investigation of the Juarez murders for the first time. Before that, federal officials had steadfastly maintained that the killings were a state matter.

It is unclear whether the federalization of the investigation represents a sincere effort to stop the killings, bring the responsible parties to justice and root out local corruption, or whether it is just a continuation of the cover-up. The latter seems far more likely. As of this writing, in April 2004, women continue to disappear and incongruous piles of bones continue to surface, while residents continue to discover evidence at crime scenes after police have declared that thorough searches have been conducted. Though there have been numerous arrests over the years, no one has been formally charged with any of the hundreds of unsolved homicides.

Meanwhile, in February 2004, Mexican federal police arrested two drug cartel members who they said might have been involved in the mass murder of twelve people in a home in Juarez. Also detained were thirteen state police officers suspected of complicity. In the “city of the future,” life is cheap and ‘justice’ is for sale to the highest bidder.

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On the U.S. side of the border, in 1985, a ranch of a slightly different variety was uncovered in Kerrville, Texas, not far from Johnson City, Texas, the birthplace and childhood home of President Lyndon Baines Johnson. The ranch, run by a family of German immigrants, was found to be holding seventy-five human slaves, many of them acquired when they were young teenagers. The property was

patrolled by armed guards who kept the slaves chained together and routinely tortured them by applying electric cattle prods to their tongues and genitals. Whenever one of the slaves was killed, the body was burned to dispose of the evidence. The Texas Rangers (who maintain a museum in Johnson City) eventually raided the property, after routinely ignoring steady reports of strange happenings at the ranch. It took the state of Texas almost two full years to bring the case to trial. When it was all over with, the rancher and one of his sons received extraordinarily light sentences for their crimes: fifteen years for one, and fourteen for the other. Another indicted son was acquitted and walked away a free man. A media disinformation campaign portrayed the entire sordid affair as a trumped-up case, but investigative journalist Gordon Thomas noted that the trial transcript indicated that it was nothing of the sort.

Thomas has also written of another ranch, in Southern California, that evidence collected from a variety of sources indicates caters to powerful pedophiles. The ranch is located immediately adjacent to one of the numerous U.S. military bases that pepper the southern half of the state. The property has a rather ominous history, having previously served as a concentration camp for Japanese-Americans during World War II, and later as a 'deprogramming' center for returning Korean War veterans who it was said had been brainwashed. According to witness statements, children from around the country have been abducted and transported to the covert location, never to be heard from again. Once there, they are held as slaves to feed the depraved desires of powerful, well-connected pedophiles who torture, abuse, and at times kill their young victims. One man who may have worked at the ranch, according to reports cited by Thomas, was serial killer Leonard Lake.

Chapter 10

The Myth of the Serial Killer

“It’s more of a shadow than anything else. You know it’s a human being, but yet you can’t accept it. The killin’ itself, it’s like say, you’re walkin’ down the road. Half of me will go this way and the other half goes that way. The right-hand side didn’t know what the left-hand side was going to do.”

—Henry Lee Lucas, describing how he perceived
his victims before killing them

Most Americans are probably familiar with what is considered the classic serial killer ‘profile.’ This was a notion first put forth by the venerable FBI, which coined the term ‘serial killer,’ and pioneered the concept of ‘profiling,’ in an alleged attempt to understand the phenomenon of mass murder. It appears to be the case though that the concept of the ‘serial killer profile’ was put forth largely to misinform the public.

In the case of Henry Lee Lucas, few if any of the elements of the serial killer profile apply. For instance, serial killers are said to act alone, driven to do so only by their own private demons. So far removed from ordinary human behavior are their actions that they would not, indeed could not, share their private passions with others. In Henry’s case, this is a patently false notion. It has been officially acknowledged that Lucas worked with not just one, but at times as many as three accomplices (as previously noted, Toole’s pre-teen niece and nephew were frequently brought along to witness—and at times participate in—the crimes of Henry and Ottis). It is also claimed that serial killers target a particular type of victim, similar in age, gender, race, hairstyle, attractiveness, and other physical attributes. Again, in Henry’s case, this simply does not fit the known facts. Henry’s victims in fact had little, if anything, in common with one another. The victims’ ages ranged from children to the elderly. Both genders and all races were

also well represented. As Lucas himself once stated: “They’s been a mixed breed of people, as far as the killings themselves.”

It is further claimed that serial killers follow a readily identifiable *modus operandi*, with the means of obtaining victims and the trajectory of the crime following a well-defined pattern. Again, that was clearly not the case with Lucas, whose victims were obtained in a variety of ways, and who inflicted death by a variety of means—including bludgeoning, stabbing, strangulation, shooting, and suffocation. Some were killed in their homes, while others were abducted and taken to remote locations. Some were sexually abused, both before and after death, while others were not. Some were cannibalized. Some were left on display—for maximum impact upon their discovery—while others were left so as not to be discovered at all. In other ways as well, Henry Lee—the consummate serial killer—did not even come close to matching the profile of what he was supposed to be. Strangely enough though, perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Henry Lee Lucas story is that it is not actually remarkable at all. In reviewing the case histories of more than two-dozen other alleged serial killers, it becomes readily apparent that few—if any—fit the supposed profile.

The victims of Resendez-Ramirez, for instance, ranged in age from 21 to 88 years, with a mix of males and females. The cause of death varied as well, with most being bludgeoned, though one was shot in the head, another stabbed, and yet another had a pick-ax buried in her head. Though not readily apparent, almost all of the weapons used for inflicting death—by both Lucas and Ramirez—had one thing in common: they are what are termed “weapons of opportunity.” In other words, they are weapons that were acquired at the crime scene immediately before the murders were committed. Notably, this precisely mirrors the means by which the CIA has historically taught its assassins to kill. A CIA training manual entitled *A Study of Assassination* advises the would-be killer: “the simplest local tools are often the most efficient means of assassination. A hammer, axe, wrench, screwdriver, fire poker, kitchen knife, lamp stand, or anything hard, heavy and handy will suffice...All such improvised weapons have the important advantage of availability and apparent innocence...the assassin may accidentally be searched before the act and should not carry an incriminating device if any sort of lethal weapon can be improvised at or near the site.” This advice has been taken to heart by a good number of ‘serial killers.’

The Mafia assassination service known as Murder, Inc.—the brainchild of the Lansky/Luciano syndicate, which had extensive connections to U.S. intelligence agencies—had a remarkably similar philosophy. As Jay Robert Nash notes in *Bloodletters and Bad Men*: “Like most of Murder, Inc.’s assassins, Pittsburgh Phil never carried a weapon in case the local police picked him up on suspicion. He would cast about, once he had selected his murder spot, for any tool handy that

would do the job.” It should probably be noted here, while we’re on the subject, that the man identified as Pittsburgh Phil, whose real name was Harry Strauss, was credited with killing at least 500 people in this manner from the late 1920s through 1940. This feat should put him at or near the top of any self-respecting serial killer list.

Henry Lee recounts in *The Hand of Death* that his training by the Hand of Death cult followed the same time-honored tradition. Of course, the FBI assures us that satanic cults and satanic crime do not exist in modern-day America. To put this assertion in its proper context, however, it is important to remember that this is the very same FBI that, during the reign of Murder, Inc., and for several decades thereafter, refused to acknowledge the existence of organized crime in America. It is also the same FBI that for years ignored and denied the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the early part of the twentieth century. The FBI, in other words, has a long history of denying the existence of indigenous groups devoted to terrorizing American society.

Other than utilizing weapons of opportunity, the most common means by which professional assassins carry out their ‘contracts’ is with a small caliber bullet fired at point-blank range to the head—typically with either a .22 or .25 caliber handgun. Inflicting such a wound is quick, efficient, relatively quiet, reasonably clean and, most importantly, highly lethal. Contrary to conventional wisdom, a small caliber round to the head is more often fatal than a larger caliber bullet, because the smaller projectile has enough velocity to make the initial penetration into the dense skull bones, but not enough to make an exit wound. Once inside the brain cavity then, the slug will tend to ricochet around the curved inner bone surfaces, causing considerable damage to the brain in the process. A larger caliber round, on the other hand, is much more likely to penetrate clean through the skull, making much more of a mess, though doing less damage to the brain. The smaller weapon then, when fired from very close range, is a much more efficient killing device. Such weapons are also very easy to conceal and are the easiest weapons to silence. And even without a silencer, the report from a .22 automatic is relatively quiet. Especially to a generation raised on a steady diet of sensationalized and highly stylized violence in the media—where every gun sounds like a cannon—a small-caliber gun report can easily be mistaken for any of a number of everyday big-city sounds.

There is another reason that these are often the weapons of choice for contract ‘hits.’ Small caliber slugs, particularly those from a .22 caliber weapon—are virtually impossible to trace or to match up to any particular gun. Literally millions of .22 caliber weapons are in homes all across the country, and it is far-and-away the most popular, mass-produced ammunition on the market. And a .22 caliber bullet that has punched through the skull and careened around the skull cavity is

virtually guaranteed to be deformed to such an extent that a ballistics match will be impossible. Matching a flattened slug dug out of some victim's head to any particular gun then is something akin to finding the proverbial needle in the haystack. For this reason, and for those previously cited, a small caliber contact wound to the head—usually to the side of the head—has long been the mark of a professional assassin.

It is a most remarkable fact then that the vast majority of the victims of the 'serial killers' profiled herein were killed either by means of a weapon of opportunity, or they were shot in the head with a small caliber weapon—execution style. And far more often than not, there is no specific type of victim that is targeted, nor is there a pattern as to how the killings are carried out.

Take, for example, the other serial killing Ramirez—Los Angeles' famed "Night Stalker." Most of the Night Stalker victims were killed with contact wounds from a small caliber handgun to the left side of the head while they slept. Both .22 and .25 caliber weapons were used. The remaining victims were bludgeoned or stabbed to death with household items—including a hammer and a lamp/vase. Some of the victims were mutilated to varying degrees, including two that were hacked with machetes. Others were subjected to electrical torture. Their ages ranged from young adults to a pair of octogenarians, with both men and women well represented. And there was certainly no discrimination shown as to the race/ethnicity of the victims.

In what were dubbed the 'Sunset Strip Murders,' also in Los Angeles, the victims were also dispatched with a .25 caliber contact wound to the head—except for one victim who was shot in the chest and sliced open. Two of the victims were also beheaded. One of the dead—who had likely been an accomplice—was male, with the rest females of various ethnicities.

Santa Cruz's Herb Mullin must surely have been—if he was actually guilty of the murders attributed to him—the most creative serial killer in the annals of modern crime. The seemingly randomly assembled set of crimes credited to Mullin stands as perhaps the most ludicrous use of the term 'serial killer' on record. The first victim was a homeless man beaten to death with a baseball bat, for no apparent reason, on a lonely stretch of road. The next was a girl who was repeatedly stabbed, then sliced open, mutilated, and generally made a mess of—in what most people would think of as a typical serial killing. The next five victims were all killed in a single night at two different residences—both occupied by known drug traffickers and their families. In one house, all three victims, two of whom were children, were shot once in the head with a .22 and then stabbed a few times for good measure. At the other home, a slightly less professional job was done. The two victims at that address, who were close friends of the victims at the other crime scene, were shot multiple times with a .22 in various parts of

the body, and then stabbed. The next four victims were a group of teenage boys on a camping trip, who were each shot once in the head and multiple times in the body. Interestingly enough, the boys had their own .22 caliber rifle, within arm's reach of where they were killed. All four were allegedly killed by a lone assailant before they could reach for the gun, despite the fact that Mullin would have had to reload his six-shot .22 automatic at least once to complete the slaughter. Following the mass execution of the teenagers, Mullin next allegedly decided to test his skills as a sniper, picking off an ex-boxer as the victim strolled across his front yard.

In nearby Sacramento, California, Richard Chase got his sniper killing out of the way right off the bat. His first victim was dropped in front of his home with a .22 round fired from a parked car, just the way Mullin had allegedly done it. The rest of the Sacramento victims were killed with a .22 caliber contact wound to the left side of the head, sometimes followed by a second shot. Some were then mutilated. Ages ranged from twenty months to fifty-one years, with both males and females targeted.

Chicago's 'Ripper Crew' killed a string of women, both black and white, by a variety of means before then adding something new to the serial killer repertoire—a gang-style drive-by shooting of known drug dealers. It is always good practice, for any aspiring serial killer, to throw at least one obvious drug 'hit' into the mix. Charles Manson and Richard Ramirez understood that, as did various other serial killers, although such troublesome facts are routinely ignored in most press accounts, lest anyone catch on that 'serial killings' are not necessarily random acts of violence. Consider, for example, the case of Charles Ng and Leonard Lake. At least a few of their known victims were deeply involved in drug trafficking. Other than that, the victims had little in common. Excavated from the pair's compound were the remains of seven men, five women, and two babies—though there were likely many more undiscovered victims.

How the pair's victims were killed was impossible to determine, as was largely true of the cases of other killers who fall into the 'Collectors' category—including Jeffrey Dahmer, John Wayne Gacy, Bob Berdella, Gary Heidnik and Herb Baumeister. In all these cases, all that remained of the unfortunate victims were various bones and, in some cases, genitalia, internal organs and slabs of flesh. It is within this group that the most consistency is shown in the targeting of victims. The known victims of Gacy, Berdella, Baumeister and Dahmer were all young men—frequently gay or bisexual men. Even so, there was not necessarily a specific victim profile in all these cases; Dahmer's victims, for instance, ranged in age from fourteen to thirty-one and were of various races.

Even in those cases where the alleged killer is given a catchy moniker that supposedly reflects a distinctive 'signature' to the slayings, there is rarely a consistent

MO that is followed. The victims of the ‘Boston Strangler,’ for instance, ranged in age from nineteen to seventy-five, were both black and white, and varied considerably in physical attractiveness. And they were not, contrary to popular mythology, all strangled in the same manner. In some cases, it was done manually, in others with ligatures acquired at the scene. In addition, some were stabbed, mutilated and/or sexually assaulted as well. Most of them were left on display, though one was discretely covered with a blanket.

In the other strangler case—Los Angeles’ ‘Hillside Stranglers’—victims ranged in age from twelve to twenty-eight, and varied considerably by height, weight, race, skin tone and hair color. In addition to strangulation, various other techniques were utilized, including electrocution, lethal injection and lethal gas—all methods improvised with materials at hand and, strangely enough, all methods used by the state to perform judicial executions.

Though Edmund Kemper was dubbed the ‘Coed Killer,’ his victims were definitely not all coeds. Two of them were his grandparents, and another was his mother. Yet another was several years too young to be a coed. His victims were killed with a combination of point-blank bullet wounds to the head, and stabbing, strangulation, suffocation and bludgeoning with weapons of opportunity.

In the case of Ted Bundy, it is frequently claimed that all of his purported victims were remarkably similar in appearance. Many of the books chronicling Bundy’s alleged exploits reinforce this notion by including a carefully selected set of photos of the slain women who did resemble one another to a limited degree. Overall though, the victims varied widely in height, weight, build, attractiveness, hair color and style, and various other physical attributes. As for the manner in which they were abducted and killed, that is largely a matter of speculation. Many were never found, and of those that were, frequently only the skull was recovered. In those cases where the cause of death could be determined, it was by means of weapons of opportunity. In the infamous attack at the Chi Omega sorority house, for instance, the crimes were committed with a club acquired immediately before entering the property. The Chi Omega bloodbath, by the way, was in marked contrast to Bundy’s previous alleged crimes, which involved the abductions and killings of single victims. This crime instead seemed to borrow heavily from the rampage allegedly perpetrated by Richard Speck. Bundy’s final alleged murder before his capture, the killing of a twelve-year-old child, also did not match his supposed *modus operandi*.

As for Richard Speck, he showed no consistency in the means by which his victims were killed, other than that all died from wounds inflicted with weapons improvised at the scene. Death came by way of various combinations of strangulation, stabbing, slashing of the throat, and breaking of the neck. And so it goes for virtually all serial killer cases. New York’s ‘Son of Sam’ targeted men and

women of various ages. Arthur Shawcross, the ‘Genesee River Killer,’ killed two young children—one a boy—along with a string of women of various ages. Most were strangled and/or bludgeoned with weapons acquired at the scene, though one was drowned. Most were mutilated, cannibalized and sexually assaulted. The ‘Gainesville Ripper’—purportedly Danny Rolling—included one male among his five victims. All were stabbed and slashed to death; some were posed and one was beheaded. Finally, lest we forget, the Manson Family’s victims ranged in age from teenaged Steven Parent to middle-aged Leno LaBianca and included both men and women killed with various weapons, including a .22 caliber handgun.

Clearly then there are any number of serial killer cases in which there is no defining *modus operandi*, and in which the deceased don’t fit any kind of specific ‘victim profile.’ In fact, it is difficult to find a case study of *any* serial killer who does leave a distinct ‘signature’ at each crime scene.

And what of the notion of the serial killer as a lone predator? Was Henry and Ottis’ partnership an aberration? Not at all. There are any number of serial killer cases where it is officially acknowledged that there was more than one perpetrator. The Manson Family, of course, is probably the most well known case of multiple-perpetrator ‘serial killing.’ Less well known is the case of the ‘Ripper Crew’ in Chicago in the early 1980s. Described by authorities as a four-man satanic cult, the Rippers—led by charismatic Robin Gecht—allegedly killed as many as seventeen women in as many months. Then there is the case of Charles Ng. Though Ng was the only one to stand trial for the series of killings in Northern California, it is acknowledged that the crimes were committed with the assistance of Leonard Lake, who committed suicide upon his arrest. And evidence strongly suggests that there were others involved as well, most notably Lake’s ex-wife.

Many other serial killers have worked in pairs, including the Hillside Strangler team of Kenneth Bianchi and Angelo Buono. Working the same Los Angeles-area turf just one year after the Stranglers were stopped was the team of Roy Norris and Lawrence ‘Pliers’ Bittaker. And a few years after they were caught, the team of Douglas Clark and Carol Bundy was working the very same L.A. streets committing a series of killings dubbed the ‘Sunset Strip Murders.’ The year after they were caught, another serial killer took over the L.A. market—the notorious ‘Night Stalker.’ Media coverage to the contrary, evidence in that case clearly pointed to multiple perpetrators. It also strongly suggested that some of the killings were contract hits. As implied earlier in this chapter, much the same can be said of the evidence in the Herb Mullin case.

As will be seen as we take a more in-depth look at our illustrious roster of serial killers, evidence almost always indicates multiple assailants. With very few exceptions, that evidence is routinely ignored or rather improbably explained away by law enforcement authorities and those who chronicle the exploits of high-profile

criminals. Maury Terry, as previously mentioned, has done an excellent job of arguing the case that the 'Son of Sam' killings were carried out by multiple cult members, despite the media portrait of David Berkowitz as the proverbial lone killer. Susan Kelly has likewise done a great job of exposing the 'Boston Strangler' killings as the work of several killers. Even before the release of Kelly's *The Boston Stranglers*, there had long been speculation that the killings were not the work of one man. Most of the officials involved in the investigation, in fact, never believed that a single killer was responsible. Of the eight members of the psychiatric panel convened to develop a 'profile,' seven believed that there were at least two perpetrators.

Even in those cases that seem to come closest to matching the classic serial killer profile, such as the John Wayne Gacy and Jeffrey Dahmer cases, there is a compelling case to be made that there were others involved. That evidence will be examined in later chapters. First, we will look at the cases of two high-profile, alleged serial killers/mass murderers who were said to have acted alone. The first is a very recent case, that of Yosemite killer Cary Stayner. The other dates all the way back to 1966, the year Richard Speck allegedly went berserk in a home filled with young nursing students in Chicago, becoming the first mass murderer of the television age.

Chapter 11

Lone Nuts?

"I must have done it, if everybody says I did."

—Richard Speck

The case of Cary Stayner stands out—in a very crowded field—as one of the most bizarre serial killer cases on record. Though the crimes ultimately attributed to him were not committed until the early months of 1999, the strange saga of the Stayner family began long before that, though exactly how long before is not entirely clear. As a friend of Cary's told *Esquire* magazine: "There's just something, you know, off with that whole family." Since as far back as 1972, there has been some serious weirdness going on in the Stayner house. On December 4 of that year, Cary's younger brother Steven was purportedly abducted by a male pedophile (working with an accomplice) who proceeded to hold him as a sex slave for more than seven years.

His abductor was Ken Parnell, a Texas native who is said to have been extremely self-destructive as a child. He had reportedly damaged his eyes by staring into a bright light, attempted to pull his own teeth out, set numerous fires, and attempted suicide on a number of occasions. He had also, perhaps not surprisingly, spent a fair amount of time institutionalized in both prisons and mental hospitals—including spending much of his teen years in California juvenile lock-ups.

Stayner was not his first victim. Parnell had previously been convicted in 1951 of kidnapping and sexually assaulting an eight-year-old boy. He was back on the streets by 1955, but then incarcerated again before year's end for a parole violation. He was soon released again, only to be convicted of armed robbery a few years later. For that crime, he served some seven years. Five years after his release from that prison term, Parnell met up with Steven Stayner. It was not a chance meeting. As Parnell indicated to his accomplice, Ervin Murphy, Stayner had been selected prior to the time of his kidnapping. Following the abduction, Parnell and

Stayner lived for a time in Yosemite, where Parnell worked at the Yosemite Lodge—which happened to be located just a few hundred yards from the home of Cary and Steven's grandfather, who was universally described as an exceptionally cruel man. Following their stay in Yosemite, Parnell and Stayner moved to Santa Rosa, and then to Ukiah, from where Jim Jones' People's Temple had recently departed for San Francisco, and where Michael Aquino would later be accused of child exploitation.

In February 1980, Stayner escaped—which is to say that he broke free, to some extent, from Parnell's psychological control. There was nothing that physically prevented him from escaping at any time. When he did leave, it was prompted by his desire to spare five-year-old Timmy White, whom Parnell had just abducted on Valentines' Day, the fate that awaited him. Stayner brought White along with him on his escape, and became something of a hero in the process. He returned to the Stayner home, though he was said to feel closer to the man who had sexually assaulted him for seven years than to his estranged family. The family reportedly never talked about his ordeal. As Cary's friend remarked: "It was like it never happened, like he was never kidnapped or anything." Strangely, the Stayner parents would not allow Steven to get therapy to help deal with his shattered childhood. By the age of sixteen, he had dropped out of high school and moved out on his own.

As for Parnell, described as an accomplished manipulator, he was charged with the kidnapping and false imprisonment of both Stayner and White, as well as with sexual molestation of Steven. Investigators on the case discovered that Parnell had also molested a number of Stayner's friends (Stayner attended school under a name given to him by Parnell, and outwardly lived a normal life with his 'father'). One of Steven's friends reportedly served as Parnell's accomplice in the White abduction. Also discovered was that Parnell was fond of taking Polaroid photos of his captive sex slave, and possibly other victims as well. For unexplained reasons, his bail was set at just \$20,000, which allowed him to walk free after posting a mere \$2,000 bond. He was tried in separate proceedings for the crimes committed against White and Stayner. Parnell was convicted in both proceedings, but he received remarkably lenient sentences for his crimes. For the multitude of offenses he committed against Steven Stayner, he received just a twenty-month sentence.

Things were relatively quiet in the Stayner home for the next nine years, until May 1989 when Steven was thrust back into the limelight owing to the airing of a television movie about his case entitled "I Know My First Name is Steven." The media's reopening of the case was followed just weeks later by the untimely demise of young Steven Stayner, who was killed instantly when an unidentified car turned abruptly into the path of his speeding motorcycle. The car and its

driver promptly disappeared. Steven left behind a wife and two young kids. Parnell was by that time already out of prison and a free man once again, after serving just five years for his crimes—less time than Steven Stayner had spent as his prisoner. The following year, Jesse Stayner—Cary and Steven’s uncle—was found shot to death in his Merced home. Jesse—or as he was more commonly known, Jerry—was perhaps the family member closest to the alleged serial killer. In his youth, Cary spent more time at Uncle Jerry’s home than he did at his own; the two even lived together for a brief time. Jesse was killed with a shotgun blast to the head fired from his own gun, allegedly by an intruder he had surprised in his home.

Following the two deaths, the Stayner family again managed to stay out of the news for nearly a decade, until Cary—the Stayner son who *hadn’t* been held for seven years as a mind controlled sex slave, and who the *Los Angeles Times* described as a “man who had been a passive and kind presence for 37 years”—decided, for no apparent reason, to become a serial killer. That, anyway, is the official story.

In the early morning hours of February 16, 1999, three women allegedly were abducted from their room at the Cedar Lodge, which lies just outside the west gate to Yosemite National Park. Strangely, though, there was no indication that any abduction had taken place. There were damp towels in the bathroom, indicating that at least one of the three had showered. Other than that, the room was neat and orderly, with the beds made and the key left out. There was no blood and certainly no sign of a struggle. The three were scheduled to check out later that morning anyway, in order to catch a flight out that day, and it looked as though the women had simply decided to check out early in the morning without going to the front desk.

Jens Sund—father of Juli Sund and husband of Carole Sund, two of the three missing women—did not bother to report his wife and daughter missing when they failed to depart from their scheduled flight and also failed to contact him with an explanation for the scheduling change. In fact, Jens Sund did not bother to report his wife and daughter missing until the next day, and only then after he had played a round of golf.

All three of the missing women came from extremely wealthy families. The Sunds are a branch of the dynastic Carrington family, and the third woman—Juli Sund’s friend, Silvina Pelosso—was from a wealthy, well-connected family in Argentina. Perhaps that is why the FBI was immediately called in to assist in what was, in the beginning, a simple missing-persons case. Just ten days after the reported disappearances, the FBI announced that it was bringing in two profilers, despite the fact that there was not yet any hard evidence that the women had met with foul play. It was another three weeks before the women’s car was found,

yielding the unrecognizable remains of Carole Sund and Silvina Pelosso. Only then did it become a homicide case.

The vehicle, which was over 100 miles from the alleged abduction site, was thoroughly and, by all appearances, quite professionally burned, obliterating all forensics evidence. So badly were the bodies burned that it was difficult to even determine their gender. They were found in the trunk of the car, which the FBI did not bother to open until the day after the car was found and identified—a rather odd fact considering that the back seat was burned away, leaving the remains visible to the hunter who discovered the vehicle. Carole Sund's wallet rather incongruously turned up in Modesto, also over 100 miles from the abduction site, though in another direction. Juli Sund's nearly decapitated body was later found at yet another location, roughly midway between the Cedar Lodge and the location of the car and the other bodies. Juli's discovery was precipitated by the receipt of an anonymous, taunting letter sent to the FBI tipping them off to the whereabouts of the body.

Due to the complexities of the crime, many investigators on the case assumed that multiple perpetrators were involved. During the course of the investigation, at least a dozen people were implicated in the murders; all of them were part of a drug-trafficking network operating in the area. One of these was a man named, perhaps appropriately, Billy Joe Strange. Like Cary Stayner, Billy Joe worked at the Cedar Lodge. Strange was the night clean-up man at the lodge's restaurant, above which lived handyman Cary Stayner. Strange's girlfriend, another suspect, also worked at the lodge, as a night clerk. Also implicated was a man named Darrell Stephens, who occasionally roomed with Strange and his girlfriend. Stephens had a lengthy arrest record, as did another suspect, Michael Larwick.¹⁶ Larwick's rap sheet included arrests for attempted manslaughter, rape, kidnapping, child stealing, assault with a deadly weapon, and various drug offenses.

When police came to arrest Larwick, he led his would-be apprehenders on a high-speed chase, in which one officer was shot, before barricading himself in a house and initiating a fourteen-hour standoff. He was eventually driven out with tear gas. When he was brought to court for his arraignment, the courtroom doors were locked to the press and public. This was improbably claimed to have been an accidental oversight. Jeff Keeney, another suspect in the women's murders, also led officers on a car and foot chase, leaving a trail of drugs in his wake. His home was found to contain three portable methamphetamine labs.

16 As a rather odd side-note to this story, Larwick's father, Leroy, attained a certain amount of notoriety in the late 1960s by creating a much-debated film clip of a purported 'Bigfoot.' Cary Stayner had a lifelong fascination with the mythical creatures, which he has claimed to have once encountered.

Larry Utley, a convicted sex offender and an associate of Michael Larwick, was also deeply involved in the meth trade, and quite possibly in the murders as well. Utley was also an associate of Eugene Earl “Rufus” Dykes, Larwick’s half-brother and yet another suspect. Once in custody, Dykes claimed that Larwick had admitted to playing a role in the kidnappings. He also admitted that he had received from Larwick checks and jewelry that had belonged to the victims. A friend of Dykes’ acknowledged being asked to forge identification to access Carole Sund’s bank account, and another friend admitted to having taken her wallet to Modesto. Dykes, whose ex-convict father was also implicated, agreed to take a polygraph examination, which seemed to confirm that he was being truthful about his involvement in the kidnappings/murders. His girlfriend admitted to investigators that Rufus had confided to her that he and another man had killed the trio by slitting their throats. Dykes himself ultimately confessed, first to helping transport the bodies, and then to the murders themselves.

That he had transported at least one of the bodies was apparent from the fact that pink fibers found on Juli’s corpse, probably from a blanket her body was wrapped in, matched fibers recovered from a Jeep used by Dykes. These same fibers were also found on Dykes’ jacket, in a truck owned by a friend of his, and in Michael Larwick’s Corvette. Other fibers, which appeared to come from Sund’s clothing, were also found in the suspects’ vehicles. Though fiber evidence is inherently problematic, it should probably be noted here that several alleged serial killers have been convicted, and even condemned to die, on less substantial fiber evidence cases than the one assembled against this group of individuals. And the incriminating fibers certainly were not the only evidence that investigators had. Rachel Lou Campbell, an associate of both Dykes and Larwick, was discovered to have in her possession Carole Sund’s checking account and ATM numbers. Investigators believed that she was likely the unidentified female who had twice called the bank in the week after the disappearances to inquire about the status of the account. Another woman testified before a grand jury that she had received a ring from Larwick that two members of the Carrington clan identified as having very likely belonged to Juli Sund.

With all of these suspects in jail—on other, unrelated charges—and with the evidence against them continuing to mount, most investigators considered the case to be essentially solved. It was widely anticipated that indictments would be handed down soon. Media coverage of the case dropped off appreciably and police began directing their attention elsewhere. But then a most amazing thing happened.

On July 21, 1999, Joie Armstrong—a naturalist living in Yosemite Park—was beheaded in a brutal murder case that brought the earlier triple slaying roaring back into the headlines. Other than geographic proximity, there was nothing

linking the two cases. This time, there was only one victim, and she was not abducted. Her body was quickly and easily found. And there was, allegedly at least, a clear evidence trail leading to a sole assailant: happy-go-lucky handyman Cary Stayner. Armstrong's murder was immediately declared to be connected to the previous case, although it is anyone's guess how investigators came to that conclusion.

On July 23, Stayner was questioned and then released. Almost immediately after his release, a warrant was issued for his arrest and a manhunt reportedly ensued. Stayner appears to have made little effort to flee or to conceal his identity, and he was arrested the next day, at the Laguna del Sole nudist colony, by three FBI agents and two sheriff's deputies. Waiving both his right to an attorney and to remain silent, he is said to have promptly launched into a full confession—reportedly in a detached, emotionless voice. Within a couple of days, Stayner had also given his confession to a television reporter. He took sole credit for all four murders. The reporter, Ted Rowlands, promptly made the rounds of national news shows with his 'scoop,' and all the evidence implicating the drug trafficking ring was quickly forgotten. Apart from his confession, however, there was no evidence to support Stayner's claims.

According to his version of events, Stayner single-handedly got the jump on the three women in their room and was able to bind them all with duct tape. He allegedly used a gun, although no gun has ever been produced and none of the victims were shot. Two of the women were purportedly killed in the room. All three were then carried out, one-at-a-time, and loaded into their car. One was still very much alive and most likely resisting the efforts of her abductor. No one at the lodge saw or heard any of this activity. Stayner then allegedly cleaned up the hotel room in which the first two murders occurred, successfully removing all traces of a struggle. Stayner then drove for miles before stopping to kill the third victim, Juli Sund, and dump her body. He then supposedly drove many more miles to another remote location, which happened to be very near Michael Larwick's childhood home, and abandoned the car with the other two bodies still in the trunk. He then took a taxi back to Yosemite Valley, incurring a fare of \$125. Two days later, he returned to the abandoned car in an unidentified vehicle, and at that time he set Carole Sund's abandoned car afire, with the two bodies still inside. After that, he allegedly drove to Modesto to dump Sund's billfold, which for some bizarre reason he did not destroy with the rest of the evidence in the fire.

Even with this rather convoluted story, authorities have not been able to explain away all of the incongruous evidence. For example, the taunting letter sent by the killer revealing the location of Juli's body was sealed with someone else's saliva. The FBI reluctantly acknowledged that DNA tests verified that fact.

Spokesmen for the Bureau had an explanation, however: their theory was that Stayner had “tricked an unsuspecting male” into supplying the saliva to seal the envelope. How exactly that would be done was left to the imagination. Cary had initially given an alibi for the night of the murders: he said he had been visiting a female friend. The woman in question confirmed that fact. Then there is the rather troubling fact that evidence strongly indicates that the women were not killed that morning at the lodge, but later at an unknown location. That, needless to say, casts serious doubt on Cary Stayner’s confession.

Any number of credible witnesses came forward, or at least attempted to come forward, to attest to the fact that the three were very much alive long after the time they were allegedly killed. A private investigator working on the case discovered credit card slips for purchases Carole made at the Yosemite Lodge—former employer of Ken Parnell—after she allegedly disappeared. Carole had signed for the purchases. Yosemite Valley’s postmistress reported selling stamps to the trio on February 16, many hours after they had allegedly been kidnapped and killed. In Sierra Village, far away from the Cedar Lodge, and very close to where Carole’s car was later found, at least three witnesses reported seeing the women that afternoon. A gas station owner remembered selling them gas, and a gift shop owner remembered them stopping in her place of business as well. Both of them attempted to contact the FBI. One failed to get through despite several attempts, and messages left by the other went unanswered. The Bureau later reluctantly acknowledged that there were several credible sightings of the women, not just on February 16 but on February 17 as well.

When exactly the women disappeared remains largely a mystery, as does why the women changed plans, if indeed they did, without contacting friends or family. They were almost certainly not killed in the early morning hours of February 16—by Cary Stayner, or anyone else. One witness claimed that Juli was kept alive for several days, during which time she was held in a Modesto home and repeatedly raped. The relatives of a man found drowned in early April of 1999 claimed that the drowned man had witnessed the assaults on Sund in Modesto.

There was never any question that the Sund/Pelosso killings were the work of multiple assailants. As Nick Rossi of the FBI said early on, “the assumption is that more than one person is involved.” James Maddock, the FBI’s lead investigator on the case, added that they were “operating under the assumption this was a very difficult crime for one person to commit.” Nevertheless, on September 6, 2000, Stayner and his defense attorney accepted the terms of a federal plea-bargain agreement that had the unmistakable stench of a cover-up. Stayner professed his sole guilt in the death of Joie Armstrong and he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole, though he was spared a death sentence. The guilty plea eliminated the need for a highly publicized trial, and the agreement

contained a very unusual provision: "After the entry of judgement in this case until his death he [Stayner] will not speak to anyone, write to anyone, or communicate to anyone about the death of Joie Ruth Armstrong." No one, in other words, will hear Stayner's side of the story. Ever.

The federal courts were done with Stayner, but the state of California still had the option of prosecuting the triple murder. Two years later, it decided to exercise that option. The state case was presided over by Judge Thomas Hastings, who had earlier reigned over the Richard Allen Davis/Polly Klaas case. Stayner was represented by Marcia Morrissey and Michael Burt, a San Francisco-based attorney whose clientele has included Richard Ramirez and Charles Ng. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported, this defense team "conceded from the beginning that Stayner had killed the three tourists." That is not generally a very effective defense strategy, but it is one that is employed in a number of serial killer cases. The Times also noted that, while the case had at one time received massive press coverage, the "criminal court fight has trundled on in front of scant spectators and only a handful of newspaper reporters."

The trial consisted primarily of mental health professionals detailing for the jury Cary Stayner's troubled childhood. These witnesses described a family tree "littered with relatives who suffered from mental illnesses, including depression and pedophilia." They spoke of a family that considered displays of emotion to be taboo. They talked of Cary, in his youth, being molested by his uncle. They discussed Cary's fondness for child pornography, which he bartered with his FBI interrogators for in exchange for a full confession. They said that he had suffered from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder his whole life, and had taken psychiatric drugs in the 1980s. And they said that Cary Stayner suffered from uncontrollable violent impulses.

If so, then only the four victims had ever seen that side of him. To everyone else, he seemed to be a gentle soul. A local nudist/naturalist, calling herself "Sunshine," told ABC's "20/20" that she had known Cary Stayner for years as a fellow free spirit. She spoke of frequently being alone with Stayner, skinny-dipping in secluded spots along the Merced River. She could not recall him ever acting inappropriately, and never observed any hint that Stayner might be hiding a dark side.

On August 26, 2002, the jury returned guilty verdicts on nine separate counts, including three of first-degree murder and one of kidnapping. They had deliberated less than six hours. On October 9, 2002, following the penalty phase of the trial, the jury returned with the recommendation that Cary Stayner be put to death. They had again deliberated for less than six hours. Three months after the

verdict was rendered, Ken Parnell was arrested in Berkeley, California after allegedly attempting to purchase a child.

* * * * *

If the available evidence in the Stayner case leaves doubts about the sole guilt of the accused, that is all the more true in the case of the infamous Richard Speck. If veteran criminal investigators are puzzled as to how Stayner was able to subdue and control three women, then it truly boggles the mind how one man was able to single-handedly subdue *nine* women, bind them all, and then systematically kill all but one of them.

According to the sole survivor, Cora Amurao, she answered the door in the early morning hours of July 14, 1966, allowing Speck entry into the house. She claimed he was brandishing a gun, though none of the victims were shot that night and no evidence was ever found indicating that a gun was used at the crime scene. Authorities claimed that Speck stole the gun from a rape victim on the very day of the slaughter, and then used it to quickly corral Amurao and five other women in the house into a room. He then proceeded to tear a sheet into strips, which he then used to tie the women up, one by one. How he was able to accomplish this while keeping all the rest at bay—and allegedly while keeping a knife in his hand at all times—is anyone’s guess. Three more women arrived home after Speck’s alleged entry into the house. All three were quickly bound and forced into the room with the others.

Speck then allegedly began dragging the women off one at a time and slaughtering them, spending twenty minutes or more with each victim. After he finished with one, according to Amurao, he would go into the bathroom to wash up and then return for another. This scene played out over the course of some four-and-a-half hours. During that time, the young women waiting their turn tried to hide under the beds, hoping to elude their assailant. They were, of course, found and killed. All of them, that is, except Cora Amurao, who claims that she alone avoided detection by Speck. It has been suggested that Speck lost count of his victims and falsely concluded that all the girls were dead, thereby making the crucial error of leaving behind a living witness.

That part of the story is problematic in a number of ways. The first question raised is: why did the young women choose to remain in the room in which they had been herded? If, despite their bindings, they were able to move about within the room—which they clearly were or they would not have been able to get under the beds—then why would they not leave the room altogether? And once out of the room, why not get completely out of the house? And what was to prevent the

women from untying each other? After all, the pattern was set early on; after the first couple of slayings, it had to be abundantly clear to the women that their lives were about to come to an abrupt end. For despite the claims that Speck cleaned himself up after each killing, it is ridiculous to suggest that Speck could have concealed the fresh blood that would have covered his clothes, assuming that he didn't bring eight changes of clothing with him. It also had to be quite clear to the awaiting victims that the selection of each new victim signaled that there would be a 20–30 minute window of opportunity to attempt an escape. And what was there to lose? It seems inconceivable that the women, facing certain death, would have passively awaited their fate.

But what of the survivor's story? It should be quite clear to anyone that an adult simply cannot avoid detection by hiding underneath a bed. That was amply illustrated by the fact that all but one of those attempting to do so were discovered. And yet one survived. How is it possible that Speck could have searched under the beds to locate the others, and yet failed to see Cora Amurao hiding there as well? And does it really seem likely that Speck was unable to count to nine?

If not for the existence of the sole survivor, police investigators would have immediately assumed that multiple perpetrators were responsible for the mass carnage. No theorizing was necessary, however, since an eyewitness was on the scene to provide the unlikely 'sole assailant' scenario that was later refined to become the official story. Interestingly though, the composite drawing (a crude, two-dimensional rendering that was seriously lacking in detail) of the suspect that was released by police, purportedly based on Amurao's description, did not resemble Richard Speck.

Since the trial of the man fingered by police hinged primarily on Amurao's eyewitness testimony—and very little else—the star witness was zealously protected, although if the imprisoned Richard Speck was indeed the sole assailant, then it is difficult to see how the witness was in any danger. Amurao was moved to a resort where four guards were posted around the clock, and she was held there incommunicado for months while being prepped extensively for the testimony that she was to deliver. Before being hidden away, Amurao allegedly identified the suspect, albeit in a most unusual manner.

While Speck in a hospital recovering from a failed suicide attempt, just days after the killings, Amurao was allegedly sent in to his room, dressed as a nurse, to get a good look at the suspect. From this encounter, she positively identified Speck as the killer. Leaving aside the obvious fact that this was a brazenly illegitimate means of identifying a suspect—one which would have invalidated any subsequent attempts by Ms. Amurao to pick Speck out of a police line-up—the real question here is: what caliber of police official would send a severely traumatized

crime victim, who just days before had witnessed the slaughter of eight of her friends and experienced the sheer terror of knowing that she could well be next, into a room, unprotected, to face the man who had put her through such torture? And what victim would be able to handle such an encounter, with the memories so fresh? And what guarantee was there that Speck would not recognize his accuser, given that hers *was* the first face he had seen as he entered the house that night?

Amurao's dramatic identification of Speck was just a warm-up exercise for what was to come; when the time came for her to deliver her critical testimony to a packed courtroom, she delivered a bravura performance. Amurao recited a endlessly rehearsed version of the events of July 14, and then, when the time came to identify the suspect in court, she played her trump card: rising from her seat—allegedly without any prompting or rehearsal—she calmly stepped out of the witness box, walked casually over to where Speck sat at the defense table, stood directly in front of him while looking him in the eye, and told the court, "This is the man." That was the clincher; Speck was found guilty after just forty-nine minutes of jury deliberations and sentenced to death.

There are indications though that this was hardly a foregone conclusion. Prosecutors clearly had doubts about their visibly shaky case, and they appear to have made every effort to stack the deck in the state's favor. One indication of that is the fact that the jury selection process was—as defense attorney James Gramenos has noted—"illegal and unfair." Gramenos objected strenuously to the blatant violation of his client's due process rights, but was overruled. Another indication was the remarkable fact that, even though the case was moved some three hours outside of Chicago—the first time any trial had ever been moved out of Cook County due to pre-trial publicity—the judge opted to stay on in the new venue. That same judge slapped a gag order on the press, guaranteeing that no news would get back to Chicago—or to anywhere else in the country. Coupled with the blocking of any interviews with Amurao, this gag order shut the public out from learning the weakness of the case against Speck.

City officials and the press had already assured everyone that he was guilty. Chicago's Police Commissioner had gone so far as to publicly declare Speck the killer even as he was releasing his photo to the media. Before even being arrested or formally charged with any crimes, Speck was already being presented to the public as a convicted mass murderer. And the public was hungry for a culprit to hang this heinous crime on. Never mind that the motive claimed by the state, robbery, was as ridiculous as it had been when claimed as the motive for the slaughter of the Clutter family in Kansas. Never mind that there are much easier ways to acquire \$23.00 than by savagely murdering eight women with one's bare hands. Someone had to pay for this assault on society, regardless of why the crime

was really perpetrated. Speck would do just fine. Many of the more thoughtful citizens of Chicago, however, are still waiting to learn what really happened in that house on that fateful night.

The most likely explanation? The ‘survivor’ and star witness was not actually a survivor at all; she was quite possibly an accomplice to a cult of individuals who perpetrated this slaughter. She could well have been the ‘inside man,’ so to speak. And it was not likely an accident that she was left alive; it was essential that she remain alive to sell the single assailant scenario and thereby derail an investigation before it ever began. After all, authorities noted from the beginning that the house was not highly visible and immediately assumed that the killer was familiar with the surroundings. Speck did not have that familiarity, but Amurao certainly did. And it is a rather odd fact that Amurao admitted to being the one to let the killer (or killers) into the house.

And what of Speck? He was likely little more than a patsy or fall-guy who may have been involved to some extent in the killings, but he certainly was not the sole assailant. And he might not have been in the house at all that night. He had no memory of ever leaving the bar that he had been drinking in earlier that evening, but he did remember receiving an injection from a man he did not know. There is no question that Speck was drinking in a bar that night; a number of witnesses placed him there, though most were unsure of when Speck had left. Two of the witnesses though, a husband and wife, placed him at the bar during at least a portion of the timeframe when the killings occurred. These witnesses were neither friends nor acquaintances of the accused, and they had no known reason to provide Speck with a false alibi.

It is possible that Richard Speck, like David Berkowitz and Pietro Pacciani, took the fall to protect others. That would certainly help explain the preposterously lax treatment of Speck during his confinement, as evidenced by that home videotape—produced circa 1988—that depicted Speck snorting huge piles of cocaine and flashing rolls of money, not to mention sporting a rather large and quite unattractive pair of breasts. No explanation has been forthcoming as to how it was possible for one of America’s most notorious killers, while residing in what is reputedly one of the toughest prisons in the country, was able to obtain copious quantities of drugs and money, and gain access to video equipment and hormone treatments. It could be that Speck was rewarded in prison for being such a stand-up guy.

Speck had previously caught a number of breaks from the criminal justice system in his native Texas, where he grew up in the violently abusive home of his stepfather—named, strangely enough, Carl August Lindbergh. Just the year before the carnage in Chicago, he had been convicted of savagely attacking a girl with a knife and nearly killing her. Despite the seriousness of the crime, and

despite having a lengthy police record that included forty-one arrests in a dozen years, Speck served just five months. This act of judicial leniency was attributed to a bureaucratic error.

Speck caught another break in 1972 when his death sentence was voided by the U.S. Supreme Court and he was resentenced to a term of 400–1200 years, with the possibility of parole—which was still a pretty harsh sentence for a man who quite likely was—as he maintained for over a decade—innocent. Not long after producing his infamous videotape, Speck’s luck ran out. At the relatively young age of forty-nine, he died in prison, allegedly of a heart attack. A few years later, Cora Amurao made an appearance on the Oprah Winfrey show to speak publicly about the killings for the first time in twenty-seven years.

* * * * *

Just days after Richard Speck—whose crudely tattooed arm declared him “Born to Raise Hell”—was arrested in Chicago, Charles Whitman—a former U.S. Marine sharpshooter who had received training by the Naval Enlisted Science Education Program (NESEP), an intelligence entity—ascended the Tower at the University of Texas at Austin and unleashed a barrage of firepower on the unsuspecting campus. By the time it was over, Whitman and fourteen others lay dead and another thirty-one victims were wounded.

To ascend to his perch, Whitman purportedly dragged a heavy footlocker—loaded with three rifles, three handguns, a sawed-off shotgun, 700 rounds of ammunition, two knives, enough food and water to last for several days, gasoline, an alarm clock, a radio, a compass, a hammer, a hatchet, and various other items—up the final three flights of stairs, unnoticed and unassisted. Once there, his shooting spree lasted for more than an-hour-and-a-half. Firing with uncanny accuracy, he picked off fifteen victims in the first thirty-five minutes alone, with shots coming at various times from all four sides of the clock tower. So many shots were pouring out of the sniper’s nest at times that many witnesses on the ground assumed that there were multiple gunmen. The night before the rampage, Charles had killed his wife and his mother, although it was his violently abusive father for whom he was said to have had an intense hatred. Whitman had also left a note, which read in part: “I don’t quite understand what is compelling me to type this note. I have been to a psychiatrist. I have been having fears and violent impulses.” Along with the note, he reportedly left a roll of exposed film with instructions to develop it after his death.

Both of these mass murders, one in Chicago, Illinois and one in Austin, Texas, took place just weeks after Anton LaVey had formally established the Church of

Satan and declared April 30, 1966 to be the first day of the Age of Satan. Whitman's rampage occurred on August 1—*Lammas* on the occult calendar. Just three weeks prior to LaVey's pronouncement, long-time CIA asset Henry Luce's venerable *Time* magazine had asked its readers the symbolic question: "Is God Dead?"

The face of a particularly brutal criminal enterprise, masquerading as a religion, was beginning to emerge from the shadows, and its effect on American society would be profound. As the *New York Times* observed 33 years later, on the occasion of the reopening of the Tower's observation deck, "the Whitman attack marked a new and different terror—that anyone anywhere could be killed at random." As the *Times* also noted, this new—and wholly manufactured—threat "prompted many police departments to develop the first SWAT teams."

America was under siege.

"Our goal was to create an atmosphere where there's lawlessness and disorder everywhere."

—David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz

Chapter 12

Satan's Family Tree

"The Devil can get into people and cause them to do things they wouldn't do otherwise."

—Herbert Mullin, speaking to a Bible study class

In New York City in 1875, Madame Helena Petrovina Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society, an occult-based group that survives to this day and that supplied much of the ideology of Hitler's Third Reich. Over the course of the next decade-and-a-half, Blavatsky published *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, two literary works that have proven to be hugely influential with many succeeding generations of modern Satanists and white supremacists. As author Peter Levenda has written, Blavatsky "popularized the notion of a spiritual struggle between various 'races,' and of the inherent superiority of the 'Aryan' race, hypothetically the latest in the line of spiritual evolution." This belief in Aryan supremacy was echoed by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who during the same timeframe posited the existence of an 'Aryan Superman' and advocated racial genocide. Nietzsche's work was also liberally borrowed from by the architects of Nazi Germany.

One of Blavatsky's most devout followers was instrumental in introducing to Western Europe the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This notorious document, which more-or-less accurately identified the existence of an ultra-secret cabal bent on global domination and the subjugation of the world's people, identified this game-plan as a grand Jewish conspiracy, thereby fueling the rabid anti-Semitism that served to stabilize the fascist states of Europe. Blavatsky also wrote of the importance of ancient alphabets, particularly what are referred to as 'runes.' Many of these runes would later show up prominently in the symbolism of the Nazi Party, including the SS lightning bolts and the swastika, which had been identified by Blavatsky as having supreme occult significance.

With the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875, Blavatsky was essentially being passed the torch by Abbe Alphonse-Louis Constant, who died that same year. Better known in occult circles as Eliphas Levi, Constant was a French magician, author, and former priest who wrote a series of highly influential books from 1855 to 1865: *Dogma and Ritual of High Magic*, *The History of Magic*, and *The Key of the Great Mysteries*. One of Levi's disciples was General Albert Pike, chief of intelligence for the Confederate Army and the highest-ranking Freemason in North America. In 1867, Pike incorporated Levi's ideas into the constitution that he drafted for an overtly racist, occult-based secret society that he and an alliance of Confederate generals and intelligence operatives created following the American Civil War: the Ku Klux Klan. Levi's ideas would later find favor with the occult practitioners who engineered the rise of Nazi Germany.

1875 was also the year that a certain Edward Alexander Crowley was born. Edward, better known as Aleister (or by the grandiose label that he chose for himself, 'The Great Beast 666'), was without question the most influential occultist of the twentieth century. He was also an asset of British military intelligence, just as Albert Pike was an American intelligence operative, and just as Karl Kellner, Franz Hartmann and Theodore Reuss had close ties to German intelligence entities. Hartmann, Reuss and Kellner were the primary architects of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (OTO), a secret society formed in Germany around 1895 that claims to be in a direct line of descent from the Knights Templar, which some researchers believe to be the granddaddy of all the occult-based, secret Masonic societies. Whether or not there is any factual basis for that belief remains an open question, and one that is far beyond the scope of this book.

What is known is that the OTO was directly linked to Blavatsky through Hartmann, a Theosophist and close associate of the Madame. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (OGD), founded by Theosophist William Westcott in 1888, was closely allied with Blavatsky's group as well. It was in the OGD, which he joined in 1898, that Aleister Crowley first attained occult celebrity status. He created his own occult order, which he named the *Astrum Argentium* (Silver Star), in 1907 and began publishing its newsletter, *The Equinox*, a couple years later. In 1912, he forged a close association with Theodore Reuss, who introduced him to the OTO and appointed Crowley to head the order's UK chapter. That same year, Crowley penned an OTO Manifesto that included a list of those he claimed to be past 'Grand Masters' of the lodge. On that list were composer Richard Wagner and an associate of his, Friedrich Nietzsche, whose published works included *The Antichrist*.

In 1919, Crowley declared that every non-member of the occult order should be treated as a savage. Around that same time, he became known for his published works of pro-German and pro-Nazi propaganda, which he continued to

produce through both World Wars. While living in the U.S., Crowley wrote for two pro-fascist rags: *The Fatherland* and *The Internationalist*. Around 1920, Crowley moved to Sicily where he founded the Thelema Abbey, a site that quickly became known for conducting satanic rites—complete with animal sacrifices, bestiality, and blood drinking. The abbey also gained notoriety for being fraught with death and disease. Crowley's own infant child died there, as did others. At the time, Crowley was openly accused of infanticide, and he never denied the charges. To the contrary, Crowley openly and rather flamboyantly revelled in his depravity. In *Diary of a Dope Fiend* (Crowley was a life-long abuser of drugs of all types), he wrote that: "I have driven myself to delight in dirty and disgusting debauches, and to devour human excrement and human flesh."

Those close to Crowley had the rather disturbing habit of dropping dead under unusual circumstances. As Gary Valentine Lachman has written, "A study of Crowley's life and that of his disciples shows that many of them ended up mad, destitute or prematurely dead; occasionally all three." From early in his life, Crowley developed an unsavory reputation for killing his mountain climbing partners, a number of whom failed to make it home from their joint expeditions. In his native England, he was widely rumored to routinely sacrifice children and dump their mutilated remains in the Thames River. In one notable incident, Crowley and an assistant entered a locked room to perform a ritual; the assistant did not make it out alive. Immediately following that escapade, Crowley reportedly spent four months in a mental hospital.

Crowley's offspring did not fare much better than his climbing partners did. In addition to the child that died at Thelema Abbey, a young daughter of his died in 1906, and some reports claim that a son died as well, in a separate incident. The Great Beast himself died on December 1, 1947. He was at the time the worldwide head of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, having been named by Reuss as his successor in 1923 and confirmed in 1924 (though some reports hold that Crowley appointed himself to the leadership position, as early as 1922). With his passing, a new generation of occult superstars stood ready to take the torch, each of them devoted to spreading the word of the Great Beast: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."

One of these disciples was Gerald Gardner, who replaced Crowley as the UK's most famous occultist. Gardner was born in 1884 into an affluent family in the UK, and he served for a time as a British customs agent. He was also the head of his own OTO lodge and a close associate of Crowley. Before his death, Crowley helped Gardner craft new rituals for what would become known as 'Wicca.' In 1949, two years after his mentor's death, Gardner penned *High Magic's Aid*. He followed that with *Witchcraft Today* (1954) and *The Meaning of Witchcraft* (1959) and the movement was off and running. More recently, Sir Laurence Gardner—

Gerald's son—penned a couple of books that attempt to justify genocide and Aryan supremacy. Laurence Gardner also serves as the Presidential Attaché to the European Council of Princes, an entity that has admitted to receiving funding from the Central Intelligence Agency.

One of the senior Gardner's early recruits was Alexander Saunders, who was raised by a grandmother who was well versed in the black arts. As a child, Saunders was shipped off for a time to live with, and be 'trained' by, Crowley himself. By the late 1960s, Saunders was a national celebrity in his native UK, having anointed himself the "King of the Witches." During the filming of "Eye of the Devil" in 1967, Saunders claimed to have initiated the film's star, Manson victim Sharon Tate, into witchcraft. His followers are said to practice Alexandrian Witchcraft, while followers of Gardner practice Gardnerian Witchcraft; both owe much to the teachings of Aleister Crowley.

Saunders' counterpart in America was the equally flamboyant Anton Szandar LaVey, who achieved minor celebrity status in the 1960s and 1970s as the clown prince of Satanism. LaVey's profile was first raised by *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen, who frequently provided free publicity. *Cosmopolitan*, *Life*, *Look*, *McCalls*, and the Phil Donahue and Johnny Carson shows also helped to steer recruits LaVey's way.

LaVey claimed to have a lengthy and very colorful résumé. He had worked, he said, as a lion tamer with the Clyde Beatty Circus and as a fortune-teller and astrologer in a carnival. He had worked with an uncle in Las Vegas who was a close associate of Bugsy Siegel and Meyer Lansky, both of whom he had met. He had studied criminology and worked as a crime scene photographer for the San Francisco Police Department, who consulted with him on "nut cases." He had been a professional hypnotist, organist and 'ghostbuster.' He had been a paramour and Svengali of a young and then-unknown Marilyn Monroe. It is unclear how much of this résumé is accurate. Following LaVey's death, his daughter claimed that his entire life story was a fabrication, which would hardly be surprising if LaVey was, as he appears to have been, an intelligence operative.

Together with Crowley-inspired filmmaker Kenneth Anger, LaVey organized the Magick Circle in San Francisco in the mid-1960s. By 1966, the group had evolved into the Church of Satan. From its inception, LaVey's group included an inordinate number of police, military and intelligence personnel. One of these was Lt. Col. Michael Aquino, who left LaVey's circle in 1975 to found his own overtly satanic order, the Temple of Set. Before his departure, Aquino had been the highest-ranking member of the Church of Satan other than LaVey. He had joined the Church of Satan upon his return from Vietnam, where he served as a psychological warfare specialist, which very likely means that he served as part of the Phoenix Program. Aquino returned from Vietnam with a Bronze Star, an Air

Medal and an Army Commendation Medal. The Colonel, who reportedly began reporting directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1981, is not the only intelligence asset in the Temple of Set; according to a police intelligence report cited by Carl Raschke in 1990, at least two of Aquino's top lieutenants at that time were intelligence operatives as well.

Although Aquino denies it, his group embraces an unabashedly fascistic ideology. The reading list that he provides to his followers includes a number of pro-Nazi books, including Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf*; Aquino advises members to look therein "for the discussions concerning the selection of leaders, control of the masses, and the justification for human social organization." Aquino's admiration for the Third Reich was also illustrated by his visit to Wewelsberg Castle to perform a satanic 'working.' During the reign of the Nazi Party, Wewelsberg had been lavishly restored by Heinrich Himmler to serve as the headquarters of the *Black Order of the SS*; as such, it is considered sacred ground by some modern Satanists. Aquino has been known to claim that he is the son of an SS officer, although at other times he has claimed that he is a 'homunculus' magically created by the 'Babalon Working' performed by Jack Parsons and L. Ron Hubbard.

After the Temple was incorporated in the state of California as a non-profit church, Aquino's group quickly received both state and federal recognition, as well as tax-exempt status. The Temple's members like to boast of being the only satanic church to hold such credentials.

There have been claims made that, like Aquino, LaVey also had a fondness for the Third Reich. Some reports hold that LaVey secretly forged an alliance with the National Renaissance Party, an overtly racist, neo-Nazi organization.¹⁷ Such claims are not difficult to believe, given that LaVey's writings reveal an ideology that can best be characterized as fascism cloaked in quasi-religious dogma. His best-known work, *The Satanic Bible*, contains a dedication to Karl Haushofer, one of the occult architects of the Third Reich. According to some reports, Haushofer dictated virtually verbatim an entire chapter of *Mein Kampf*, although legend holds that the tome was dictated to Rudolf Hess by an imprisoned Adolph Hitler. Hess was, it should probably be noted, a member of the *Thule Gesellschaft* (a powerful occult society behind the rise of fascism) and had been a student and protégé of Haushofer at the University of Munich.

LaVey's prolific writings are filled with pro-police and pro-authoritarian propaganda, unabashed elitism, and calls for the destruction of the weak by the

17 According to some reports, Bobby Beausoleil, who was associated with both the Church of Satan and Charlie Manson, played a key role in forging a prison alliance between the Manson Family and the Aryan Brotherhood. Other reports have linked Manson to the Nazi Lowriders, another neo-Nazi prison gang.

strong¹⁸—calls that echo Crowley’s writings in *Book of the Law*: “We have nothing with the outcast and unfit; let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings; stamp down the wretched and the weak; this is the law of the strong.” The Church of Satan’s promotional literature has proudly proclaimed the Church of Satan to be “an eclectic body that traces its origins to many sources...[including] the ritual magic of Aleister Crowley and the Black Order of Germany in the 1920s and 1930s.” Readers are reminded that the Black Order was the elite branch of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) that was primarily responsible for engineering countless crimes against humanity during the reign of the Reich.

In *The Black Flame*, an official publication of the Church of Satan, LaVey once wrote: “If a neo-fascist look—or outlook—makes for men who look like men and women who look like women, I am all for it.” He also offered the following observation: “There is nothing inherently wrong with fascism, given the nature and needs of the average citizen...Now it’s not so much a case of avoiding fascism, but of replacing a screwed-up, disjointed, fragmented and stupefying kind of fascism with one that is more sensible and truly progressive.” Peter Gilmore, a ranking member of the Church of Satan, has described modern Satanism as practiced by LaVey’s group as “a brutal religion of elitism and social Darwinism that seeks to re-establish the reign of the able over the idiotic, of swift justice over injustice, and for a wholesale rejection of egalitarianism as a myth that has crippled the advancement of the human species for the last two thousand years.” Gilmore has also advocated the institution of “an American *Schutzstaffel*.”

The Temple of Set is only one of several groups that have been spawned from LaVey’s inner circle. Another is the Werewolf Order, co-founded by LaVey’s daughter Zeena and Manson-admirer Nikolas Schreck. That particular spin-off was patterned directly after the so-called Werewolf Corps (Nazi terrorist cells created in post-war Germany to thwart attempts at denazification). Zeena LaVey and Nikolas Schreck are also notable for hosting, along with publisher Adam Parfrey, a public gathering on August 8, 1988 that was organized to celebrate the anniversary of the slaughter of Sharon Tate by the Manson Family.¹⁹

18 LaVey also publicly endorsed the practice of cannibalism. At a seminar that he dubbed “On Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice,” LaVey once served guests the amputated thigh of an unidentified young woman. The main course had reportedly been donated by a Berkeley physician.

19 Nikolas Schreck is also notable for his noticeable lack of a left ear, which he sliced off in a VanGogh-like move intended to symbolize his allegiance to Satan. The 8/8/88 celebration was notable for another reason as well: it was held just one day after the 100th anniversary of the first Jack the Ripper slaying on August 7, 1888.

Another disciple of Crowley, and an occult superstar in his own right, was rocket-fuel scientist Jack Parsons. In 1939, Parsons joined the Agape Lodge of the OTO in Pasadena, California, where he also helped found the prestigious Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The Agape was the only OTO lodge in the States at that time, though there was an active lodge in Vancouver started by Charles Stansfield Jones. In 1942, Parsons took the ‘magickal’ name of “Fratr 210” and assumed leadership of the Pasadena lodge, with the blessings of Crowley. Parsons led the branch of the German-based, pro-Nazi order throughout the war years, while at the same time working on highly classified military projects purportedly aimed at defeating the European fascist powers. One of his early recruits, and most avid disciples, had just served with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific and was the son of a naval commander. Calling himself “Fratr H,” he claimed at various times to work for the Los Angeles Police Department, the FBI, and the Office of Naval Intelligence. In truth, he may very well have worked for all of them. Fratr H, perhaps better known as L. Ron Hubbard, soon became Parson’s right-hand-man. In 1946, the two ‘adepts’ performed an allegedly important ritual that they dubbed the ‘Babalon Working.’

Two years later, following the death of mentor Crowley, Parsons took the oath of the antichrist and took on an elaborate new name: Belarion Armiluss Al Dajjal Antichrist. His Pasadena mansion served as the lodge’s temple. Leadership of the OTO had, for the time being, been passed by Crowley into the hands of Karl Germer, a former Nazi spy. Hubbard, meanwhile, parted ways with Parsons and by 1950 had launched the Hubbard Dianetics Research Foundation in New Jersey. In May 1950, *Astounding Science Fiction*, a pulp magazine, introduced Dianetics as a purportedly new science. Within weeks, Hubbard’s book had hit the bestseller lists. In 1952, he moved his operation to Phoenix and renamed it the Hubbard Association of Scientologists. In June of that same year, just two days short of the summer solstice, Parsons allegedly blew himself up while at work in his private home lab. When informed of her son’s death, his mother promptly committed ‘suicide.’ Rumors surrounding Parson’s death named L. Ron Hubbard, Howard Hughes and Randolph Hearst as possible suspects.

In 1953, the Church of Scientology was formally incorporated in Los Angeles. The group grew quickly over the succeeding years, particularly in the late 1960s—when membership quadrupled with the addition of such members as Charles Manson. By 1967, Hubbard’s empire included command of a fleet of ships. Though the Church of Scientology has worked hard to gloss over its occult roots, its founder’s own son—L. Ron Hubbard, Jr.—has been quoted as saying: “Hitler was involved in the same black magic and the same occult practices that my father was. The identical ones...[my father] thought of himself as the Beast 666 incarnate...when Crowley died in 1947 my father then decided that he

should wear the cloak of the beast.” There seems to have been a lot of that going around. L. Ron, Jr. has also said that the “one super-secret sentence that Scientology is built on is: ‘Do as thou wilt.’”

In the early 1960s, two ranking members of the Church of Scientology—Robert Moore and Mary Anne MacLean, better known as the DeGrimstons—split off from London’s Hubbard Institute to form the Process Church of the Final Judgment²⁰—a group whose official logo is a modified swastika and whose literature included glowing tributes to Nazism, Satan, gore and necrophilia. The group’s bookstore reportedly stocked titles on topics such as Hitler, organized crime, hypnosis, brainwashing, and the occult. Moore, a former cavalry officer and the grandson of a British vicar, and MacLean, a one-time prostitute who was connected to the Profumo scandal and who reportedly believes that she is the reincarnation of Nazi propagandist Josef Goebbels, first left London with their followers just after the summer solstice of 1966, arriving first in Nassau and then in Xtul, Mexico. They were soon back in London.

By 1967, they had arrived in the States, first setting up shop in New Orleans’ French Quarter, where the organization was formally incorporated with the assistance of a former lawyer for the Catholic Church. In March 1968, the group moved their base of operations to San Francisco, taking up residence not far from LaVey’s Church of Satan and various other occult groups, including a branch of the OTO. Recruiters for the group had been in the Bay area since the 1967 ‘Summer of Love,’ signing on such members as ‘Brother Ely,’ a member of the Gypsy Jokers biker gang whose home/Process Church temple was located just two blocks away from the home of the Manson Family. From its inception, the Process made no effort to hide its infatuation with death, destruction and cultural terrorism. In the essay *Jehovah on War*, Moore commanded his followers: “THOU SHALT KILL.” Another essay that appeared in the official Process publication urged readers to experience the pleasures of grave robbing and necrophilia. A rant in the “Death” issue was penned by a recent transplant to the Bay area by the name of Charles Manson.

Also by 1967, the Process had already spawned at least one spin-off, probably from the group’s inner circle, reportedly known as ‘The Omega.’ The spin-off has

20 A February 2004 report from Denver’s *Rocky Mountain News* revealed that the Process Church is alive and well today after a series of name changes (Lou Kilzer “Friends Find Their Calling,” February 28, 2004). The group first became The Foundation—Church of the Millennium, then The Foundation Faith of God, then the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, and finally the Best Friends Animal Society, which has its headquarters on a compound in the Utah desert. The group, which still includes many original members, is now known to rub shoulders with various Hollywood celebrities.

been variously referred to as the 'Four-P Movement,' the 'Four Pi' cult, or the 'Chingon' cult. The group's logo is a stylized swastika composed of four 'P's. Its members are said to share a fascination with Nazi racist doctrines. Author Michael Newton has written: "If law-enforcement spokesmen are correct, the cult is also deeply involved in white slavery, child pornography, and the international narcotics trade." The first branch of the cult was organized in Northern California, and is said to have held its early gatherings in the Santa Cruz Mountains, adjacent to that boiling cauldron of satanic activity known as San Francisco. From this primordial stew would arise, in the late sixties, the Manson Family.

Much of Manson's ideology was taken directly from the teachings of the Process Church, with whom Charlie was closely connected, as alluded to by Bugliosi in *Helter Skelter* and greatly elaborated on by Ed Sanders in *The Family* and Maury Terry in *The Ultimate Evil*. Manson was exposed to the Process as early as the spring of 1967 at San Francisco's infamous 'Devil House,' and he later claimed to have met the leaders of the Process at the Polanski home, which he is known to have visited before the killings. Manson was also linked to: the Church of Satan; the Solar Lodge of the OTO, which operated from a ranch near Blythe and a cult-owned house near the University of Southern California campus; the Church of Scientology (Charlie declared himself to be a 'Theta Clear' after 150 hours of 'auditing' while in prison); a particularly bizarre group known as the Kirké Order of the Dog Blood; and a number of occult-oriented biker gangs, including the Straight Satans (who once attended a Ku Klux Klan rally in the San Fernando Valley), the Satan Slaves, the Gypsy Jokers, the Jokers Out of Hell, and the Coffin Makers.

Terry's evidence indicates that the Family was itself a satanic cult—specifically a faction of the Process-spawned Four Pi cult and a sister group to both the New York chapter said to be responsible for the Son of Sam slayings and the Santa Cruz/San Francisco faction that may have been responsible for the 'Zodiac' murders. The Manson Family, appropriately enough, was also deeply involved in drug trafficking, just as Henry Lee Lucas claimed his cult to be. It is not likely a coincidence that Henry's partner, Ottis Toole, was known to have paid visits to the New Orleans headquarters of the Process Church.

With all that in mind, we now turn our attention to the San Francisco/Santa Cruz area and the explosion of violent murders that belched forth from that cauldron beginning in the late 1960s.

“Satan is a Fascist”

—Title of an April 1972 article by Donald Nugent in *The Month* that referred to the “unholy trinity of Adolph Hitler, Charles Manson...and Anton LaVey.”

“In as much as Fascism stands for an embracing of the Natural Order and a rejection of ‘anything goes’ attitudes that have hindered our society, particularly since the 1960’s, then Fascists we are.”

—Church of Satan Magister Peter Gilmore, in *The Black Flame*, Vol. 4/No. 1&2

Chapter 13

The Spawning Ground

Ottis Toole: I've been meaning to ask you...that time when I cooked some of these people? Why'd I do that?

Henry Lee Lucas: I think it was just the hands doing it. I know a lot of things we done, in human sight, are impossible to believe.

Toole: When we took 'em out and cut 'em up...remember one time I said I wanted me some ribs? Did that make me a cannibal?

Lucas: You wasn't a cannibal. It's the force of the devil, something forced on us that we can't change. There's no reason denying what we become. We know what we are.

On March 21, 1967 (the spring equinox), Charles Milles Manson was released from prison and given transport to San Francisco, where—despite having served virtually his entire adult life in prison—he immediately started gathering devoted followers, many recruited from the various satanic groups blossoming in the area. In the spring of the following year, 1968, Manson loaded his new followers into a bus and took them on the road, ultimately settling into the Los Angeles area where Charlie quickly and improbably established numerous prominent contacts in the entertainment industry. As Neil Young, who knew Charlie and his girls well and once tried to get the head of Warner Brothers to sign the aspiring singer/songwriter, once told an interviewer: “A lot of pretty well known musicians around L.A. knew him, though they'd probably deny it now.”

On December 20, 1968, just shy of the winter solstice, what was thought to be the first of the Zodiac murders rocked the San Francisco area when a man was shot once in the head at point blank range with a .22 and his female companion was shot multiple times with the same weapon. A detective working the case

noted that the male victim had recently learned of a major drug deal that was about to go down, and he had been talking openly about who was involved in the transaction.

It would later be speculated that the Zodiac killings actually began in the Los Angeles area on the eve of Halloween, 1966—just a few months after the rampages of Richard Speck and Charles Whitman. The victim, Cheri Jo Bates, had been stabbed in the chest and her throat had been slit so deeply that she was nearly decapitated. A wristwatch of military origin had been found at the crime scene, along with a military-style heel print. The circumstances of the murder suggested that the female victim knew her killer and had spent a portion of the evening with him before the attack. What was said to be a confession was received in the mail and, on *Walpurgisnacht* of 1967, taunting letters were sent to area newspapers and to the victim's father. The FBI would later inadvertently reveal that it had an alternate version of the 'confession,' featuring the exact same wording but set in a different typescript and with a different number of words per line.

On Independence Day, 1969, another couple was gunned down in their car, this time with a 9mm semi-automatic. The woman, Darlene Ferrin, who appeared to be the primary target of the attack (the man survived his wounds), may have known the previous Zodiac victims. She had reportedly told her friends that she had witnessed a murder by a man who had subsequently been following her. In the weeks before her death, she had been receiving mysterious packages from a man living in Mexico who Darlene had, for unexplained reasons, married in 1966 using an assumed name and then later divorced. Her companion on the night of the murder, Michael Mageau, left his home in such a hurry that the lights and TV were left on and the front door was left open. He later told investigators that he and Darlene were followed immediately upon leaving Ferrin's house. After changing his story several times, Mageau went into hiding. Shortly after the shootings, police received a call from a man claiming credit for Ferrin's murder. The call was placed from a payphone just outside the Sheriff's station.

At the end of July, the first of what proved to be a long series of letters arrived at area newspaper offices, with a request that the letter be published on August 1, the occult holiday known as *Lammas*. The series of letters were laced with codes that suggested that the writer had a background in naval intelligence, bringing the ONI (Office of Naval Intelligence) onto the case. Others agencies that investigated the Zodiac killings included the FBI, the U.S. Postal Service, the California Department of Justice, and four local police agencies. On August 4, 1969, the killer supplied his moniker in a letter that began: "This is the Zodiac speaking." Just days later, on the nights of August 8 and 9, the Manson Family committed two of the most notorious multiple murders in the nation's history: the Tate-LaBianca slayings. The Manson killings were part of a weekend orgy of

violence in Los Angeles that saw the city record twenty-nine known homicides in just four days. Before the search for the perpetrators of the high-profile murders was over, it would involve the FBI, the Mossad, the California Beverage Control Board, the U.S. Treasury Department, the L.A. County District Attorney's Office, the LAPD, the L.A. Sheriff's Office, and Colonel Paul Tate—a U.S. Army Intelligence asset, Vietnam veteran, and the father of victim Sharon Tate.

Also brought in by Roman Polanski to assist in his own investigation of the killings was famed 'psychic' Peter Hurkos. Hurkos had earlier made a high profile appearance alongside of F. Lee Bailey in the Boston Strangler case, which will be covered in a later chapter. At the time of the Manson murders, Hurkos was involved in organizing a Black Arts Festival scheduled for Halloween day, 1969. The events other organizers were Timothy Leary and Anton LaVey, who were scheduled to host the festival before it was cancelled.

The month after the Tate-LaBianca killings, and just after the autumnal equinox, a man and woman were stabbed multiple times in a San Francisco-area park. Despite the fact that it took nearly an hour for an ambulance to respond to a call as the pair lay bleeding, the man survived the attack. In what has to be the only known case of a serial killer showing up for work dressed in a logo-bearing costume, the assailant was described as wearing a strange hood with an attached apron that prominently displayed the trademark symbol of the Zodiac. The attacker reportedly had a gun, but chose instead to use a knife, breaking from the previous pattern and likely contributing to the survival of the male victim. Prints from a military-issue boot distributed primarily to U.S. naval bases on the west coast were found at the scene. The professed killer again called police, again from a payphone near the local police station. He reportedly left a clear palm print on the phone, but a "nervous" technician reportedly destroyed it.

On October 11, 1969, one day shy of the birthday of Aleister Crowley, a taxi driver was shot once in the head with a 9mm handgun, although it was a different 9mm than had been used previously by the Zodiac. At four San Francisco-area crime scenes, the 'Zodiac' had now used a different weapon at each. The latest victim had picked up his fare on Mason Street and had then driven him to an address in the Presidio Heights area of the city, where he was promptly shot. Some local kids witnessed the murder and immediately called the police with a description of the assailant. For unexplained reasons, however, the police dispatcher broadcast a description of a black perpetrator, allowing the real shooter to evade a massive police response. Two days later, a new letter from the Zodiac claimed credit for the killing and threatened a future attack on a school bus.

On October 22, a man identifying himself as the Zodiac called authorities and requested to speak, strangely enough, to either F. Lee Bailey or San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli. A spectacle then played out in which the man, calling himself

‘Sam,’ called and had a live chat on the air with the CIA-linked Belli. In November, another letter arrived from the elusive Zodiac, this one containing a bomb threat. Also in November 1969, two Scientologists were found savagely murdered on the streets of Los Angeles. Each had been stabbed more than fifty times. One of the victims had dated Manson disciple Bruce Davis in 1968, just before Charlie had sent Davis to London to visit both the headquarters of the Process Church and the local Scientology school. Davis was later convicted of other, unrelated murder charges, and he has been identified by some researchers as a possible suspect in the Zodiac killings.

Another Zodiac letter, addressed to Belli, was sent on December 20, just shy of the winter solstice. On April 20, 1970, yet another letter was sent; it was followed by a ‘dragon card’ on April 28. The next day, on the eve of *Walpurgisnacht*, the Zodiac’s bomb threat was revealed to the public, ratcheting up the already high level of fear in the Bay area. Interestingly, one of the Zodiac’s numerous letters contained a coded reference to the locations of the killings. A decoding suggested that the crime scenes formed a pattern that centered on Mt. Diablo (the Devil’s Mountain) and that utilized an obscure unit of measurement known as a radian, which is a mathematical unit based on the number Pi.

Elsewhere in the country, a man named Stanley Baker was convicted in July 1970 for the murder of a Montana resident. Baker made a candid admission to his arresting officers: “I have a problem. I am a cannibal.” As proof, he produced from his pocket a well-gnawed human finger. Baker was the talkative sort and he readily confessed his involvement in a number of other murders that he claimed he had committed as a member of the Process-spawned Four Pi cult. Police were able to confirm his complicity in a particularly brutal mutilation murder in San Francisco, thanks to his having left behind a bloody fingerprint. California courts nevertheless declined to prosecute Baker for the homicide with the remarkable claim that he had been denied a speedy trial. Despite his confessed involvement in a number of murders, and despite the fact that the murder for which he was convicted involved him ripping out the man’s heart and eating it, Baker was released from prison after just fourteen years, and according to recent reports, he remains at large today. This in spite of the fact that he distinguished himself as something less than a model prisoner during his incarceration by starting his own satanic cult and having no fewer than eleven weapons confiscated by guards.

Just as Stanley Baker and Charlie Manson had migrated away from San Francisco, so too did many other disenchanted hippies and flower children move on in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many of them found refuge in the hundreds of square miles of sparsely settled wilderness offered by the Santa Cruz Mountains, where the abundance of rich soil and clear, running water provided ideal conditions for communal living and marijuana cultivation. By 1972, some

seventeen thousand men, women and children had taken up residence in the fertile glens and along the rich creek beds of Santa Cruz. As Margaret Cheney described the scene:

Every enterprising commune or solo Druid grew a patch of *cannabis*; but it did not end there. More enterprising men began to operate small, portable pill factories in the remoter parts of the forest, turning out LSD and amphetamines for the city market, free of police harassment. A small cult of Satanists from San Francisco liked the landscape and opened a local parish. After them came pretenders, exploiters and hangers-on. The more sensational news media promoted the black-mass aura. Small sacrificial animals were occasionally found beheaded.

Seemingly random, motiveless killings quickly began to plague Santa Cruz. On October 19, 1970, in a case closely mirroring the slaughter of the residents of the Tate house the year before, John Lindley Frazier, allegedly acting alone, killed all the occupants of a home in Santa Cruz, including a prominent doctor, his wife, secretary, and two children. Frazier, who was known to have a strong interest in the occult, was said to have started his own lifestyle as an ‘Aquarian Age’²¹ hermit living in a six-foot-square shack in the woods (a lifestyle later adopted by Ted Kaczynski, who was a subject of MK-ULTRA experiments while he was a young student at Harvard, and who has been named by some researchers as a possible suspect in the Zodiac killings). Just over a week after the Frazier killings, a Halloween card was received from the Zodiac. More cards and letters followed, the last of which arrived in 1974. The murders were never solved, though many believe that—as Inyo County District Attorney Frank Fowles has stated—“Manson and the Zodiac Killer were connected.”

Soon after Frazier’s rampage, women began going missing from around the Santa Cruz area. As early as autumn of 1968, reports began surfacing of grisly

21 The notion of an ‘Age of Aquarius’ was popularized by groups like San Francisco’s ‘Diggers,’ who occupied the aforementioned ‘Devil House,’ and by publications such as San Francisco’s *Oracle*. Perhaps no one played a greater role in popularizing the idea of the ‘Age of Aquarius’ than the *Oracle*’s Gavin Arthur. Interestingly, Arthur’s full legal name was Chester Alan Arthur III. He was the great-grandson of President Chester Arthur. He reportedly predicted JFK’s assassination before Kennedy was even elected. Some attribute that feat to clairvoyance, but it was more likely due to foreknowledge.

occult sacrifices being performed in the surrounding mountains. By the summer of 1972, it was clear that Santa Cruz had a problem. Mutilated bodies began showing up in the hills. By the time 1973 rolled around, the bodies were piling up at an alarming rate. In just the first six weeks of the year, eight bodies were found, and women were continuing to disappear. What had once been an idyllic community had been radically transformed; the murder rate had quintupled and Santa Cruz had achieved the rather dubious distinction of having the highest homicide rate in the country. Many of the area's killings were credited to two alleged serial killers, Edmund Kemper and Herb Mullin, who were said to be operating at the same time in the same city, though acting independently of each other. Kemper's bloody odyssey reportedly included eight victims brutally butchered between May 1972 and April 1973, most of them coeds whose corpses were cannibalized and sexually violated. Mullin was credited with dispatching thirteen victims in just four months, from October 13, 1972 through February 13, 1973. Mullin admitted to having a strong interest in the occult, a fact made evident by the nature of the killings attributed to him: the first victim was killed on Friday the 13th, the second on or about Halloween, and the third murder was the stabbing of a Catholic priest in his confessional on November 2, celebrated as All Souls Day.

To briefly recap, no fewer than six serial killers/mass murderers—Charles Manson, Stanley Baker, Edmund Kemper, Herbert Mullin, John Lindley Frazier, and the Zodiac—were all spawned from the Santa Cruz/San Francisco metropolitan area in a span of just over four years, at a time when 'serial killers' were a rare enough phenomenon that they hadn't yet acquired a name. And another serial killer was said to be at work not far away during the same timeframe. As Bundy chronicler Richard Larsen recounts, the bodies of at least fourteen young women and girls were found, nude and with their belongings missing, in Northern California between December 1969 and December 1973. In the immediate vicinity of each of the bodies "was found an elaborate witchcraft symbol of twigs and rocks." Remarkably enough, the crimes collectively attributed to these men did not even account for *all* the ritualized homicides that occurred in the Bay area during that time. For example, the murder of Fred Bennett, the captain of the Oakland chapter of the Black Panthers whose mutilated remains were found scattered in the Santa Cruz hills, was never solved. And many of the young students who were reported missing from local campuses were never found, either dead or alive, and were therefore never listed as homicide victims.

On October 12, 1974, the birthday of Aleister Crowley, student Arliss Perry was brutally murdered and left on display in the Stanford Memorial Church on the campus of Stanford University, nestled in the shadows of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Perry was left lying on her back, with her head toward the altar and

her legs spread wide. She was nude from the waist down and an altar candle protruded from her vagina; another altar candle was wedged between her exposed breasts. Her jeans had been neatly arranged in an inverted V-shape and placed across her splayed legs, forming the Masonic symbol of the compass and the square. Five years earlier, the very same symbol had been left carved into the stomach of Manson victim Leno LaBianca, as the “W” in the word “War.” The prime suspect in the still-unsolved murder of Perry is a man named Bill Mentzer, who knew Charles Manson and at least one of his victims: Abigail Folger. In fact, Mentzer reportedly had lunch with Folger just a few days before her death. He later was connected to David “Son of Sam” Berkowitz as well, and still later was convicted of the *Cotton Club* murder of aspiring film producer Roy Radin.

A few years after Perry’s murder, a new rash of ‘serial killings’ began in nearby Sacramento, California. These were ultimately attributed to a man named Richard Chase, also known as the “Vampire of Sacramento” and “The Dracula Killer.” These killers—Chase, Manson, Kemper, Mullin, the Zodiac, Frazier and Baker—heralded the dawn of a new era that soon had established ‘serial killers’ as an ever-present part of the American landscape. Before 1960, fewer than two serial killers a year were reported nationwide. By 1970, the number had climbed to six per year; by 1980, to nearly twenty per year. By 1990, nearly three-dozen serial killers a year were being reported across the country.

The years covered by the occult bloodbath in Northern California, 1967 through 1973, correspond precisely to the years that the Phoenix Program in Vietnam was in full operation (although similar programs, under different names, existed prior to 1967). In September 1973, the head of the Phoenix operation, William Colby, was appointed as the new Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Phoenix had officially come home.

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Charles Milles Manson was born “No Name” Maddox, the son of an alcoholic teenage prostitute. His mother was imprisoned for armed robbery when Charles was just a toddler, so the boy was sent to live with his grandparents. Following that, he lived for a time with an aunt and uncle in Virginia, who sent him off to his first day of school dressed as a girl, just as Henry Lee’s mother had done. By age eight, Charles was back with his mother, who occasionally sent him off to stay with a moonshiner uncle. At age nine, he was sent to stay at the Gibault Home for Boys—a ‘reform’ school in Terre Haute, Indiana. Three years later, the pre-teen boy was living alone in a single room at a boarding house, until he was discovered by authorities. How he came to be living alone remains something of a

mystery. From that point on, Manson spent the vast majority of his life institutionalized.

Charles next found himself housed at Boy's Town, identified in *The Franklin Cover-Up* as a cesspool of pedophilic operations. By the age of fifteen, Charles was no longer a ward of the state; he had graduated to being a full-fledged convict. In prison, the diminutive Manson was repeatedly raped and beaten by guards and fellow inmates, until he managed to escape at the age of sixteen and find his way to California. He was soon arrested again and sent to the rather ominously named National Training School for Boys in Washington, D.C. A few years later, he was set free and married briefly and fathered a child, while also working as a pimp. That occupation earned him a lengthy prison stay following a conviction for running an interstate vice ring. Seven years later, he was again set free, after reportedly following Henry Lee Lucas' lead by begging authorities at Terminal Island Prison not to release him.

Within months, Charlie was playing his music in bars in San Francisco's Tenderloin District and gathering a large and devoted group of followers. In his brief period of freedom, he lived with and associated with hundreds of different people, many of them prominent in the entertainment industry. He made numerous contacts in the music business, including Dennis Wilson,²² Neil Young and Terry Melcher—the son of Doris Day and the former occupant, along with Candace Bergen, of the Cielo Drive home where the Tate murders occurred. Charlie even reportedly served as a 'religious consultant' for Universal Studios on a movie about Christ, and also auditioned to be one of "The Monkeys." He was also deeply involved in a number of criminal enterprises, well before the consecutive bloodbaths that thrust him into the national limelight. As author Joel Norris has noted, Charlie was "a drug dealer and contract killer," and "had become involved in underworld crime, murder-for-hire rings, and child pornography." Interestingly enough, Manson has said that the Family's most well known victims were involved in some of the same enterprises: "Don't you think those people deserved to die? They were involved in kiddie porn." Charlie had also, as previously noted, allied himself with various satanic cult groups that, as Norris notes, were "heavily based on ritual bondage, sacrifice, and also murder." According to Ed Sanders, who interviewed numerous members and associates of the Family, Manson was also involved in the production and distribution of snuff films.

In the aftermath of the Tate and LaBianca killings, the LAPD, one of whose officers co-owned the auto shop that Charlie lived in just a few months before the murders, couldn't really be bothered with the wealth of evidence that implicated

22 Wilson and Melcher reportedly created an L.A.-area 'Hell Fire Club' known as the Golden Penetrators. Manson was likely a member.

Family members in the murders. The department also refused to acknowledge and examine the obvious connections between the two murder scenes, severely hampering the investigation. They likewise refused to explore the connections between the murder of musician Gary Hinman and the other two more high-profile crimes. The L.A. Sheriff's Department had already solved the Hinman case, no thanks to the LAPD, and had taken Bobby Beausoleil into custody just a few days before the Tate murders. The Sheriffs knew of his connections to the Family, and of the connections between the three crime scenes; two motorcycle gang members with close ties to the Family—Al Springer and Danny DeCarlo of the Straight Satans—had given the Sheriff's damning testimony concerning the Family's involvement in all three murders.

DeCarlo, who was reportedly a member of the Process Church, appears to have provided security for Charlie and the Family. He kept a large arsenal of weapons at the Family compound, including a .303 British Enfield rifle, a .22 rifle, a 20-gauge shotgun, a .30 caliber carbine, a 12-gauge riot gun, an M-1 carbine, and a sub-machinegun. The Family, it should be noted, did not operate as the hippie cult that they have been portrayed as being. Their base of operations was more of a paramilitary compound than it was a commune, complete with guard shacks at lookout points, telescopes, walkie-talkies, military field telephones, and converted dune buggies equipped with machinegun mounts.

When the Sheriffs passed along to the LAPD the information they had obtained from their informants, L.A.'s finest proceeded to do absolutely nothing. Meanwhile, on September 1, 1969—just a few weeks after the Tate murders—a .22 caliber revolver was found in Sherman Oaks and turned in to the LAPD. The gun was a rather rare and unique firearm, and just happened to match the description of the weapon suspected of being used in the killings—right down to the broken handle that provided a perfect fit for the handle pieces that were recovered at the murder scene. Nevertheless, the department tagged and filed the weapon and it was promptly forgotten. For months. The department later sent out a flyer with a photo of the weapon, failing to realize that they already had the gun in their custody. It took a phone call from the father of the boy who had found the gun to get the department to acknowledge its existence, and even then, the caller was initially told that the gun had probably been destroyed.

Elsewhere, Family member Susan Atkins had been arrested on unrelated charges and was spending time in the Sybil Brand Institute for Women. While there, she gave detailed confessions of the murders to at least two fellow inmates. She claimed that the Family had already committed eleven murders, and "many more were going to die." Both of these women tried to pass this information along to the LAPD, but both were repeatedly denied permission to do so. This was in spite of the fact that one of the female jailers to whom these requests were

made was at the time dating one of the Tate case homicide detectives. One of the inmates later said: "It was the hardest thing I've ever tried to do in my life, to get anyone to listen to me."

It would appear then that the LAPD had, among other evidence, all of the following at its disposal: the eyewitness account of a participant in the crimes; the gun used in the crimes; and the statements of two close associates of the killers directly implicating them in the crimes. Yet they chose not to act on any of this for a period of several months.

Though no serial killer/mass murderer in history has likely achieved the level of notoriety, or generated the volume of media coverage, that Charles Manson has, many of the most compelling facts of the Manson case remain largely unknown to the public. Of particular significance, perhaps, are the myriad levels on which the killers and the victims were connected. One of those connections was provided by none other than Anton LaVey. At least one of Charlie's girls, known locally as the "Witches of Mendocino," was recruited from LaVey's Church of Satan. Susan "Sexy Sadie" Atkins was one of many dancers in LaVey's stable, collectively known as the "Topless Witches Review." Atkins later credited LaVey with starting her down the road to murder. Family member Bobby Beausoleil, who was a roommate and, by some accounts, a lover of child star-turned underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger, was also recruited from the Church of Satan.

Interestingly enough, LaVey had connections to the victims as well. He had formed a close association with Roman Polanski shortly before the murders when he served as the technical consultant for Polanski on the film "Rosemary's Baby," in which he also made a cameo appearance as—who else?—Satan. On the set of an earlier film, Tate herself had reportedly been initiated into witchcraft by Alexander Saunders. Sammy Davis, Jr., who was introduced to the Church of Satan by Manson victim Jay Sebring, has said of the victims who were killed at Tate's Cielo Drive residence: "Everyone there had at one time or another been into satanism." Some newspaper reports at the time of the slayings, denounced as sensationalism, were rife with reports that the Polanskis were satanists who hosted drug and sex orgies. Indeed, just days before the murders a drug dealer was reportedly filmed being whipped at the house in an S&M ritual. Various celebrities were said to have been attendance. Actor Dennis Hopper spoke in interviews of sadistic movies filmed at the house that featured some of Hollywood's biggest names.

Another connection was provided by the Esalen Institute, a 'new age' retreat in Monterrey with ties to Crowley enthusiast Timothy Leary's like-minded Himalayan Academy. Manson had ties to both. He had in fact visited Esalen, where Robert DeGrimston of the Process Church reportedly lectured occasionally,

just a few days before the Tate killings. On the very day of the murders, someone from within the Polanski home placed a call to the Institute for reasons unknown. One of the victims, Abigail Folger, may have visited the retreat just a few days before Manson's visit. Author Robert Heinlein was also reportedly invited to lecture at Esalen. Heinlein, who, like Hubbard, first gained notice penning pieces for *Astounding Science Fiction*, is probably best known as the author of the 1961 novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*. The book provided Manson with a Crowley-inspired script to follow, and it was one of the few books that Charlie allowed his disciples to read. Heinlein was a right-winger with strong authoritarian leanings who to this day, nevertheless, continues to be promoted by various voices in the progressive community.

Another link between the principals in the case was provided by singer "Mama" Cass Elliot. Victims Voytek Frykowski and Jay Sebring, who had a history of sadism, were both part of Cass's clique, as were Manson and some of his followers. Victim Abigail Folger may have been as well. Folger had also been friends for a time with Charles Manson himself, as well as with convicted *Cotton Club* killer Bill Mentzer. Four of the LAPD's top initial suspects in the Tate murder case were members of Cass Elliot's inner circle. They remained prime suspects for the first month of the investigation. One member of that circle was Pic Dawson, the flamboyant son of a U.S. State Department official and an on-and-off boyfriend of Cass. Dawson had lived in the home of victims Frykowski and Folger in the summer before the killings while the ill-fated pair house-sat for the Polanskis at the future crime scene: 10050 Cielo Drive, later renumbered, appropriately enough, 10066 Cielo Drive.

Another connection between killers and victims was provided by their shared interest in drug trafficking. Several of the victims—including Voytek Frykowski, Abigail Folger, and Sharon Tate herself—were linked to the trafficking of hallucinogens. Rosemary LaBianca was a known trafficker of methamphetamine, and likely other drugs as well. Frykowski had reportedly secured a deal just before the murders that would have made him the exclusive distributor of MDA in the L.A. area, his operations financed with coffee heiress Folger's considerable financial resources. Jay Sebring, who before the murders had once appeared in an underground movie that also featured Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil, appears to have been involved in the drug trade as well. A man named Joel Rostau is known to have delivered drugs to Sebring at the Cielo house just hours before the murders. Rostau was found murdered the next year in New York City. Another Sebring associate showed up dead just a month later in Florida. Immediately following the killings on Cielo Drive, Sebring's house was thoroughly cleaned by friends before police arrived to conduct a search.

The Manson family was also heavily involved in drug dealing, including trafficking in LSD, hashish, marijuana and cocaine. Just a couple of days after the killings, Manson was seen driving a black Mercedes Benz possibly owned by an underling of a man named Ronald Stark. Around that same time, Stark assumed the role of banker for the 'Brotherhood of Eternal Love,' a tax-exempt 'church' that was formed by a motorcycle gang with close ties to Timothy Leary. The Brotherhood was led by a man named "Farmer" John Griggs. At the same time as the Tate murders, Griggs allegedly overdosed on PCP at the group's ranch in Idyllwild, California. A month earlier, a teenage friend of Leary's daughter had been found drowned at the ranch. The death of Griggs resulted in a massive shake-up at the organization that resulted in the shadowy Stark becoming the Brotherhood's sole banker and money manager. Under Stark's guiding hand, the Brotherhood became the largest known producer and distributor of LSD in the world, producing some 50 million doses. Stark was also closely linked to a parallel acid-producing operation in the UK dubbed the "Microdot Gang," which likewise produced millions of hits of LSD in the early 1970s. While running his empire, Stark was known to have extensive contacts with American embassy personnel and to have frequent visitors from both the British and the American consulates.

Were the Manson killings in reality part of what might be dubbed "The Great Acid Coup of 1969"? Were they the result of an operation aimed at, among other things, killing off some competitors, intimidating others, and consolidating control of the hallucinogenic drug market? The possibility clearly exists. Police originally were drawn to the theory that the killings were drug related. Other early theories were that the killings were occult inspired, or that the true motive could be found in what was dubbed 'fame-porn.' Films and videos found at the Polanski home suggested an elite Hollywood wife-swapping operation. The Folger/Frykowski home also yielded a box of erotic photos of Hollywood's elite.

There were also indications of the involvement of organized crime in the killings. Leno LaBianca had known underworld connections to whom he reportedly owed nearly \$250,000 in gambling debts. At the time of the murders, the LaBianca home—which I must add, perhaps gratuitously, was once owned by Walt Disney—was known to have its phone lines tapped. I could also add here, perhaps rather gratuitously as well, that Walt Disney was a direct descendent, on his mother's side, of George Burroughs—reportedly the 'grand wizard' of the witches executed in Salem in 1692.

One mistaken impression that many people have about the Manson case is that the homes where the attacks took place were largely chosen at random. That was hardly the case. Manson was very familiar with the Polanski/Tate home, which he had visited in the past. Manson knew both the owner of the Cielo Drive

home, Rudy Altobelli, and the previous tenant, Terry Melcher, who along with Charlie was involved with the Process Church (as was John Phillips, Cass Elliot's bandmate and another associate of Manson). Charlie was familiar with the LaBianca home as well; it was right next door to the home of Harold True, who had hosted LSD parties attended by Charlie and his followers before the murders.

One particularly bizarre fact about the Tate killings that has gone largely unreported is that the crime scene appeared to have been rearranged after the killers had left. An attempt appeared to have been made to pose the victims bodies on the home's front porch, after which the corpses were reposed inside the house. Evidence of tampering with the crime scene included an unidentified bloody boot heel print found on the front porch of the house and a number of unidentified fingerprints on the premises.

Manson was ultimately arrested on charges unrelated to the murders on October 12, Aleister Crowley's birthday, following a raid on the Family compound, and was only later charged in connection to the killings. Charlie had previously been arrested or charged on forty or more occasions. One of those arrests, in 1967, was made by a narcotics team led by the LAPD's Frank Salerno. Salerno would later lead the task forces investigating both the Hillside Strangler murders and the Night Stalker killings.

When the Manson case came to trial, there were the usual strange occurrences that seem to plague serial killer trials. The lead defense attorney, Ronald Hughes, had just passed the bar and had yet to try a single case. He was, needless to say, a rather odd choice to spearhead the defense of one of the most vigorously prosecuted and high-profile murder cases of all time. Hughes soon went missing, and later turned up dead on the very day that death sentences were returned by the jury. Family member John Philip "Zero" Haught, not charged with playing a role in the murders, also turned up dead, allegedly after playing a game of Russian Roulette. Another member of the Family was whisked away to Patton State Hospital, which was reportedly deeply immersed in overt behavior modification experiments in the 1970s. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the trial was that the defense team rested their case without bothering to actually present one. Courtroom viewers were stunned when not a single witness was called to rebut the prosecution's case, thereby virtually guaranteeing a win for Bugliosi and the state. Also of note is that then-President Richard Nixon declared Manson guilty on national television, nearly causing a mistrial, but ultimately greatly aiding the prosecution's efforts.

When it was all over, Judge Oder pronounced death sentences for Charlie, Patricia Krenwinkel, Susan Atkins, and Leslie VanHouten. The sentences were delivered on, of all days, April 19, 1971. The year before, Bobby Beausoleil had become the first Family member to receive a death sentence when the jury trying

him returned the sentence in the Gary Hinman murder trial. The date was April 21, 1970.

Perhaps in no other serial killer case has the subject of mind control played a more central role. That Charlie had a remarkable ability to control his followers is a well-established and widely acknowledged fact. Even more remarkable is that Manson has maintained much of that control from inside a prison cell for over thirty years now. In fact, the control that he had over his disciples was the primary basis for Manson's murder convictions. While it was Charlie's face that came to symbolize the killings, he did not personally participate in the Tate/LaBianca murders. According to the official version of events, he was not even present at the crime scenes when the murders took place; he merely suggested to his followers what they should do, and they obligingly followed his commands. In order to convict Manson then, it was necessary for the prosecution to convince the jury that the actual killers were virtually powerless to disobey their leader. For this reason, the Manson trial had no real precedent in American legal history. What the Manson case demonstrated was that it could be proven in a court of law that a person could be compelled to essentially act against his/her will. That had already been established in a Danish court in a landmark case recalled by Estabrooks in *Hypnotism*:

An amateur hypnotist named Nielson had induced an hypnotic subject named Hardrup to commit a murder...Nielson, the hypnotist, got a life sentence, the maximum penalty in Denmark, whereas Hardrup, the actual murderer, received a two-year sentence on the basis of temporary insanity.

The Manson case had a slightly different outcome: Manson, the hypnotist, received the death penalty, the maximum sentence in the State of California, and so too did the actual murderers. Legally and logically, that verdict made little sense. For if Manson's control was so complete that the killers were powerless to resist his commands, then they should not have been held legally accountable for their actions. And if Charlie did not wield such power, then he should not have been held responsible for the actions of others. Prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi did not address that inherent contradiction in his prosecution strategy in his widely read book, *Helter Skelter*. He did ponder, albeit briefly, how Manson gained such control over his subjects. He concluded that that remains "the most puzzling question of all." Indeed. After spending just a few pages briefly summarizing some of the techniques Manson employed on his followers, Bugliosi surmised:

I tend to think that there is something more, some missing link that enabled him to so rape and bastardize the minds of his followers that they would go against the most ingrained of all commandments, Thou shalt not kill, and willingly, even eagerly, murder at his command.

Charlie himself once gave an indication of how he controlled his flock: "If you want to get to people and unlock their minds, the basic way you get to them is through fear." That was a concept that borrowed from the teachings of the Process Church. In a summer 1969 interview, *Beach Boy* Dennis Wilson spoke of "getting the fear." In the same interview, he referred to Charlie as "the Wizard."

While pondering the question of *how* Manson was able to exert such control, Bugliosi largely ignores a perhaps even more important question: *where* did Charlie learn the techniques that he was obviously so skilled at? Bugliosi notes only that it "may be something that he learned from others," which, of course, is only stating the obvious. The question not asked, either in the book or at trial, is: who were these others? One possible answer can be found among the personnel at the Haight-Asbury Free Clinic in the late 1960s. Two employees of the clinic—Dr. Roger Smith, a research criminologist who had started the clinic's drug treatment program, and Dr. David Smith, who founded the clinic itself—were both involved in government-sponsored research on human behavior. Both had connections to Manson and his followers. In fact, Roger Smith was Charlie's parole officer.

Another question never addressed by Bugliosi is how it was possible that a man of limited education, who had spent the majority of his life behind bars, somehow acquired those skills while U.S. intelligence agencies, after investing countless millions of dollars in decades of research aimed at attaining that very same goal, have allegedly met with nothing but failure. It defies explanation that men such as Manson—or Jim Jones, David Koresh, *et al*—have stumbled upon a secret that the CIA has yet to discover. It is a patently absurd notion, and yet that is exactly what we are supposed to believe. We are also supposed to believe that Charlie, while controlling the actions of others, was himself acting on his own free will. That is highly unlikely.

If Charlie was in fact controlling the Family, the logical question to be asked at trial was: who was controlling Manson? Was Manson himself a puppet, as well as a puppeteer? That question, naturally, was never raised and so remains largely unanswered to this day. Perhaps Bugliosi felt that question unimportant, given that, according to his book, "The Manson case was, and remains, unique." Dr. Roger Smith saw things a little differently. In December 1969, he told *Life* magazine: "There are a lot of Charlies running around, believe me."

(The story of Charles Manson is an endlessly fascinating one. It is also a story that is difficult to tell in a linear fashion, because Charlie and his victims were connected to so many people on so many different levels. For a nonlinear look at the Manson story, see <http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/wtc13.html>.)

* * * * *

Relatively little has been written about the murder of Dr. Vincent Ohta and his family on October 19, 1970, though the crime was no less sensational than the slaughter at the Polanski/Tate residence the year before. There were two marked differences between the Santa Cruz crime scene and the Benedict Canyon crime scene: in Santa Cruz, none of the victims was a national celebrity and the job was done more professionally.

In a spectacular home overlooking the bay, Dr. Ohta, his secretary, Dorothy Cadwallader, his wife, Virginia, and his sons, Derrick and Taggart, were bound and blindfolded and then shot in the head from behind, execution style. They were then tossed into the home's pool, some of them while they were still alive. The house was then set afire in several locations, thus destroying the crime scene. The family's Rolls Royce and Lincoln Continental were parked across the home's driveway entrances, denying access to the emergency vehicles that attempted to respond to the fires. A third car, a 1968 Oldsmobile station wagon, was missing.

There was little in the way of crime scene evidence. The main portion of the house was completely gutted by the fires. The victims' bodies had been washed clean in the pool. A driving rain in the early morning hours had thoroughly washed away any footprints or other evidence that might have been left outside the home. Police initially said that they had found no scrawled messages and no evidence of burglary. When the missing Oldsmobile was found, torched and abandoned in a tunnel, it also failed to yield any evidence.

Although there was little for police to work with, one thing seemed clear enough: these murders were not the work of a lone perpetrator. Some investigators, and much of the public, immediately suspected that another homicidal cult was at work. It seemed very unlikely that a sole assailant would have been able to bind all five victims, drag all their bodies out to the pool, start multiple fires, blockade the driveway, and then make a clean getaway. Two guns were used in the commission of the crimes—the .38 caliber weapon that killed Dr. Ohta and the .22 caliber weapon that killed the others. A witness reported seeing three people in the vicinity of the abandoned Oldsmobile, and three sets of footprints were found leading from the tunnel to an adjacent river. Two people who fit the

witness' description were reportedly found in the search area, but there is no indication of what became of those potential suspects.

For obvious reasons, a Sheriff's spokesman announced at a press conference that police were seeking more than one perpetrator. A few days later, however, John Frazier was arrested and charged with being the sole perpetrator of the crimes. An initial report on the arrest falsely claimed that Frazier had waged a gun battle with police, when he was actually taken into custody without incident.

John Frazier had been placed in foster care at the age of five. He later ended up in a series of juvenile detention facilities. He was said to have a history of sleepwalking and horrifying nightmares. Despite his troubled upbringing, a friend described Frazier as having been a perfectly normal family man and competent mechanic, right up until the time that he suddenly changed his lifestyle dramatically and began speaking gibberish. On July 4, 1970, just three months before the murders, Frazier left his wife. At that time, he apparently took up residence in a shack, accessible via a drawbridge, on property near the Ohta residence. While living there, he reportedly collected guns.

Following his arrest, Frazier was assigned James Jackson, the chief assistant public defender of Santa Cruz County, as his defense counsel. Assisting Jackson was Harold Cartwright, a former U.S. Marine and police lieutenant working as Jackson's private investigator. Also brought on board by Jackson was Donald Lunde, a former Navy man and a professor of psychiatry at the Stanford University Medical School, not far from Santa Cruz. This team remained together to handle the Kemper and Mullin cases as well. Also on the same team, for all practical purposes, was prosecutor Peter Chang. It is unclear whether these four men knew each other before the Frazier trial began, but in his book, Lunde makes it clear that he, Chang, Jackson and Cartwright were fast friends by trial's end, and frequently saw each other socially thereafter. This undoubtedly made it much easier to coordinate the shamelessly fraudulent Kemper and Mullin trials.

On October 28, 1970, a grand jury indicted Frazier on five counts of murder. The defendant entered a plea of "not guilty," which was later changed, on January 19, 1971, to "not guilty by reason of insanity." A gag order was issued and the trial was moved to Redwood City, but the Santa Cruz team remained on the case. Helming the trial, which began in October 1971, was Judge Charles Franich. By late November, Frazier had been convicted on all five murder counts. It is unclear what evidence those convictions were based on. No murder weapon was ever found, so there was no ballistics evidence. There were no witnesses to the crime, and virtually all forensics evidence was destroyed by the fires and the rain. One witness reportedly identified Frazier as the driver of the abandoned Oldsmobile. It was claimed at one time by the DA's office that fingerprints had been recovered from a typewriter found in the incinerated home, but it was later acknowledged

that that statement had not been accurate. It was also claimed, implausibly enough, that fingerprints were recovered from a beer can found in the home.

Dr. Lunde seems to have played a key role in garnering the convictions when he testified (for the defense, mind you) that Frazier had confessed the crimes to him during a psychiatric examination. Lunde also assured the court: “He’s crazy.” John Frazier illustrated that point when he arrived for court during the penalty phase of the trial with half his head and face shaved clean. He was sentenced to death, but that sentence was later set aside by a 1976 Supreme Court decision.

There are many questions left unanswered in the Ohta/Frazier case. Among them is the question of what Dorothy Cadwallader was doing at the Ohta home. Cadwallader worked at Ohta’s office, not at his home, and she was not known to be a visitor to the residence. Press reports claimed that she was there to baby-sit, but Cadwallader’s husband denied those reports. He had no explanation for why his wife was there that fateful day.

Another lingering question concerns the typewritten note that a press release claimed was found under the windshield wiper of the Rolls Royce, contradicting initial reports that there were no notes or messages found. Of course, a typewritten note fits in quite well with the claim of a fingerprint-laden typewriter. That typewriter, unfortunately, did not actually exist. The note, however, lives on. It read, in part:

halloween...1970

today world war 3 will begin as brought to you by the pepole of the free universe.

* * * * *

Edmund Kemper III and Herbert Mullin—Santa Cruz’s dueling serial killers—lived what were, in many respects, strangely parallel lives.

Both were born the sons of World War II heroes, Kemper on December 18, 1948, and Mullin on April 18, 1947. Edmund Emil Kemper, Jr. was a Special Forces operative whose specialty, according to his son, was suicide missions. Martin William Mullin served as a highly decorated captain in the Pacific. According to *his* son, Martin voluntarily committed himself to a mental hospital at the close of the war. Both of these men liked to regale their sons with graphic war stories. Young Herb was taught that violence is natural, and Ed’s childhood home was filled with what Margaret Cheney described as “mementos of battle-field gore and heroics.”

In their youth, both Herb and Ed received training in firearms from the National Rifle Association while at summer camp. Both would later be accused and convicted of killing with the cold precision of a professional assassin. Both were also labeled ‘serial killers,’ though both were convicted of crimes that evidence suggests they did not commit—at least not alone.

Both of their alleged killing sprees began in 1972 in Santa Cruz, California and both were arrested in early 1973. Following those arrests, the two were assigned adjoining jail cells, appointed the same defense attorney, examined by the same psychiatrist, and their cases were prosecuted by the same district attorney, at least until Chang bowed out of the Mullin case due to a medical emergency. Kemper and Mullin were both found guilty, both determined to be sane, and both were sent to California’s Vacaville Medical Facility, which has been well documented as a hotbed of covert intelligence operations. Not long before their killing sprees began, both men spent a considerable amount of time in mental institutions, both voluntarily and involuntarily. In the two years leading up to the convictions of Kemper and Mullin, at least seventy-four men, women and children were killed in the state of California by released mental patients.

* * * * *

Herb Mullin was, by all outward appearances, the quintessential All-American boy. He was a bright student, a talented athlete, and was popular enough to have been voted “most likely to succeed” by his graduating class at San Lorenzo Valley High School. But he was also known to consume large quantities of hallucinogenic drugs and he had “Legalize Acid” boldly tattooed across his stomach.

On April 21, 1968, just three days after his 21st birthday, Mullin was arrested for possession of the substance referenced in another of Herb’s tattoos: “Eagle Eyes Marijuana.” He cryptically wrote to his parents of that experience: “That day the GAME started.” For the ‘crime’ of possessing marijuana, Herb was given probation and, on Halloween day, committed to San Luis Obispo General Hospital. The personable young man—who was known to have a keen interest in astrology, numerology, reincarnation, magic and the occult—was institutionalized at least four more times over the next few years, including a voluntary commitment to Mendocino State Hospital near Ukiah. On July 30, 1970, Herb was again arrested on drug charges and ordered into the psychiatric ward of the county hospital.

That same year, he met an older woman named Pat Brown at a Santa Cruz commune, and she soon thereafter convinced him to accompany her to Maui. Once there, Herb was once again committed to a mental hospital. According to

Manson chronicler Ed Sanders, the hospital was run by the U.S. Army. Sanders also claimed, in a letter to famed ‘conspiracy’ researcher Mae Brussell, that a mind control project in operation on the Hawaiian Islands at the time was specifically aimed at creating ‘serial killers.’ While on Maui, Mullin—whose other tattoos read “Mahashamadhi,” “Kriya Yoga,” and the word “Birth” with two crosses—also spent time at the Krishna Temple. Upon his return to the mainland, he was met at the airport by the son of a prominent local doctor, Richard Koch. Mullin reportedly revealed to him that he had received electroshock treatments while on Maui.

On March 28, 1971, Mullin was again arrested, this time for being drunk in public and resisting an officer. He served ten days in jail and then, in May, moved to San Francisco, where he remained for the next sixteen months, although later he had only vague memories of that lengthy period. For the most part, he could not account for that entire one-and-a-half-year slice of his life. He lived in the city’s ‘Tenderloin’ district, where Charlie Manson had taken up residence just a few years earlier. Herb stayed in the company of young male hustlers in a series of seedy hotel rooms and, at times, in his car. Friends and acquaintances from that period of his life universally described him as sweet, tender, sensitive, and completely incapable of killing anyone. Strangely though, he also appears to have been a Golden Gloves boxer during that time.

Throughout his adult life, Herb complained frequently of voices in his head, haunting his thoughts. He regularly told those around him that he was receiving messages, including commands to kill, that were delivered in his father’s voice. Herb would later state: “I feel that I was under my father’s control, like a robot.” Mullin was also known to tell people that his father, a Mason, was a mass murderer responsible for countless unsolved killings up and down the California coast. During the largely blacked-out period that he spent in San Francisco, Herb engaged in what is known as backward writing, a hypnotically conditioned skill that is frequently indicative of mind control programming. Mullin was ultimately diagnosed as suffering from MPD; his alters were said to include a Mexican laborer, an Eastern philosopher, and, bizarrely enough, local columnist and unofficial Anton LaVey publicist Herb Caen.

Herb returned from San Francisco to his parent’s Santa Cruz home in September 1972, and allegedly began his killing spree just a few weeks later. He allegedly purchased a six-shot .22 revolver from a gun shop on December 22, the winter solstice. Around that same time, the former Conscientious Objector inexplicably decided to enlist in the U.S. Marines. On January 15, he passed both the physical and mental entrance examinations, a rather remarkable feat considering that at the time he was just a few weeks away from being arrested and charged as a serial killer. He also had a criminal record, which his recruiter opted to waive.

Herb's arrest preempted his military plans. Once in custody, he was interrogated by police, throughout which he robotically chanted the single word "silence" to virtually all questions posed to him, as if repeating an instruction that had been programmed into his brain. He later claimed that, once incarcerated, he began receiving telepathic messages instructing him to kill himself, but he was able to resist acting on those orders. Had Mullin elected to commit suicide, the state surely would have breathed a sigh of relief. After all, they would have been spared the burden of staging a blatantly fraudulent trial.

From the moment of Herb's arrest, there were clear indications that he was being railroaded—by the very same team, as noted previously, that sent John Frazier to death row. There were also clear signs from early on that Mullin may not have been responsible for many of the crimes for which he was charged, most of which looked for all the world like contract hits. The killing of Father Tomei, for example, was very likely a professional hit. Tomei, who was raised in an orphanage during World War I, was internationally known both as a hero of the French resistance during World War II, and for having organized a chorus for troubled youth made up primarily of boys from abusive homes. This chorus toured internationally, which, though it is merely speculation, would have provided an ideal 'front' for an underage male prostitution racket.

An eyewitness to the slaying of Tomei described his assailant as young, white, 6' tall, and wearing a black leather jacket. Herb was only 5' 7" tall and never owned a black leather jacket. Although he certainly could have borrowed the jacket, the five-inch height discrepancy is a little harder to explain. Mullin did have a connection to Tomei: Herb's second cousin, Monsignor Edwin Kennedy, was a close friend of the slain priest.

Mullin may or may not have been responsible for the nearly simultaneous mass murders at the homes of Jim Gianera and Bob Francis. One witness described the possible assailant as being short and of medium build, which accurately described Herb. But the witness also stated that he thought the man was Mexican, which Mullin definitely was not, although, as previously mentioned, one of his alter egos was. One thing that is known for sure is that Herb knew the victims quite well, which illustrates yet another flaw in the public's perception of the nature of serial crime. In fact, a number of the killers profiled herein knew at least some of their victims, and sometimes knew them quite well.

Another thing that is quite clear is that the Gianera and Francis families were not randomly selected victims. Rather, they were almost certainly the targets of professional hits. Both Francis and Gianera were known drug dealers, as were Gianera's two brothers. And word on the street at the time of the killings was that Jim and Bob were snitches. It is, therefore, extremely unlikely that the simultaneous assaults on their two homes were random acts of violence.

Bob Francis was not at home at the time of the killings, but his wife and two young sons were summarily and quite professionally executed with a .22 round to the head. One of those sons, Herb's youngest alleged victim at just four years old, was named Daemon—which is a nice name to give to your kid, if your name happens to be, say, Lucifer. At the Gianera home, both Jim and his wife Joan were killed with multiple gunshot and stab wounds. Strangely, both Jim and Joan's families arrived at the crime scene before the police were notified. The house looked as though it had been thoroughly searched, though whether by the killers or by the victims' families is unclear. Police later found two .22 casings in Bob Francis' car, though that is obviously far from being conclusive evidence of guilt.

Another mass murder attributed to Mullin, the slaughter of four teenaged campers, appeared to have been the work of multiple perpetrators—unless, that is, one chooses to believe that one man wielding a six-shot revolver can overpower four healthy young men armed with a rifle. This crime also looked very much like a professional job. All four victims were coldly and methodically dispatched with a single small caliber shot to the head from point-blank range. Evidence at the scene suggested that there had definitely been a struggle, yet the boys loaded and unfired rifle was found still lying within easy reach of where the teens' bodies lay dead.

The final murder attributed to Herb was the sniper shooting of a retired boxer who was felled with a single shot to the chest from 100 feet away, in what appeared to be yet another professional hit. Just days later, prosecutor Chang filed six murder counts against Mullin, even though three witnesses were unable to pick him out of a police line-up. Eight days later, four more murder counts were added and a sweeping gag order was issued barring any public statements on the case from anyone involved. On March 1, Mullin appeared before a judge, accompanied by attorney Jackson, and shocked the courtroom by entering a *nolo contendere* plea and a request to represent himself. When the judge rejected both the plea and the request, Herb immediately offered up a guilty plea. The judge, however, insisted on going through with the mockery of a trial. Dispensing with a preliminary hearing, the case was instead sent to a grand jury, which issued indictments on all ten murder counts on March 14. The transcript of those proceedings, naturally enough, was sealed by the judge.

Mullin's defense counsel, Jackson, got things rolling by introducing a number of pre-trial motions that rather shamelessly sold his client out. Jackson told the court that there was no reason to change the venue of the trial, despite a massive amount of pre-trial publicity demonizing Mullin, and despite the unprecedented climate of fear in Santa Cruz engendered by the alleged actions of Kemper, Frazier, Mullin, *et al.* He also made an unprecedented request that jury questioning, known as *voir dire*, be conducted in the judge's chambers. The request was granted and the jury was, without precedent, selected away from the eyes of the press and public.

As California law requires that a defendant pleading “not guilty by reason of insanity” also maintain their factual innocence, two trials are generally required to dispose of such a case: one to determine factual guilt; and the second to determine sanity, and therefore legal guilt. In a most remarkable move, however, Jackson agreed with the prosecutor and the judge that the two should be combined into one, since it was universally claimed that there was no question about factual guilt. The ‘trial,’ in other words, began with the presumption of guilt as its starting point, completely doing away with the notion that, in the American criminal justice system, all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

When the trial began on July 30, 1973, the judge opened the proceedings by explaining to the secretly selected jurors the five possible verdicts they were to consider: guilty of first degree murder; guilty of second degree murder, guilty of voluntary manslaughter; guilty of involuntary manslaughter; or not guilty by reason of insanity. Notably absent from that list, from the very beginning of the trial, was “not guilty.” Not to be outdone, defense counsel Jackson began his opening statement by declaring: “Friday the 13th, October 1972, Herbert William Mullin took a baseball bat and clubbed one Lawrence White to death.” Not only had he declared his client guilty of murder, *he had implicated him in a crime he had never even been charged with*. Jackson’s opening act also included this little gem: “We do not, as you know, intend to argue the proposition that [Herb] did not commit these killings.” He did not, in other words, intend to actually defend his client.

With Mullin’s guilt having been predetermined—albeit with no actual physical evidence to support that conclusion—the state presented its case in just four days, with the ‘facts’ established rather perfunctorily and without a hint of any objections from the defense table. The defense team, in fact, did not bother to challenge any of the supposed facts of the case, which would not have withstood any sort of scrutiny. Truth be told, the state need not have presented a case at all; the defense did a fine job of establishing Mullin’s guilt. Playing a central role in that charade was Dr. Donald Lunde, who took the stand and proceeded to reveal what was purportedly Herb’s own account of the murders, which the doctor claimed that Mullin had confessed to both he and Cartwright.

Not long into this testimony, Herb objected and requested that Jackson promptly terminate his questioning of Lunde, which was obviously eliciting testimony that was damaging to Herb’s case. Mullin noted of Lunde’s testimony: “different aspects and different facets of the story which I related are being portrayed completely false as to how I made them.” He also informed the judge that, “in conference, they [Lunde and Jackson] explained that they would portray the reasons for my derangement.” The judge, needless to say, declined to halt Lunde’s

testimony, which was essential for establishing Mullin's alleged guilt, which is why, I suppose, the testimony was being solicited by the *defense* team.

Herb voiced numerous other complaints during his trial and frequently questioned the competence and integrity of his appointed defenders, noting at one point the fact that Jackson, his lead attorney, refused to communicate with him in writing. Herb also strenuously objected to the misuse by Lunde of videotapes that the doctor had made of Herb's supposed confessions. Mullin even went so far as to state, rather bluntly, that he was the victim of a huge conspiracy. Despite his deep mistrust of Lunde, the doctor was nevertheless able to convince Mullin to take the stand in his own defense, which any first year law student knows almost never benefits anyone other than the prosecution. While on the stand, Herb was asked directly by Jackson to explain why he had killed thirteen people, to which he responded: "All right. First of all, you have heard me say before that I am a scapegoat, sort of an outcast who has been made to become a scapegoat."

That was not, it seems safe to say, the response that Jackson had hoped to elicit.

On August 19, 1973, the jury returned with guilty verdicts on all ten murder counts. The failure of the pitiful attempt at an insanity defense was due in no small part to a statement from Lunde to the jury: "as a practical matter, whether somebody is dangerous or not, there is no place to put him." The message was quite clear: finding Mullin to be insane would essentially mean setting him free. The jury had essentially been instructed to find Herb guilty, and it did just that. He was sentenced to life in prison and promptly shipped off to Vacaville, before ultimately landing in San Quentin. Over the years, he was periodically shipped back to Vacaville, perhaps in need of a tune-up.

To fully understand the depths of Lunde's cravenness, one need look no further than the doctor's own words, written in his self-serving book on the case: "I had learned years earlier that the best course after a psychiatric interview of a criminal defendant is for me to return to my office, immediately dictate a summary of my notes, and destroy the originals." That is, needless to say, a course of action to be taken only when one feels the need to cover something up, and a course of action that should have disqualified Lunde as a credible witness in the case.

The final words on the Mullin case were written by Kenneth Springer, the jury foreman, who wrote to then-Governor of California Ronald Reagan: "I hold the state executive and state legislative offices as responsible for these 10 lives as I do the defendant himself—none of this need ever have happened." Springer probably had no idea how true those words really were. Nor did he likely know that the very same words could be as accurately applied to the case of Edmund Kemper.

When Ed Kemper was just a toddler, his father headed off for the Pacific, where he spent two years working on the U.S. atomic bomb testing program, as did the father of the so-called “Sunset Strip Killer”...but we’ll get to that later.

Though it appears that efforts have been made to whitewash Kemper’s childhood, there are clear indications that it was a horrifyingly abusive one. At one point in his young life, Ed was made to live in a dank, dark basement for eight consecutive months, the only access to which was through a trapdoor hidden beneath a kitchen table. From the age of eight, Ed engaged in an incestuous relationship with an older sister. At ten, he killed and beheaded his first cat, planted the severed head on a spindle and thereafter prayed over it. According to chronicler Margaret Cheney, he was prone to “zombie-like fits of staring,” which is another way of saying that he had a strong tendency to dissociate.

At the tender age of fifteen, Kemper summarily executed both of his grandparents with single .22 caliber rounds to the backs of their heads. He was judged insane and, on December 6, 1964, was remanded by the California Youth Authority to Atascadero State Hospital, an enormous facility filled with convicted rapists, child molesters and other violent sex offenders. Kemper remained at Atascadero for five years. On staff there, near the end of his confinement, was none other than Dr. Donald Lunde. It is indeed a small world.

Remanded back to the CYA as ‘cured,’ Kemper was paroled three months later to his mother’s care. Not long after, Ed began work on a particularly brutal string of murders, while at the very same time he successfully petitioned to have his juvenile record sealed. In pursuit of that latter goal, he reportedly once drove to Fresno for a required psychiatric exam with a freshly severed head in the trunk of his car.

Kemper spent a considerable amount of his free time hanging out at a bar called the “Jury Room,” which served as a watering hole for local cops, sheriffs and prosecuting attorneys. Kemper was quite well known there, where he was affectionately known as “Big Ed,” even by the regulars who were aware of his colorful history. This theme of alleged serial killers maintaining close ties with various law enforcement agencies and personnel is one that will be revisited frequently in this book. In fact, many of the men profiled herein, including Ed Kemper, aspired to careers in law enforcement themselves.

By April 1973, Kemper had been charged with savagely murdering six female hitchhikers between May 1972 and February 1973. He followed those killings up with his swansong—bludgeoning his own mother to death, beheading her, raping her headless corpse, and then, according to some reports, using her severed head as a dartboard. Ed then called to invite his mother’s friend over to the house that he shared with his mom and, upon her arrival, quickly dealt with her in a similar manner. This double murder occurred, strangely enough, on April 21,

1973—exactly five years to the day from the date on which Herb Mullin had noted that the “GAME” had begun. Kemper quickly fled the state, ending up in Pueblo, Colorado after a making a stop at the University of Nevada campus for reasons unknown.

On April 23, Big Ed called some of his drinking buddies at the Santa Cruz Police Department and promptly began confessing his crimes. Pueblo police arrested him as he stood at a public payphone talking to the Santa Cruz officers. In his nearby car were 3 guns and 200 rounds of ammunition. He had apparently left some of his arsenal at home; his sister claimed that Ed owned at least six guns, including a .22 Ruger pistol, which is the one that he allegedly used to inflict the fatal head wounds that killed many of his victims. Why Ed chose to turn himself in and give up without a fight, after making his roundabout escape equipped with a mini arsenal, remains a mystery.

Though there is no question that Kemper was involved in the killings (he did, after all, document his handiwork with Polaroids), there is evidence to suggest that others may have been involved as well. An eyewitness to the abduction of one victim, for instance, described a “fairly tall male Caucasian” driving a “cream or tan-colored sedan.” Kemper’s car was bright yellow, and he was hardly what would be considered “fairly tall.” Kemper, in fact, was known as Big Ed for good reason: he was a giant of a man, standing 6’ 9” tall and weighing in at 280 pounds. It would have been nearly impossible for any potential eyewitnesses not to notice his imposing stature.

One particularly bizarre aspect of the crimes attributed to Ed Kemper and Herb Mullin is that the body of one of Ed’s alleged victims and the body of one of Herb’s alleged victims were found buried in the virtually the same isolated, remote location. As Kemper himself noted, the body of his victim was discovered “amazingly close to where the girl from Cabrillo was found up there, stabbed.”

Kemper’s trial was a largely pointless affair that featured the very same cast of characters that had starred in the Frazier and Mullin trials. No one in the courtroom ever questioned whether Ed was factually guilty of the crimes, or whether he had acted alone. After all, he had given what Cheney described as “one of the most detailed, articulate, and chilling confessions of sadism, murder, mutilation, cannibalism, and necrophilia in the annals of crime.” He had also taken the time to document his barbarity with a large collection of ‘snuff’ photos. What the confessions and photos revealed was a series of unbelievably sadistic crimes that were laced with occult symbolism. This had led some avenues of the media to theorize, prior to Ed’s arrest, that the yet-to-be-identified killer was a member of a devil-worshipping cult.

Just as Mullin had unwisely chosen to take the stand in his own defense, so too did Kemper. He testified that the killings arose from fantasies that began to build

in his head during his confinement at Atascadero. Attorney Jackson elaborated, adding that Ed had told California Youth Authority officials of “evil forces within him which tried to control his behavior.” Incidentally, John Frazier, like Kemper, had spent time with the CYA; he also claimed, like Mullin, to hear voices in his head. The phenomenon of hearing voices, though considered by psychiatrists to be auditory hallucinations indicative of delusional thought processes, is actually a quite logical manifestation of both Multiple Personality Disorder and mind control programming, the two frequently going hand-in-hand. Many researchers have put forth the idea that the hearing of such voices, and particularly the receiving of specific commands, is a result of various high-tech forms of electromagnetic mind control, such as inter-cerebral implants. However, while such technology no doubt exists, it really is not necessary to explain the phenomenon of hearing voices—a phenomenon that long predates the development of any technological means to produce it.

In all probability, what the voices represent are the various alter personalities of a person with a severe dissociative disorder communicating with that person’s core personality, which has no conscious awareness of the alters and so experiences their voices as disembodied “voices in the head.” The voices, in other words, are essentially a one-way internal conversation between different personalities inhabiting the same body. In a sense then, the voices are not a delusion at all, for the afflicted person is not imagining that someone is talking to him; someone *is* talking to him. The problem is that the person is unaware that the person talking to him is actually within him. He is, in a very real sense, talking to himself.

Ed Kemper was probably familiar with the notion of voices in the head. As he once said, “I believe...that there are two people inside me.” He also described experiencing a dissociative state while going about his grisly work: “It’s almost like a blacking out. You know what you’re doing but you don’t notice anything else around.” Ed was judged sane and guilty of eight counts of first-degree murder, giving him a career total of ten homicide convictions, just like Herb Mullin. He was sentenced to life in prison and sent to Vacaville, then later transferred to Folsom.

* * * * *

It seems somehow redundant to review the case of the so-called Vampire of Sacramento, Richard Chase, given that his story closely parallels that of Herb Mullin. Nevertheless, a brief review is in order.

Chase was born into a household where inter-familial violence was the order of the day. His parents reportedly fought constantly, and his father was

euphemistically described as a “strict disciplinarian.” By the age of eighteen, Richard was receiving regular psychiatric care. In the late 1960s, Chase was twice arrested for possession of marijuana, the same charge that first brought Mullin into the orbit of the criminal justice system. Richard was also a suspect in a 1968 shooting, although he was never charged with the crime. In 1973, he was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon and, on December 1, he was admitted into the American River Hospital by order of the court, but was discharged not long after into the care of his mother. As Herb had done with his father, Richard took to accusing his mother of controlling his mind. Chase also began claiming in the mid-70s that he was receiving telepathic messages. He was known to hold conversations with people nobody else could see. And like Mullin, Chase reportedly had a healthy appetite for hallucinogenic drugs. His mother later claimed that her son’s problems were due to him being the victim of LSD abuse.

Richard was again arrested in 1976 and, on April 28, just two days shy of *Walpurgisnacht*, was again admitted to American River Hospital. In June of that same year, his mother was granted a one-year conservatorship of the troubled young man. He was then transferred to Beverly Manor, where he became known to staff and fellow inmates as “Dracula.” In September 1976, he was released. In June or July of the following year, Richard Chase made a very odd solo journey to Washington, D.C., for reasons unknown. He never explained to anyone, before or after the trip, the reason for his abrupt and unexpected sojourn. Immediately after that, on August 3, 1977, Chase was arrested at California’s Pyramid Lake. Two loaded and bloodstained rifles were on the seat of his truck, along with Richard’s bloodstained clothes and shoes. Also in the vehicle was a large bucket of blood in which was floating a fresh liver (later claimed to be from a cow). Chase—naked, dripping with fresh blood, and with dried blood caked in his hair, whiskers and ears—fled from the officers upon their approach. He was apprehended, arrested and charged with federal gun law violations. In a rather unlikely turn of events, all the charges were subsequently dropped.

Less than five months later, Chase’s alleged killing spree began, just after he purchased a .22 semi-automatic handgun in early December 1977—just as Mullin had done in December 1972. On December 29, an engineer with the Federal Bureau of Land Management was picked off by a sniper in a car wielding a .22 caliber weapon—precisely mirroring one of the crimes attributed to Herb Mullin. Not quite a month after that, Teresa Wallin was killed with two contact wounds to the head from a .22, one pumped into her left temple. The slugs recovered from her head were said to be “similar” to the one that killed engineer Ambrose Griffin—which is not saying much, since any .22 slug would be similar to the one that killed Griffin.

Teresa Wallin was carved up and left on display. She was ripped open from her neck to her groin, with her sternum and breastplate split open. Some of her organs were removed and her left nipple was sliced off. She was then posed in the master bedroom on her back, with her splayed legs facing the hallway. Her corpse was found to contain a three-month-old fetus. Just four days later, in a scene reminiscent of the Ohta house after John Frazier's alleged visit, or the Francis home after Herb Mullin's alleged visit, Evelyn Miroth was found dead in her home, the victim of a .22 round fired above her left ear at very close range. A man described as a friend, Danny Meredith, caught two slugs to the head, one between the eyes and another next to his left ear. Young Jason Miroth, Evelyn's son, was shot above the left ear and in the back of the head. Missing from the home was twenty-two-month-old David Ferreira, Evelyn's nephew. He was also shot in the head, though his body was not discovered until much later.

Evelyn Miroth was also brutally mutilated after her death, as was young David Ferreira. Miroth was found nude, ripped open and with her legs splayed. Two household knives lay near her body. Her right eye had been partially removed and there were multiple cuts and stab wounds about her neck. She had been split down the middle, with a second cut across her abdomen intersecting the first gaping wound, thereby forming an inverted cross on her corpse—as was the case also with Mullin's alleged 'ripper' victim, whose body was discarded nearly alongside of one of Kemper's alleged victims. Another cut ran up the back of Evelyn Miroth's buttocks; tests revealed that semen was present in the wound. This semen was never matched to that of her alleged killer. The bathroom of the home was a gruesome sight, with blood all over the floor and bloody water left standing in the bathtub, indicating that Miroth was probably butchered there before being posed elsewhere.

Mirroring the situation five years earlier in Santa Cruz, the homicide rate in Sacramento soared during Chase's alleged murder spree. In the twenty-nine days between his first and last killings, no fewer than fourteen largely unexplained murders plagued the capital city. Included among the dead were a baby girl killed by her father and a baby boy killed by his mother. Both of these infanticidal parents drew three-year sentences, illustrating once again the appalling job done by the criminal 'justice' system in protecting the most vulnerable of Americans.

On January 28, just one day after the Miroth bloodbath, Richard Chase was arrested by a three-man team of detectives that had been working the case. Despite the fact that these were arguably the most sensational crimes in the city's history, the three were all rookies whose *combined* experience working homicide cases totaled just six months. It seemed almost as though the police, rather than turn the case over to its most seasoned homicide detectives, had opted to bring in a team of newcomers to handle the investigation.

At the time of his arrest, Chase believed that he was under investigation not for murder, but for killing dogs, which he apparently was in the habit of doing. The detectives quickly made clear that Richard was being charged with multiple counts of murder, which he repeatedly denied knowing anything about. He readily admitted though to killing the dogs, whose blood covered virtually everything in his apartment, including his handwritten notebook that reportedly featured drawings of swastikas. Chase was grilled relentlessly by detectives, who showed him photographs and filled him in on the details of the crimes they claimed he was guilty of committing. Steadfastly though, Chase maintained his innocence, at one point saying: "I just...I don't know. I don't understand how it could be me."²³

Eventually two other detectives took over the questioning of Chase, showing him yet more graphic crime scene photos and hurling yet more accusations at him. Nevertheless, Richard continued to steadfastly deny any involvement in the murders and the detectives ultimately gave up and sent him to a cell. Once there, amazingly enough, Chase promptly confessed the murders to a trustee inmate. That is, at any rate, the way the official story reads.

To say that the case against Chase was weak would be a serious understatement. No forensics evidence placed him at, or even anywhere near any of the crime scenes: not one drop of blood, not one strand of hair, not a single fingerprint. No witnesses could place him at any of the scenes and no ballistics evidence linked him to any of the killings. The only evidence recovered at the Wallin crime scene consisted of latex glove prints and fresh shoeprints on the kitchen floor. The latter, oddly enough, were not noticed until hours after technicians began searching the home, and hours after investigators had been freely trampling over the

23 That statement by Chase may have been a telling one. Such speculative statements about one's own guilt or innocence, seeming to imply that the accused cannot say for certain, are quite common in the serial killer literature. Ted Bundy, who gave what are said to be 'confessions' by speculating on what the killer *may or may not* have done, was particularly notorious for such comments. These types of statements are generally attributed to the killer's desire to match wits with, and play games with, their pursuers, and/or to a desire to confess their crimes without actually giving a legally admissible confession—to take credit for their crimes without actually incriminating themselves. However, there is another explanation: it might be that many of these alleged killers cannot honestly say whether they are guilty. They know that the persona being questioned is not guilty, but they may not be able to rule out the possibility that another persona, utilizing their body, may indeed be guilty. That would be particularly true if the person has 'blacked-out' the timeframe when the crimes occurred.

alleged evidence. One detail of the crime scene strongly indicated that the killer was not Chase, but rather someone known to Teresa: her ever-vigilant German Shepherd, Brutus, was in the house at the time of the killing.

Two sisters of David Wallin—Teresa's husband, who discovered the body—suspected one of David's former significant others, who claimed to possess psychic powers and who had bragged to the two women that she was in a "devil cult." One such cult that was active in the area, strangely enough, was the Manson Family, who had relocated to the area to be near their leader's new home in a California prison cell. Indeed, the Family's Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme had been arrested just two years before, in 1975, in the city's Capital Park following a failed assassination attempt on then-President Gerald Ford.

At the Miroth crime scene, all that was left behind by the killer was again shoeprints, this time in the outside soil, and latex glove prints. A cigarette butt that may or may not have been left by an assailant was found on the porch. There is no indication that saliva on that butt was ever matched to Chase. Richard's car was apparently parked nearby, adjacent to the Country Club Centre, a fact that prosecutors pointed to as an indication of guilt. If so, Chase had parked the car rather inappropriately for use as an intended getaway car: it was quite conspicuously parked in a clearly marked no-parking zone. And oddly enough, the car was not actually used; the Meredith car was driven away from the home by the killer(s). It appeared as though Chase's car had been deliberately left, by someone, in such a way that it would not fail to be noticed, and in a location that would establish Richard's presence near the crime. There is a distinct possibility that whoever killed the inhabitants of the Miroth home arrived in the Meredith car as well as leaving in it, which would mean that the killer almost certainly knew the victims. Neighbors across the street, who were keeping a fairly close eye on the house, saw no one enter or leave the Miroth home, saw no other cars arrive, and neither saw nor heard any signs of a struggle.

Perhaps the clearest indication that Chase did not act alone in committing the crime, if indeed he was involved at all, is that the tiny body of David Ferreira was found adjacent to a church nearly two months *after* Richard had been arrested. The discovery was made when a gate that was normally kept locked was found to be unlocked and left ajar. There in a box lay Ferreira's remains—stabbed, slashed, shot and beheaded. Also in the box were the child's clothes and Danny Meredith's car keys. According to prosecutors, the body had been decomposing there since before Chase's arrest. Common sense and the circumstances of its discovery suggest otherwise.

When Chase's trial began on January 2, 1979, Richard stood before the court looking very much like a concentration camp inmate. Already a thin man, the 5'

11” Chase’s weight had dropped to a nearly skeletal 107 pounds. He sat emotionless at the defense table, his mind seemingly miles away.

As recounted by Lt. Ray Biondi, who headed the investigation and co-authored a self-congratulatory book on the case, the most “damning” pieces of evidence presented in support of the state’s case were two items that Chase allegedly had in his possession at the time of his arrest: a .22 caliber handgun and Danny Meredith’s wallet. The .22 though could not be matched to any of the slugs recovered from the victims, and the possibility certainly exists that the wallet was planted, or was acquired by Chase after the murders. As it turned out, the strongest card in the state’s hand was Chase himself, who took the stand in his own defense, just as Herb had done. Despite having entered pleas of “not guilty” and “not guilty by reason of insanity,” Chase proceeded to give a long and rambling confession on the stand, during which he “freely and accurately used psychiatric and legal jargon,” according to Biondi. What he could not do, however, was accurately recall many of the details of the crimes.

Chase’s defense counsel greatly aided the prosecution’s efforts by asking the jury to return second-degree murder convictions against his client. Echoing the immortal words of James Jackson, he stated: “I just feel that to tell you that there is something less than murder here is not a reasonable way to argue to you.” On May 8, 1979, after just five hours of deliberations, the jury returned with six first-degree murder convictions. Six days later, after just 65 minutes of deliberations, they found the defendant sane. Four more hours of deliberations produced death sentences, after Chase once again took the stand during the penalty phase of the trial.

Richard Chase never made his appointment with the executioner. On December 26, 1980, he was found dead in his cell from the toxic ingestion of an enormous quantity of anti-psychotic drugs. His death was ruled a suicide. He allegedly had hoarded his daily medicine until he accumulated a lethal dose. His daily medication packet for that day, however, was found untouched.

Not long before his premature death, Chase spent four months incarcerated at—where else?—Vacaville.

Chapter 14

Superstars

“[W]e locate a number of good hypnotic subjects among the criminal class. We then isolate and train these subjects...If allowed a free hand, the authorities could proceed to plant such prepared subjects from the criminal class where it would do the most good...”

—George Estabrooks in *Hypnotism*

As the mid-1970s rolled around, the FBI’s Behavioral Sciences Unit came of age, the ‘science’ of criminal profiling was thrust upon the American people, the term “serial killer” entered the national lexicon, and the marauding mass murderer suddenly became the new American anti-hero. As soon as there was a name for this new and feared breed of criminal, the country bore witness to the media giving saturation coverage to the alleged exploits of these individuals, creating larger-than-life figures out of the likes of Henry Lee Lucas, David “Son of Sam” Berkowitz, Theodore Robert Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, and Angelo Buono and Kenneth Bianchi, collectively known as the “Hillside Stranglers.”

Henry Lee Lucas, already discussed in previous chapters, had the longest reign of any of the serial killer superstars, spanning from 1975 to 1983. The alleged Son of Sam had a much shorter though quite spectacular reign just a year into Henry’s killing spree. That string of execution-style shootings has been far more thoroughly examined in Maury Terry’s *The Ultimate Evil* than would be possible here. Interested readers are advised to pick up a copy of Terry’s book, a thorough reading of which will facilitate a better understanding of this book.

The twelve victims attributed to the Hillside Stranglers were killed between October 17, 1977 and February 17, 1978, closely mirroring the alleged murder spree of Herb Mullin, whose thirteen alleged victims were killed during almost the exact same span of time just five years earlier: October 13, 1972 to February 13, 1973. The last killing attributed to Ted Bundy occurred just eight days before

the last Hillside Strangling, on February 9, 1978. Bundy had been killing for four years or more, according to varying accounts. John Gacy's reign also ended in 1978, and he too had been killing for about four years—longer by some accounts.

There were a number of parallels between the cases of these high-profile killers. Kenneth Bianchi, like Charles Manson, was born the son of an alcoholic, teenage prostitute. His alleged partner, Sicilian-bred Angelo Buono, was also born the son of a prostitute. Like Lucas, Buono spoke of being taken along by his mother while she serviced her tricks. According to some accounts, Ted Bundy's mother was an abusive young prostitute as well, who also plied her trade in the presence of her young son.²⁴

24 Prostitution is a theme that runs rampant through the serial killer literature. In addition to being born the sons of prostitutes—frequently underage prostitutes—some future predators have themselves been forced into child prostitution, probably far more often than has been reported. A large percentage of the victims of alleged serial killers make their living as prostitutes as well. More than a few serial killers have worked as pimps, running their own prostitution rings, as was already seen in the case of Manson. Of the alleged killers profiled in this chapter, both Gacy and Buono were involved in running prostitution rings, with both specializing in child prostitution rings. Other killers we will meet elsewhere in this book had close ties to the sex trade as well. Serial murder and prostitution are such frequent bedfellows precisely because both of these activities tend to carry the heavy stench of mind control. As numerous studies have shown, the vast majority of prostitutes begin their careers at a very young age—as child prostitutes. As was noted in an earlier chapter, almost all child prostitutes are borne of a lifetime of abuse. They work the streets either because the conditions in their own homes are so horrendous that the street life is actually preferable, or because a family member has forced them into prostitution. These are people who will—to an overwhelming degree—have a very strong tendency to dissociate, and who are, therefore, prime targets for mind control operations. Any good pimp has at least a general understanding of that fact. That is why the image of the abusive pimp maintaining control over his brazenly exploited flock is such a pervasive one. Psychologists and sociologists have long stumbled over mountains of jargon and double-talk attempting to explain why prostitutes will remain fiercely loyal to a man who regularly beats and berates them while appropriating nearly all of their earnings. The same is true of the proverbial battered wives who refuse to leave the men who repeatedly rape and beat them. Meaningless terms such as ‘battered wife syndrome’ are routinely tossed out to try to explain this phenomenon. When asked, none of these victims, housewife or prostitute, can really explain why they choose to remain in such a chronically abusive environment. The ugly reality is that all of these women, whether

Bianchi, Bundy and Gacy all had an intense interest in law enforcement work. Bianchi, for example, studied police science in college, went on ride-alongs with the LAPD, joined the Sheriff's Reserves, and was known to carry a California Highway Patrol badge. Gacy was described by his wife as a "police freak"—a description that was applied to him by others as well. From an early age, Ted Bundy also expressed a strong interest in pursuing a law enforcement career, and at various times worked for the Seattle Crime Prevention Advisory Committee, the King County Law and Justice Planning Office, the Seattle Crime Commission, and as a self-employed law enforcement consultant, billing himself as T.R.B. Associates.

Another common thread that ties the cases of these men together is an early experience in the workforce that exposed them to the depravities that one human can inflict upon another. Kenneth Bianchi, for example, worked for a time as an ambulance attendant. So did John Wayne Gacy, who also was employed at a mortuary. Such an experience is what the intelligence community refers to as a 'bleeding.' In a similar vein, the entire country is being 'blooded,' though on a lesser level, through near constant exposure to a television and videogame diet increasingly dominated by scenes of graphic violence. The effect of this is to radically desensitize individuals, or an entire society, to appalling levels of bloodshed and carnage.

Another commonality among some of the more high profile serial killers profiled in this chapter and others are seemingly improbable connections to very high-ranking members of their respective political parties. Gacy, for example, was a fixture in Chicago Democratic Party circles. Despite his colorful and at times criminal past, he had a high enough security clearance to have once had a face-to-face meeting with then-First Lady Rosalynn Carter. Ted Bundy was equally well connected to various Republican Party officials.

As a final note here, before taking a closer look at the stories of these men, it should be noted that the era in which their crimes were committed was a time when reported cases of Multiple Personality Disorder skyrocketed. Before the decade of the 1970s was over, twice as many cases had been reported in that ten-year span as in the previous 100 years. There are indications that all of these alleged killers suffered, to varying degrees, from a dissociative disorder. Bianchi

on the streets or in the home, are—to varying degrees—victims of mind control. And a careful reading of the literature reveals that virtually all such victims have suffered a lifetime of abuse, beginning long before their current abusers entered the picture. Of course, most of them are not victims of the systematic and highly refined techniques practiced by the intelligence community, but they are mind control victims just the same. And so it is with those we think of as serial killers.

was diagnosed as such by a number of therapists, though this diagnosis was disputed by others—including the CIA's own Martin Orne and Margaret Singer.

Though never formally diagnosed, Ted Bundy displayed unmistakable signs of a dissociative disorder as well. Not only could Bundy's personality change at a moment's notice, but his physical appearance could as well. Bundy had a chameleon-like ability to alter his appearance, an ability that is clearly displayed in the numerous photos of him that grace the pages of the various books he has inspired. A neighbor of his in Florida once offered this observation: "He always looked different...I don't know, sometimes he just didn't even look like the same person at all." Diana Smith, a therapist and Bundy family friend, wondered how Ted could "be so many different things to so many different people." An investigator on the Bundy case, Joe Aloï, claimed that he once observed Bundy react to a particularly stressful situation by spontaneously, and quite radically, altering his physical appearance; Ted's body and muscle tone changed markedly, and he suddenly became sweaty and began emitting a noticeable odor. The judge who presided over Ted's Colorado trial referred to him as a "changeling," noting the unsettling way in which his appearance could change dramatically with his mood. The judge drew a comparison to Vincent Bugliosi's description of Charles Manson's similar ability. Bugliosi was not the only one to make that observation about Manson; disciple Susan Atkins once said: "Charlie changes from second to second. He can be anybody he wants to be. He can put on any face he wants to put on at any given moment."²⁵

Although John Wayne Gacy did not have the ability to alter his physical appearance, as Detective David Hachmeister of the DesPlaines police observed, "His personality could change in a split second." Gacy was viewed by many as a pillar of the community—a man who was politically active and well-connected, who gave of his time freely to entertain children, who was a valued neighbor who regularly hosted parties with hundreds of guests, and who was a successful businessman and a loving father. On the other hand, he also had the unique distinction of being convicted of thirty-three counts of first-degree murder. How are we to reconcile these two sides of John Gacy? Men such as he are usually said to be 'sociopaths.' They are said to be lacking a conscience. The persona that is

25 That ability is a very real, though extremely rare, physiological phenomenon. George Estabrooks explained it decades ago, in his seminal work *Hypnotism*, as a hypnotically induced phenomenon that is indicative of a severe dissociative disorder. Estabrooks also explained such religious/supernatural phenomena as speaking in tongues, the appearance of stigmata, and the channeling of 'spirits' by 'mediums,' as hypnotic/dissociative phenomena.

presented to the public is said to be nothing more than an elaborate ruse, an emotionless facade disguising the monster within.

But is it not just as likely, if not more so, that the public self is, in fact, a legitimate personality—separate and distinct from the one that does the killing? And when the monster emerges, does this represent the facade slipping away, or an alter personality emerging? Or is there any difference? Is the ‘sociopath’ label not, in the final analysis, just another way of describing multiple personality disorder?

* * * * *

Kenneth Bianchi is, like many other serial killers, of unknown parentage. He was born the son of an alcoholic teenage prostitute on May 22, 1951 in Rochester, New York, and then privately adopted by the Bianchis. His adoptive parents were repeatedly reported to the Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children for their treatment of their son. Ken was taken frequently to doctors and administered unspecified tests at the urging of his mother, who also frequently kept him home from school for prolonged absences, including nearly his entire Kindergarten year. As a child, Bianchi frequently lapsed into trance-like states, during which time his eyes would roll back in his head. He later recalled enduring such punishments as having his hand held over a stove flame. He also is said to have once killed a cat and left it on his neighbor’s porch on Halloween.

Following high school, Bianchi sought psychiatric care and married briefly, although the union lasted just eight months. He also attended junior college, studying psychology and police science—and reportedly making frequent use of the school’s medical facilities. He found work both as a bouncer and as an ambulance attendant, and apparently considered an Air Force career, for which he took a qualifying test. Sometime during his early adult years, Bianchi also joined a biker gang, which ostensibly was the inspiration for the rather remarkable tattoo that he sported on his arm: “Satan’s Own M.C.” Perhaps not surprisingly, Ken had gaps in his memory, and would sometimes find himself walking down a street with no memory of how he got there or what he had been doing immediately prior. Such episodes are clear signs of a dissociative disorder, a category that includes fugue states and amnesia, as well as MPD/DID.

At the age of twenty-six, Ken arrived in Hollywood and moved in with his cousin, Angelo Buono, and Angelo’s son, also named Angelo Buono. Bianchi readily established access to a steady supply of drugs, which he both sold and used. He also, rather improbably, set up shop as a therapist, sharing office space with a legitimate therapist in North Hollywood. During this time in California, Ken claimed to be getting outpatient treatments for cancer, and he regularly visited a hospital to

receive those treatments. He generally preferred to go alone to these appointments, although sometimes his girlfriend, Kelli, drove him there and then waited in the car for him to return.

Bianchi, of course, never actually had cancer. There is no question though that he was indeed making regular visits to a medical facility, and he was receiving *some* kind of treatments, although at least one of his chroniclers has claimed that Ken would, on a regular basis, enter the hospital, randomly kill time by reading and hanging out, and then return to the car. What possible purpose would be served by his doing so is left unexplained, as is how Bianchi was able to bring home legitimate receipts and medical forms following these treatments.

Ken's cousin and reputed partner, Angelo Buono, reportedly had a strong bond with his mother, whom he frequently accused of being a whore; he never lived more than a couple of miles from her throughout his entire adult life. Angelo quit high school at the age of sixteen and he was shortly thereafter remanded to the custody of the California Youth Authority. By the age of twenty, he was known for his flamboyance, exemplified by his habit of driving new Cadillacs. It is unclear how he suddenly acquired such wealth.

Buono apparently had a lifelong penchant for underage girls; during his life, he married at least two of them. He fathered at least eight kids by his numerous wives; he reportedly regularly sodomized all of them. He also beat and sodomized his wives, often in front of the children. Angelo's sons and only daughter were frequent visitors to the house that their dad shared for a time with Ken Bianchi. Many young girls were frequent visitors as well, and some even lived there for varying periods of time. Angelo has been described as a "magnet for women" and he had a constant stream of mostly teenage girls passing through his home. Many of them were working for him; his auto upholstery shop also served as a front for a teenage prostitution racket. Some of his girls—including sixteen-year-old Sabra Hannan and Rebekah Gay Spears, a fifteen-year-old biker's daughter—were kept virtually enslaved with regular beatings, rapes, and threats of death and dismemberment.

Angelo supplied the services of these young girls to the city's business and political elite, including a city councilman, a police chief, and a chief aide to a member of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors. Such favors had earned side-kick Bianchi the right to display an L.A. County Seal on the windshield of his Cadillac. Buono and Bianchi had connections to the Hollywood crowd as well; Angelo once shared a home with actor Artie Ford, a friend of fellow actor Jay Silverheels (the *Lone Ranger's* Tonto). He also repaired cars for Frank Sinatra and for reputed Mafioso Joe Bonnano. Buono's daughter claimed that her father once drove her to Sinatra's Palm Springs home, where Angelo dropped off a package. Several of the suspects identified during the course of the investigation were

Hollywood names as well. The first suspect booked was actor Ned York, who gave a long and rambling confession to the crimes. Another man questioned in connection to the stranglings was identified as a minor actor who had a film studio set up in his home. An aspiring actress told of going to this home for an audition and being forced to participate in the production of hardcore S&M films. Yet another suspect was a man identified only as a famous Hollywood producer who was said to enjoy the company of young girls. He was stopped by police while driving the car of a convicted rapist, accompanied by a young girl, and he was discovered to be in possession of a phony police ID.

Buono was known to have two avid interests that are common to many alleged serial killers: guns and Polaroid photography. Angelo reportedly owned five rifles, two .45 caliber handguns, and a Thompson sub-machinegun. He also owned a Polaroid camera, with which he was said to have photographed some of the pair's victims, although such photographs were never produced at trial.

Buono and Bianchi's first purported victim was a black prostitute and drug dealer named Yolanda Washington whose nude body was found along Forest Lawn Drive. She had been strangled with intense force after having sexual contact with at least two men. Not long before her death, she and a group of fellow prostitutes had sold Buono a 'trick list.' The month before Washington's body was found, a girl named Laura Collins was found similarly strangled and dumped not far from Forest Lawn Drive, but her death, oddly enough, was never attributed to the so-called Hillside Stranglers.

The next victim, Judith Ann Miller, also a prostitute, was found sprawled nude on Halloween day, 1977. She had been carefully placed by two or more individuals, and had marks on her face, wrists and ankles that suggested that she had been gagged and bound, but her bindings had been subsequently removed. There were said to be two witnesses to the abduction, both of whom—like the killers and the victims—reeked of mind control operations. One was a woman who had worked as a subject for a professional stage hypnotist; he had hypnotized her on literally hundreds of occasions. She claimed to have seen Miller get into a car with a light-skinned black man. The other witness was a male bounty hunter named Marcus Camden; he saw the victim get into a dark blue limousine, which he said was definitely not Ken's Cadillac. He described the driver as a dark man with curly hair, Latin looking, and with a big nose. Neither witness saw a second man in the vehicle, although both Bianchi and Buono were later said to have participated in the abduction. Investigator Frank Salerno promptly checked Camden into Cedars-Sinai Hospital for tests, for reasons that are unclear. Much later, Camden allegedly positively identified Angelo; at the time, he was voluntarily committed to Richmond State Hospital in Indiana. As an interesting side note,

witness Camden was missing two left fingertips, which is, according to some unconfirmed reports, an identifying mark of some satanic cults.

The next victim was Lissa Teresa Kastin, an exotic dancer with the L.A. Knockers dance troupe. She was likely a prostitute as well; at the very least, she had considered the profession and had discussed it with others. A witness who worked on a composite drawing described Lissa's abductor as a white or Latino man with an olive complexion and acne, in his late 20s, 6'2" or 6'3" tall, 150 to 160 lbs., and with a thick mustache and a small mole on his left cheek—a description that didn't fit Buono or Bianchi. Jill Barcomb was the next victim. She was, like the others, a prostitute who was found nude and strangled. Following her was Kathleen Robinson, described as being part of the street scene. Unlike the others, she was found fully clothed. Next was Kristina Weckler, an honors student at the Pasadena Art Center. She was found nude and strangled, and she had had Windex injected into her arms and neck.

Bob Grogan, one of lead investigators on the Strangler task force, pocketed and subsequently suppressed Weckler's personal notebook—a flagrantly illegal act that he later openly acknowledged. Grogan, who had served as a technical adviser on the *TJ Hooker* television series, had connections to Santa Monica's Rand Corporation, which is widely regarded by researchers as a CIA front.

The next two victims were Sonja Johnson and Dollie Cepeda, who were just fourteen and twelve years old, respectively. Following them was Jane King, who was picked up across the street from the Scientology Manor, where she was reportedly taking acting classes. The body of Lauren Wagner was the next to be discovered; she had been strangled and electrocuted. There were purportedly at least three witnesses to her abduction, though all of them were problematic. One of these was a neighbor, Beulah Stofer, who reportedly witnessed the abduction from the window of her home, after which she claimed to have received a threatening phone call. She said that she had seen two men argue with Wagner before dragging her into a car and had heard Lauren scream: "You won't get away with this." Strangely, however, she did not initially report what she had witnessed. Stofer ultimately identified both Buono and Bianchi as the girl's abductors, after being questioned by Grogan on more than 100 occasions, by his own accounting. Prior to a visit to the crime scene by Buono's jury, Grogan later tampered with the scene by going to Stofer's house to trim her front hedges, which normally blocked the view out of the window that Stofer claimed to have witnessed the crime from.

Another neighbor claimed to have witnessed the abduction of the girl as well, but this witness also failed to initially report the incident. A third witness claimed that he just happened to be driving by at the time of the abduction. The man was said to be a convicted killer who had been 'cured' at Atascadero, just like killer Ed Kemper had been cured at that same facility.

Forensics evidence indicated a culprit other than Bianchi or Buono. A substance found on the corpse was determined to have come from a type B secretor, which ruled out both of the cousins. At trial, the state argued that the substance was nothing more than ant residue. The media, which had been focusing their bright lights on the trial, decided, for no apparent reason, not to provide coverage of this rather dubious testimony.

The next victim, Kimberly Dianne Martin, was found in a vacant apartment—bound, gagged, strangled, and with a fractured skull and blood dripping from her ear. She was an underage outcall prostitute who had been dispatched to meet a trick. The request had reportedly been phoned in by Ken Bianchi. Just three days after her death, Bianchi went on a ride-along with the LAPD. The last victim attributed to the Hillside Stranglers was Cindy Lee Hudspeth, who was strangled and stuffed nude into the trunk of a car, which was then pushed over an incline. Bianchi would later claim, in a purported confession, that the car was pushed over front-end first; evidence indicated otherwise. This was just one of many details that his ‘confessions’ would get wrong.

Soon after the killings began, a task force was established that included elements of the LAPD, the L.A. Sheriff’s Department, and the Glendale Police Department. It eventually grew to include 162 officers. The task force’s headquarters was in room 832 of the Justice Building, which had been converted from its original use as a courtroom, the very same courtroom where Charles Manson had been tried and convicted. The team was led by Frank Salerno, who had earlier headed a narcotics team that had arrested the very same Charles Manson on drug charges. Also on board the task force was the aforementioned evidence tamperer, Bob Grogan. Weekly press conferences were held by then-Chief Daryl F. Gates, who had little progress to report as the killings continued, with some of the bodies showing up carefully posed in the hills near the L.A. Police Academy. All of the victims had been raped, and yet semen tests that were conducted reportedly yielded nothing. Ken Bianchi was questioned on multiple occasions during the investigation, by at least two LAPD officers and one Glendale cop, but he was cleared each time.

One ‘expert’ consulted by the press was none other than Dr. Louis Jolyon West, a prominent member of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation who was connected to numerous covert CIA operations throughout his career. West told the *L.A. Times*: “It would be most unlikely to find this done by more than one person...this type is almost always the work of a single person.” This was an obvious bit of disinformation that flew in the face of the known facts of the case. Not long after the Hillside Stranglings, West was one of the first prominent mouthpieces to promote the mass suicide story to explain what happened at Jonestown. This was another rather obvious bit of disinformation.

Three months after the last killing, Bianchi left the Los Angeles area for Bellingham, Washington, where he wasted no time in joining the Whatcom County Sheriff's Reserves. Strangely enough, the chief of the police department of Bianchi's new city of residence was both a former Los Angeles cop and a friend of fourteen-year-old victim Sonja Johnson's father, the bookkeeper for an L.A.-area Catholic parish school. Chief Terry Mangan had an unusual history that sounded as though it could have been written by a Hollywood screenwriter. While working as an ordained priest, and as a high school teacher and dean of students in Monterrey, California, he began serving as a counselor to the police. He was soon regularly hanging out at the police academy and riding on patrol every night, becoming some kind of mythical priest-cop. He ultimately left the priesthood altogether and became a full-fledged cop. In 1976, the year before the stranglings began, he was named the new chief of the Bellingham force.

On January 12, 1979, two Western Washington University coeds were found bound and strangled. Footprints and a loose pubic hair were reportedly recovered at the scene. New Bellingham resident Ken Bianchi was arrested shortly after the discovery of the bodies, and he promptly confessed. He was appointed Dean Brett as his defense counsel, and a psychiatric social worker named John Johnson was assigned to the case as well. Bianchi was held in isolation and allowed only limited visitation with family and friends. Before long, he was examined by a stream of psychiatrists/psychologists, some of whom had known and longstanding connections to the CIA.

The first to examine Bianchi, on the spring equinox, was Dr. John Watkins, who questioned the accused in the presence of Brett, Johnson, Frank Salerno and Salerno's partner, both of whom had flown up from Los Angeles. Next was Dr. Ron Markman of Los Angeles, a man with the dubious distinction of being both a psychiatrist and an attorney. He had previously been involved in both the Manson and the SLA/Patty Hearst cases.²⁶ The stench surrounding the Strangler case reached a new level with the arrival of the next examiner: none other than Dr. Donald Lunde, last seen playing a pivotal role in the Frazier, Kemper and Mullin cases. Conveniently enough, Lunde just happened to have family in Bellingham that he purportedly just happened to be visiting at the time, so he just sort of dropped in for an 'off-the-record' examination of the famed Hillside

26 Contrary to conventional wisdom, the so-called Symbionese Liberation Army appears to have been an artificial creation of the Central Intelligence Agency. Its architect was a man named Colton Westbrook, who had previously served in Vietnam as a Phoenix Program operative. The supposed revolutionary group arose from an MK-ULTRA project run by Westbrook at, appropriately enough, California's Vacaville facility.

Strangler. Next up was Dr. Ralph Allison, brought in from—of all places—Santa Cruz, California. He finished up with Bianchi on April 19, and Watkins returned the next day to administer a Rorschach test. The following day, April 21, Angelo Buono's house was searched for the very first time. The home was found to be immaculately neat and, amazingly enough, it reportedly contained not a single fingerprint, which would tend to indicate that Buono had been tipped off prior to the search.

In May, Vienna-born Martin Orne, sent in by the state, took a turn at examining Bianchi. Orne was another False Memory Syndrome Foundation luminary who received extensive CIA funding and who, probably not coincidentally, had testified at the SLA trial. In June, Dr. Saul Faerstein of Beverly Hills took his turn with Bianchi and in July, Dr. Lunde returned for an on-the-record examination. Lunde's role was to build the prosecution's case to try Bianchi in Los Angeles as the Hillside Strangler. As such, Lunde's examination concentrated almost exclusively on discussion of the L.A. killings. Like Orne and Faerstein, Lunde largely dismissed the notion that Ken was suffering from MPD. Others have claimed that Bianchi displayed at least four distinct personalities, who were named Ken, Steve, Billy and Friend. Salerno and Grogan, as well as most of Bianchi's chroniclers, have claimed that the symptoms displayed by the suspect were an obvious ruse. Dr. John Watkins to this day sticks by his initial diagnosis of MPD.

On October 2, 1980, Veronica Lynn Compton, a playwright and actress and the daughter of an L.A.-area editorial cartoonist, was arrested for attempted murder in Bellingham. The attack was said to be an attempt to commit a copycat killing that would have cast doubts on the incarcerated Bianchi's guilt in the earlier killings. Strangely, Compton's victim did not bother to report the incident until several days after the alleged attempt was made on her life. Compton had been sexually active from an early age, as evidenced by the fact that she was only twenty-three and yet she had an eight-year-old son. She had reportedly slept with numerous Hollywood figures, including a lawyer/agent who was later killed in an unsolved murder case. She confided to Bianchi that she herself had killed before, and that she shared with him an interest in necrophilia.

On October 19, Bianchi appeared before a judge and entered a guilty plea based on a deal that had been worked out with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. The deal allowed the state of Washington to avoid a trial that would have revealed the state's case to be rather dubious. That case was built primarily on hair and fiber evidence, which is inherently problematic, and which is also, it should be noted, by far the easiest type of evidence to plant. The official version of events was filled with discrepancies and such odd events as evidence strangely turning up at the crime scene the day after it was combed over by investigators following the discovery of the bodies.

Nevertheless, Ken entered a guilty plea and agreed to testify against Buono in exchange for a life sentence to be served in California, even though the possibility existed that he would still receive death sentences for the charges pending in California. In other words, Bianchi gained absolutely nothing from the plea ‘deal’ offered to him and guaranteed himself a life sentence at a minimum. Ken had worked with his attorney until late into the night before his court appearance. He was instructed to stare at his hands while repeating the words “these hands have killed” before entering the courtroom, to ensure that he did not back away from the agreement to enter the guilty plea.

Within twenty-four hours, Ken was on his way back to Los Angeles. Along the way, he was questioned by Salerno and Grogan and got many of the details of the crimes wrong, which did not seem to faze the two detectives in the least. Within days of his arrival in L.A., he had received additional life terms. Shortly after his arrival though, Ken began to have doubts about the deal he had made, and by November, he was insisting on his innocence. That same month, Angelo Buono’s Glendale home suddenly vanished; it had been bulldozed on the orders of the owner of the glass shop that sat next door. Buono—who by that time was sitting in a special security section of the county jail alongside his son Peter, a former Marine and a long-time PCP addict—had signed over the deed to the property. The glass shop owner denied that he had colluded with Buono to destroy evidence, and he was never charged with committing a crime. Around that same time, Prosecutor Roger Kelly opted to drop all the remaining murder charges against Bianchi, thereby giving up the leverage the state intended to use to compel Ken to testify against his cousin. Kelly also reportedly attempted to break down and discredit the testimony of two prosecution witnesses.

Nevertheless, a nearly yearlong preliminary trial for Buono was begun, assigned to Judge Ronald George. George had attended Beverly Hills schools and then the prestigious *Ecole Internationale de Geneve*, which functions as something of an intelligence prep school. Founded in 1924 by a League of Nations group, it is attended by the sons of diplomats, European royalty and finance capitalists. George next attended Princeton University. By the age of thirty, he was arguing before the U.S. Supreme Court to have the death penalty reinstated in California. In 1972, he was appointed to the bench by nominal conservative Ronald Reagan, and in 1977, he was elevated to the Superior Court by nominal liberal Jerry Brown.

On July 13, 1981, Kelly—backed by District Attorney John Van de Kamp—moved to drop all charges against Buono. Judge George, in a highly unusual move, ruled that the case be prosecuted. Kelly promptly withdrew, clearing the way for George to assign the case to the state’s attorney general, George Deukmejian. On November 6, jury selection began. In a rather unlikely development, ten of the

twelve jurors who were seated worked in civil service positions. These men and women spent the next two years of their lives hearing the case against Angelo Buono. Kenneth Bianchi alone delivered five months of testimony. In order for Bianchi's testimony to be heard, however, it had to be determined whether he had been hypnotized in Washington. If so, his testimony would have been disallowed under California law. Judge George accommodated the prosecution by concurring with the opinion of covert operative Martin Orne that Bianchi had faked both his hypnotism and his dissociative disorder.

The judge did disallow Bianchi's Bellingham 'confession' tapes, ruling that they had not been made under oath. This was not likely an effort by the judge to prevent the railroading of the defendant, but rather to avoid having the trial's verdict overturned on appeal. The tapes, which showed Bianchi confessing to the crimes in an even, matter-of-fact, emotionless voice, were entered into evidence in a way that would not compromise the verdict: they were entered *by the defense*. The defense also opened a door that allowed the state to call, as rebuttal witnesses, three young women who had been held by Buono as enslaved prostitutes. Their testimony had been earlier disallowed by the judge. After doing a considerable amount of damage to their client's case, the defense rested on August 2, 1983—after noting for the jury that both Charlie Chaplin and Lewis Carroll shared with Angelo a fondness for underage girls.

In a highly unusual move, the judge opted to sequester the jury for the duration of their deliberations, even though they had been free for the entire two-year duration of the trial itself. He also specifically instructed them to return verdicts on the numerous counts separately, which was another highly unusual jury instruction. The first guilty verdict was delivered after ten days of deliberations, appropriately enough on Halloween day, 1983. By the time the deliberations were through, Buono had been convicted on nine of ten counts. Perhaps sensing that his defense team did not have his best interests in mind, Buono requested that he be allowed to represent himself for the penalty phase of the trial; his request was denied. On January 9, 1984, Buono was formally sentenced to life in prison.

In the aftermath of the trial, Van de Kamp was elected to replace outgoing Attorney General George Deukmejian, who was elevated to the office of Governor of the state of California. His underling, Robert Philibosian, became the new L.A. District Attorney. Prosecutors Roger Boren and Michael Nash were both appointed to the bench by Governor Deukmejian, after Nash prosecuted the death penalty appeal of Douglas Clark, whose case will be examined in the next chapter. Judge Ronald George was elevated to the California Supreme Court, and ultimately was named its Chief Justice. Defense counsel Gerald Chaleff now serves as the senior adviser to the City Attorney's Office.

While there is a very strong probability that the two cousins were involved in the killings, it is just as likely that others were involved as well. Many believed that a police officer was directly involved. Several were questioned during the course of the investigation, and a few who were conclusively linked to the times and places of the disappearances and/or the body drop-sites could not account for their time. Another suspect was a man named George Shamshak, who escaped from a Massachusetts prison around the time that the killings began, and who was recaptured around the time that they ended. Shamshak confessed to the murders, and even offered the press what he said were audiotapes of some of the killings. He also claimed that a Beverly Hills resident named Peter Mark Jones was involved. Jones was arrested and released, and then he promptly left the city and was quickly forgotten. As for the Washington murders, Bianchi maintained that an accomplice performed the killings. The man, identified only as 'Greg,' was known to the police. He was killed in a 'freak' motorcycle accident near the body drop-site, shortly after Kenneth Bianchi's arrest.

In September 2002, Angelo Buono died in prison. Kenneth Bianchi continues to serve his time.

* * * * *

John Wayne Gacy was born the son of an abusive, alcoholic father—as his sister and mother both attested to in court. Little else has been written about John's early years, although it is known that the senior Gacy constantly belittled his son and once shot the boy's dog. He was also known to beat John's mother.

As a teenager, Gacy worked in Las Vegas both at a mortuary and as an ambulance attendant. At the mortuary, it was said that he had a habit of sleeping in the embalming room, amongst the corpses. He was fired after some of those corpses were found to have been partially undressed. In the 1960s, John lived in Waterloo, Iowa, where he owned several businesses, including four restaurants, a clothing design firm and a motel. During that period of his life, he joined the Jaycees and quickly forged a bond with the man who soon became the local chapter president. This particular Jaycee chapter was known at the time to be involved in prostitution, pornography, and various other crimes of vice. A local prosecutor identified Gacy's motel, managed by his newfound friend, as the hub of those activities. According to the prosecutor, the motel was a front for a gay and straight prostitution ring.

Gacy was in the habit of hiring many young people of both sexes to work at his businesses. He also reportedly set up what was described as a 'social club' in his basement recreation room, which he kept well stocked with drugs and alcohol

to supply to his numerous underage guests. He was also said by those who knew him at the time to “control” his wife and to openly offer her sexual services to friends and colleagues. One former employee also said that Gacy always carried a gun.

On March 11, 1968, Donald Voorhees, Jr.—the son of a Jaycee and former Iowa state representative—gave a statement to police alleging that Gacy had assaulted and sodomized him. In early May, Gacy was indicted by a grand jury, though no further action was taken for several months. On September 12, John made a court appearance at which he was ordered to submit to a psychiatric examination at the ominously named Psychopathic Hospital of the State University of Iowa. While in custody there, he spoke freely to investigators of wholesale corruption among the city’s elite. He talked of gambling, prostitution, pornography, wife swapping, and the corruption and complicity of local police. He supplied the names of numerous Jaycees, police personnel, and various other prominent individuals who were involved in criminal enterprises.

When brought before a judge, Gacy threw himself at the mercy of the court and entered a guilty plea. On December 3, 1968, he was sentenced to a ten-year term. He served less than two of those years, earning parole on June 18, 1970. While in prison, he somehow managed to always have money, cigars, and civilian shirts—all difficult commodities to attain for most prisoners. According to some reports, Gacy received electroshock and aversion therapy while incarcerated, allegedly to ‘cure’ him of his homosexuality. Just eight months after his release, he was again arrested, this time for disorderly conduct. Despite the violation, just eight months after that he was released from parole. Another eight months after that, on the summer solstice of 1972, he was again arrested and charged with aggravated battery and reckless conduct. Gacy had allegedly offered a young man a ride on June 7, identified himself as a police officer, and then attempted to handcuff the boy. Failing in that endeavor, Gacy had then clubbed him on the back of his neck, kicked him, and then pursued him with his car and struck him down. Curiously, the charges were dismissed against Gacy, whose fingerprint card on file with local police carried the alias ‘Colonel’ Gacy.

In July 1975, the first known victim whose death would be attributed to John Gacy disappeared. The young man, John Butkovitch, was an employee of Gacy’s construction company, which specialized in drugstore remodels. Gacy’s home was later found to be fully stocked with an array of pharmaceuticals. Just one night before his disappearance, Butkovitch had been involved in a disturbance at a friend’s house. He was rumored to have gone to Puerto Rico to traffic drugs, and his family received a collect call from a woman in San Juan who claimed that John was alive and well. Someone apparently made an effort to thwart a missing persons investigation.

Boys and young men continued to disappear for the next several years, though no one really paid much attention. The missing boys were routinely considered runaways by the police, despite pleas from many of the parents to investigate their sons' disappearances as missing persons cases.

On January 6, 1978, Gacy was arrested for deviate sexual contact, but the assistant state's attorney rejected the filing of felony charges. Six months later, Gacy was charged with battery. A twenty-seven-year-old man had been picked up and then knocked out with a rag placed over his mouth. He awoke in a park with burns on his face and a bleeding rectum. The man had been picked up from the city's gay district, where Gacy was very well known and widely believed to be a cop. The victim gave police the license number of Gacy's car, and he was soon taken into custody. Several court dates were allowed to pass with no action taken on the charges. John Wayne Gacy was, after all, a very well connected guy. He served as a lighting commissioner and as a Democratic Party precinct captain. He claimed to have been an aide to Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, and he was known to be on friendly terms with Illinois Attorney General William Scott. He also claimed that local columnist Mike Royko and local TV anchorman Walter Jacobson were "good friends" of his. He once had his photo taken with First Lady Rosalynn Carter; the image is signed: "To John Gacy. Best Wishes. Rosalynn Carter." In the photo, Gacy is wearing a Secret Service "S" lapel pin, indicating that he had been given a high-level security clearance. Another hint of Gacy's political connections was provided by an observation made by one of his prosecutors: "Two items on [Gacy's] Chicago Police report were blacked out, indicating that they were FBI matters."

John also laid claim to having organized crime connections, which is not surprising given the fine line between politics and organized crime. Gacy claimed not only that he himself worked for the "Syndicate," but also that he was a cousin of local mob figure Tony Accardo.

Gacy continued in Chicago his practice from Iowa of surrounding himself with young people. He frequently entertained as a clown at hospitals, orphanages, and at private parties. He also hired a steady stream of teenage boys to work for his construction firm, at least three of whom went missing, and another of whom followed an interesting path that will be examined in the next chapter.

On the night of December 11, 1978, a young man named Rob Piest disappeared. He had last been seen outside of the pharmacy where he was then employed, talking to Gacy about a job with his construction company. The Piest family focused their suspicions on John Gacy and pharmacy owner Phil Torf, who was evasive when questioned about the boy's disappearance and who refused to provide Gacy's address. For unexplained reasons, Torf had remained at the pharmacy that night with his friends until 1:00 AM, three full hours after closing

time. The Piest family quickly grew angry with the police over their handling of the case, and they began threatening to storm the Gacy house. In order to pacify the family and prevent them from acting on their threats, police agreed to begin surveillance of John Gacy. Assigned to the task was a special 'Delta Unit' of the DesPlaines Police.

What followed was a surreal game of cat-and-mouse in which Gacy at times all but joined the surveillance team, wining and dining his alleged pursuers, inviting them into his home and allowing them to ride along with him in his car. At other times, he would drive maniacally around town with the Delta Unit in pursuit—reportedly hitting speeds of up to 100 miles-per-hour, even in school zones. Amazingly, he was never stopped during such escapades, let alone ticketed or arrested. Police also searched Gacy's house, which was said to be meticulously neat. The search yielded a number of interesting items: a high school ring that had belonged to one of the missing boys; an Illinois drivers license issued to another boy; marijuana and rolling papers; a vast supply of pharmaceuticals; a switchblade knife; a pair of handcuffs; police badges; a hypodermic syringe; numerous items of clothing that were obviously too small for Gacy; a photo lab receipt later traced to Rob Piest; an empty brown bottle that had contained chloroform; a bloodstained rug; and a homemade stock. One room in the home was completely filled with clown pictures. The crawlspace underneath the house, where employees had been asked to dig trenches, was covered with a layer of lime—useful for hastening the decomposition of bodies. There were nearly thirty of them buried there in shallow graves. More had been dumped into the DesPlaines River some sixty-five miles from Gacy's home.

Police opted not to arrest Gacy at the time of the search, despite the seemingly incriminating evidence found in his home, and despite the fact that they had received complaints from at least five assault victims, three in Chicago alone, all alleging druggings and torture administered by Gacy, *and* despite the fact that Gacy still had charges pending against him from the incident earlier in the year. However, Gacy did have an alibi for the evening that checked out: he had been at the hospital at the side of his uncle, who died the very night that Rob Piest disappeared.

On the eve of the winter solstice, Gacy was arrested for the final time, although not on murder charges, but for possession of marijuana. Just the day before his arrest, the conviction of Elmer Wayne Henley in Texas had been reversed. Henley had been convicted a few years earlier, in 1974, for his participation in what one of Gacy's chroniclers described as "a homosexual torture ring that killed twenty-seven boys." Henley and his two accomplices provided quite a model for Gacy to follow. The trio lured young boys to the home of Dean Corll, where they were tortured, raped and killed on a special 'torture board' in Corll's

plastic-draped bedroom. Their bodies were then buried beneath a layer of lime in Corll's rented boathouse, while the parents of several of the victims received phone calls or were sent letters assuring them that their sons were still very much alive. In Houston as in Chicago, police insisted on classifying the growing numbers of missing boys as runaways.

Gacy's marijuana arrest prompted a second search of his home, during which the bodies in his crawlspace were discovered. How they were not discovered during the earlier search, or detected during the numerous visits to the Gacy home by his surveillance team, remains a bit of a mystery. Every corner of the house was said to literally reek of death due to the decomposition of the bodies buried in the shallow graveyard just beneath the floorboards. The second search also turned up a garage freezer that contained unmarked frozen meat and a container full of what inspectors suspected was blood. These items were later claimed to be nothing more than stewed tomatoes and non-human meat, although one would think seasoned homicide investigators would know the difference between stewed tomatoes and blood.

While his home was being searched, Gacy was taken to Holy Family Hospital for a medical examination, allegedly due to complaints of chest pains. Immediately upon his release from the hospital, John read and signed a Miranda waiver and began confessing to the murders. One of his first questions to police was: "Who else do you have in the station? There are others involved." Gacy was then asked if the others were involved directly or indirectly, to which he responded: "Directly. They participated." Asked who these others might be, he answered simply: "My associates." He was also asked where Rob Piest was, to which he answered: "I don't know. I didn't transport him." When asked who did, he replied: "I can't say."

This interrogation was cut short by a Sergeant Long, and then later resumed with two attorneys at Gacy's side. No further mention was made of any accomplices, and the issue does not appear to have been pursued thereafter. Perhaps notably though, the homicide rate in the Chicago area soared following Gacy's arrest, possibly indicating that a large clean-up operation ensued. And on December 28, a week after John's arrest, a fresh body was fished from the DesPlaines River.

Although Gacy confessed to being a mass murderer, he had very little knowledge of the crimes to which he confessed. He claimed, for instance, that all of the victims were strangled, but forensics evidence suggested that at least thirteen of them had in fact been suffocated. He provided a map of the locations of the bodies under his house that press reports claimed was accurate, even though it actually contained numerous discrepancies. Gacy was able to recall sketchy details of only five of the killings; of the other twenty-eight, he had no memory at all. He

claimed that the murders began in 1974, but then later stated that the first occurred in January 1972. He attributed all of the murders to an alter personality that he referred to as Jack Hanley.

John was denied bail and sent to Cermak Hospital, which was the medical wing of the local jail, and kept isolated from other inmates. Jail personnel were instructed to have no contact with him either. Not long into his stay there, Gacy wrote a letter that read: "Since the dark shadow of Satan has come over me, it seems that my fair weather friends have run away..." During his second week at Cermak he consented to an interview, with the full cooperation of his attorney, during which he once again confessed to the murders. He claimed rather preposterously that the victims were mostly male prostitutes who he had killed over price disputes. To explain how he had gained control of the young, healthy victims prior to killing them, Gacy put forth a dubious story about using a "handcuff trick" to get the young men to handcuff themselves.

On January 10, 1979, "not guilty" pleas were entered on Gacy's behalf in response to the seven murder counts that had been brought against him. On April 23, a grand jury handed down indictments on twenty-six additional counts, bringing the total to thirty-three. Two days later, Gacy entered "not guilty" pleas to the additional counts. Jury selection for his trial began in January 1980. Despite intense pre-trial publicity—overshadowed for a time by news of the carnage at Jonestown—the venue of the trial was not changed. Instead, jurors were selected from another county and then sequestered. Remarkably, the jury selection process was over in just four days.

The trial began on February 6, 1980. Following opening statements, the state called sixty witnesses to present its case against John Gacy. The defense's case, such as it was, was presented in less than a week. Gacy was clearly unhappy with the work of his legal team; in a letter to the judge, he complained: "I asked that my trial be stopped and I haven't heard from you. When I asked my attorney as to why we are not putting on more witnesses, I am told that we don't have money to bring in experts." The state began its rebuttal of the defense case on February 29, and, due to the numerous doors opened by 'mistakes' made during the abbreviated presentation of a defense, it was given enormous latitude. Prosecutors were allowed to call, for instance, a number of witnesses who had survived attacks by Gacy; their testimony had originally been excluded. These young men all told similar stories of druggings and torture that were highly damaging to the defense.

It must be said here that these victims all told of being victimized solely by Gacy, which seemed to indicate that he was indeed the sole perpetrator of the crimes committed against the thirty-three dead victims. What was never explained, however, was why it was that after these victims had been subdued, raped and tortured, and were completely under the control of the alleged serial

killer, they were subsequently released, very much alive and able to bear witness against the defendant. Serial killers, we are told, are essentially slaves to their unnatural desires who, once they up the ante and begin killing their victims, are unable to stop themselves from killing again and again. And yet we are to believe that John Wayne Gacy, purportedly one of the most successful, and most deranged, serial killers of all time, was able to torture his victims for hours on end, but then pull back from the edge and opt to let some of them go now and then. And we are to believe that he had no concern with leaving living witnesses that could easily have been disposed of in his crawlspace.

The possibility exists that Gacy was not actually able to kill alone, although he was clearly capable of raping and torturing his helpless victims. Perhaps, as his initial statements to police indicated, there were others involved in the actual killings, and Gacy's house was just a convenient place to dispose of the bodies. Gacy himself suggested such a scenario in another of his letters to the judge: "As you know, other than the so-called statements made by me, and given in a self-serving manner by officers for the prosecution, there is only evidence that I owned the house that was used for [bodies], their safe-keeping." Gacy's statement was an accurate one, as outrageous as it may at first appear to be. And there were at least a half-dozen people known to have keys to Gacy's home.

One of the surviving victims who testified against Gacy had a rather interesting story to tell. Under oath, he told of having a meeting with the police and the assistant state's attorney not long after his initial complaint was filed; at that meeting, he was not allowed to sign any complaints against Gacy and he was bluntly informed that no action was going to be taken.

The last rebuttal witness called was a man named James Hanley whose purpose was, reportedly, to discredit Gacy's claim of having an alter personality named Jack Hanley. The state claimed that Gacy had appropriated this man's name for his concocted alter personality in an attempt to avoid responsibility for his crimes. Prosecution claimed that the witness's belated appearance was due to the fact that they had "had investigators looking for Hanley for more than a year, but somehow the police computer didn't turn up his name." That was a rather stunning claim given that Hanley was one of their own; he had been a plain-clothes detective with the Chicago Police Department since the late 1960s.

To no one's surprise, a Gacy's jury reached a verdict on their first vote, after less than two hours of deliberations. He was found guilty of all thirty-three first-degree murder counts. Following just two more hours of deliberations, after the sentencing phase of the trial, the jury unanimously voted to impose the death sentence.

While awaiting his scheduled execution, Gacy occupied his time painting portraits of clowns and Disney figures—a common pastime of convicted serial

killers, many of whom consider themselves to be artists, including painters, poets, writers and musicians. Elmer Wayne Henley, like Gacy, whiles away his time in prison painting scenes that are far removed from the violent crimes he was convicted of.

While it is abundantly clear that Gacy was involved in the abductions and murders, it seems unlikely that he was acting alone. In addition to the facts already presented here that indicate the possible involvement of others, there were other indications that something was not quite right about the Gacy case, and that elements of the police were complicit in the operations. Following the disappearance of one of Gacy's employees, Greg Godzik, John was not questioned by police for a full three months. Godzik's frustrated parents turned for help to private investigator Anthony Pellicano, Jr., a shadowy character who tends to surface in organized crime and Hollywood circles, and who, as this is being written, is facing a variety of charges in Los Angeles in connection with a case he was working on for actor Steven Seagal. Pellicano never checked out Gacy and later claimed that he had never been given the name by Godzik's parents, which was an interesting claim given that the primary reason for his hiring was to investigate the man that the police refused to investigate. Pellicano nevertheless maintained that he had been told that Greg worked at a gas station, not for John Gacy.

Godzik was reportedly seen still very much alive *after* the time of his reported abduction, as was at least one other victim and former Gacy employee, John Szyk. In one of those bizarre 'coincidences' that seem to surround serial killer cases, the Godzik home was burglarized the night before the story of John Wayne Gacy's arrest hit the airwaves. The family of victim Rick Johnston was convinced that Rick had been abducted by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, an organization heavily steeped in mind control and with extensive connections to South Korea's version of the CIA (which was created and trained by our own CIA). Victim John Mowery, a former Marine, was the second sibling in his family to fall prey to a sadistic killer; his sister Judith had been found stabbed to death in her apartment in November 1972.

As for the unnamed others who were possibly involved in the killings, there were any number of people who lived for varying periods of time in the Gacy home, or who regularly spent time there, all of whom denied knowledge of the crimes and of the source of the stench permeating the house. One of Gacy's longtime employees and sometime houseguest, identified only by the pseudonym of Dick Walsh, was said to be evasive when questioned. He was given a polygraph examination, but his examiners claimed they were "unable to render a definite opinion." There is no indication that further examinations were attempted. Another Gacy employee was Gordon Nebel, who reportedly worked as the company's bookkeeper. He was curiously misidentified in the logs that

Gacy's surveillance team kept of his visitors, even though the officers were well aware of Nebel's identity, and aware that he worked two days a week inside the death house. Two other associates of Gacy's, Donald Morrill and Ronald Rohde, were known to have protected and shielded John from police during his period of surveillance. Neither of them appears to have been investigated in connection to the crimes, nor were any of the numerous names that appeared in Gacy's address book marked with a mysterious "H."

Whether any of these associates were involved in the deaths of the victims will likely never be known. The man in the best position to provide answers to those types of questions was executed by the state of Illinois on May 10, 1994.

* * * * *

Theodore Robert Bundy was yet another serial killer whose parentage remains obscured. He entered this world in 1946 at the Elizabeth Lund Home for unwed mothers and he was promptly abandoned there for three months by his mother, Eleanor Cowell. He was raised to believe that his mother's father, Sam Cowell, was his father as well, which he may in fact have been. Chronicler Ann Rule has written that the identity of Ted's real father was unknown outside of the family, and that he was a "shadowy man whose real identity grows more blurred with every year that passes..." Throughout his life, Bundy described his church deacon father/grandfather in glowing terms, while other family members have characterized him as a horrendously violent and abusive man who terrorized his family and was sadistic to animals. Sam Cowell's own brothers reportedly stated on numerous occasions that somebody should kill him to spare others further misery.

In October 1950, Ted's mother began calling herself Louise and legally changed her son's name from Theodore Robert Cowell to Theodore Robert Nelson—for no discernable reason. The next year, she married Johnnie Culpepper Bundy and changed Ted's name once again. Johnnie, a former Navy man and a member of a large clan of Tacoma Bundys, was employed at—of all places—a military hospital at a joint Army/Air Force complex. Ted attended Woodrow Wilson High School in Tacoma, Washington—at least according to his former classmates he did. That cannot be verified, however, since all records of Bundy's enrollment there have strangely disappeared. After graduation, he worked for a municipal electric utility.

In the spring of 1967, Ted met a woman identified by the pseudonym Stephanie Brooks. She was the daughter of a wealthy California family and was just one of many women who would be drawn into Ted's orbit. In the summer of 1968, Bundy received a scholarship to attend Dr. Lunde's Stanford University,

just as that tiny geographic region of the country was about to become the serial killer capital of the world. Ted purportedly attended Stanford for sessions in intensive Chinese studies, although nothing else in his biography hints at any interest in Chinese studies.

That same year, Ted traveled to Florida to attend the Republican National Convention as a supporter of presidential candidate Nelson Rockefeller. At about that same time, he worked as a driver and bodyguard for Art Fletcher, a candidate for Lieutenant Governor in the state of Washington. In 1969, Bundy traveled to Aspen, Colorado for an extended stay, after telling friends that he had been hired as a ski instructor, which turned out to be a lie. The real reason for Ted's stay in Aspen remains unknown. He also paid a visit to Arkansas that year, reportedly to visit relatives.

In September 1969, another woman entered Ted Bundy's orbit. Variouslly identified as Liz Kendall or Meg Anders, she was the daughter of a prominent doctor in the Mormon stronghold of Ogden, Utah. Despite her social standing, her estranged husband was a convicted felon. Meg/Liz apparently did not have the best taste in men.

In 1971, Ted began working at the Seattle Crisis Clinic as a paid work/study student; he remained there through May 1972. His work partner at the clinic was none other than Ann Rule, a policewoman *cum* 'true-crime' reporter whose brother had been recently killed, allegedly by his own hand, at—where else?—Stanford University. Ted left the crisis center to intern at Harborview County Hospital as a psychiatric counselor; his salary there was funded by a federal grant. He also worked that year as a key organizer of Washington Governor Dan Evans' reelection campaign. His job was, specifically, to spy and gather intelligence on the governor's opponent. Governor Evans later personally wrote Ted a glowing letter of recommendation to a Utah law school. As noted earlier in this chapter, Ted next worked for a variety of city, state and county law enforcement entities. In April 1973, he became a special assistant to Washington's Republican Party Chairman, Ross Davis, whom Ted frequently dined with and whose children, amazingly enough, he occasionally babysat.

In July of that same year, Bundy again flew to the San Francisco area, just as the dust was settling from the flurry of ritual murders that had terrorized that city. Just after his return to Washington, women began disappearing from the Seattle/Tacoma area. Before that time, the Seattle area had experienced very few murders—but that was about to change dramatically. The body of the first victim attributed to Bundy was found on December 6, 1973. Katherine Merry Devine had last been seen two weeks earlier getting into a pick-up truck after running away from home. The man from whom she willingly accepted the ride was not Ted Bundy. Her body was found to be missing its heart, lungs and

liver—purportedly attributable to scavenging animals. If so, those scavengers were very selective.

Next to disappear was Lynda Healey, in the early morning hours of February 1, 1974. According to the official version of events, Lynda was abducted from the home that she shared with others. Bundy allegedly entered the house, undetected by any of the home's other occupants, crept noiselessly downstairs, overpowered and killed Lynda without waking a roommate sleeping just on the other side of a thin plywood partition, and without leaving behind any signs of a struggle, wrapped Lynda's body, carried it back upstairs undetected, and then returned, still unnoticed, to make Lynda's bed, hang up her nightgown, and grab a change of clothes for her. Nothing unusual about any of that.

Later that same day, Lynda's roommates received three phone calls from someone who made only breathing noises before hanging up. One of those very same roommates later roomed with one of Ted Bundy's cousins—a cousin with whom Ted had been very close since the age of four. The brother of that same cousin, with whom Bundy was also quite close, was a teacher of what were described as 'disturbed youngsters.' Lynda herself did volunteer work at the Camelot House, described as an experimental school for 'retarded' youth. The only remains of Healey ever found was her skull, based on which investigators speculated that she had been bludgeoned to death. According to Healey's mother, the positive identification of that skull was based on a single tooth—raising the question of whether Lynda was actually ever found at all.

There was certainly nothing ever found of college student Donna Gail Manson, the next girl to disappear. She was last seen on March 12, but it took nearly a week before anyone bothered to report her missing. Whereas Healey, who bore no physical resemblance to Manson, was abducted from her home, Donna had reportedly been out walking when she disappeared. Donna Manson is said by Bundy chronicler Stephen Michaud to have "dabbled in occultism." Ann Rule described her as having an "obsession with death, magic, and alchemy." Found in her room was literature from "Thought Power, Inc.," described by Rule as an organization offering "seminars on positive thinking and mind discipline." The chief of the college police force, Alfred Pickles, reportedly ordered a perfunctory search of the campus following Donna's disappearance, and then inexplicably delegated oversight of the case to, bizarrely enough, his secretary. One of Ted's friends had been Manson's occasional racquetball partner. Another friend of Ted's was a jogging partner of Susan Rancourt, last seen on April 17. Only her skull was ever found, along with several others, on nearby Taylor Mountain.

Along with the proliferation of missing girls, the Pacific Northwest was grappling with another emerging problem in the spring of 1974: an abundance of what are referred to as 'cattle mutilations.' While conspiracy theories attempting

to explain this phenomenon abound, such theories frequently involving UFOs and alien experimentation, many police investigators and independent researchers have linked these occurrences to local satanic cult activity.

Next to disappear from the Seattle area were Roberta Kathleen Parks and Brenda Ball. Both were later identified only by skulls that were found on Taylor Mountain. Ball was not reported missing for two-and-a-half weeks following her purported abduction. She was, curiously enough, an acquaintance of Bundy chronicler Ann Rule's daughter. Georgann Hawkins reportedly disappeared from a well-lit, heavily traveled alleyway running along her campus's Greek Row on June 11, 1974. Many of her fellow students were up late that warm night, and virtually every window along the Row facing the alley was open. Georgeann was seen by fellow students approaching her sorority house, right up until she was within a few seconds of the entrance. Nevertheless, she then disappeared without anyone seeing or hearing a thing. No clues were left behind and no body was ever found. Police investigators—including a man named Herb Swindler, who took over as head of the homicide division on the very day that Georgeann's disappearance was reported, and who had been friends with Ann Rule for twenty years—were at a loss to explain the disappearance. A high school friend of Ted Bundy's was a friend of the missing girl's family.

On July 3, 1974, a law enforcement summit was held in Olympia, Washington that was attended by 100 representatives from Washington and Oregon. A prime topic of conversation at the summit was the wave of missing girls, which was rather odd since only one of the girls' remains had yet been discovered, confirming that she had met with foul play, and there was no indication whatsoever that the disappearances, which occurred over a wide geographic area, were connected in any way. In attendance at the summit were the Army's Criminal Investigations Division (CID), and Bundy friend and chronicler Ann Rule.

Each of the seven girls that had disappeared thus far—Devine, Healey, Manson, Rancourt, Parks, Ball and Hawkins—had vanished without a single clue having been left behind. There were no witnesses and no forensics evidence to tie anyone to any of the crime scenes. In some of the cases, it could not even be determined when or where the crime had occurred. All of that was about to change. On July 14, just days after the crime conference concluded, Janice Ott and Denise Naslund both reportedly disappeared from a very crowded Lake Sammamish Park—in broad daylight, and in front of literally thousands of potential witnesses, including a sizable chunk of the Seattle police force, who were holding their annual picnic there that day.

Ott, a probation officer whose father had sat on the Washington State Board of Prison Terms and Paroles, was the first of the two to disappear that day, apparently

sometime around noon. No one saw her leave or get into a car with anyone, and it was never explained what happened to her bike, which disappeared along with her and which would not have fit into Bundy's Volkswagen. Naslund, a known drug user who was said to usually have a supply of downers on hand, but who nevertheless babysat for a good friend of Ann Rule, disappeared around 4:30 PM. One witness saw a girl matching her description ride off from the park with a biker gang. She reportedly yelled, "No, I can't! Let me off!" Many years later, Naslund's mother wrote a brief note that was displayed at her daughter's memorial service, which read: "God forgive *them* for what *they* have done. I love you." It has never been explained why she used that peculiar wording.

A total of eight witnesses came forward claiming to have seen the elusive predator in the park that day. One of them had seen Janice Ott in the company of a man with sandy blond hair around the time of her disappearance. The descriptions offered by the other witnesses varied. Only two of them were ever able to identify Bundy as the man they had seen, and then only after his image had been widely aired by the media, tainting the IDs. One thing that several of them agreed on was that the man had introduced himself as "Ted." Why the stealthy killer would choose to show his face before thousands of potential witnesses, and why he would do so using his real name, are questions that have never been answered. Why Ted Bundy does not appear in any of the hundreds of photographs that were shot at the park that day is another question that has never been answered.

Following the Lake Sam disappearances, the task force tracking the Seattle killer was dubbed the "Ted Squad." One of the very first "Teds" reported to the newly christened task force was none other than Theodore Robert Bundy. His name was turned in by his friend Ann Rule, fresh from her attendance at the law enforcement summit. Ted would later also be reported by his fiancée, one of his college professors, and a former co-worker at one of the government agencies where he had worked.

It was later determined that both girls had been strangled or bludgeoned to death, though that was a largely speculative conclusion. Only the girls' skulls and a few assorted bones were ever found, on September 7. These remains were examined by, curiously enough, Dr. Daris Swindler. Though Rule's book pointedly claims that Daris was "no relation to Herb Swindler," Michaud acknowledges that he was in fact a "distant relative of Herb Swindler."

One key piece of evidence to emerged from the Lake Sam disappearances was a possible name for the suspect; he had identified himself to several witnesses as "Ted." Why the stealthy predator who had successfully abducted numerous women without leaving behind a single witness or forensics clue would suddenly operate in broad daylight using his real name was never explained.

The task force became thereafter known as the ‘Ted Squad.’ Among the very first ‘Teds’ to be reported to the squad was Theodore Robert Bundy—by his purported friend Ann Rule. Over the course of the investigation, four others would report Bundy as well: his fiancée, the pseudonymous Liz Kendall; a college professor; and a colleague at the Department of Emergency Services.

The fact that only the skulls of the girls were ever found further fueled the belief of some that the killings were cult related. Rule’s book refers derisively to: “totally unsubstantiated rumors that the missing and murdered girls had been sacrificed and their headless bodies dumped, weighted, into the almost bottomless waters of Lake Washington.” Chronicler Michaud, however, offered a different take: “occultism or Satan worship [are] creeds that local police say have long found a small but ardent following of practitioners around Seattle.” He added that many “people were convinced that a virulent offshoot of the Charles Manson family had moved to the Seattle area and had begun a new reign of terror led by ‘Ted.’” Some on the Seattle police force were convinced that there was cult involvement in the murders. A hefty file on occult activities in the area had been assembled, cryptically referred to as ‘File 1004.’ The occult theories though were ridiculed by county police and prosecutors.

The skulls that were recovered from Taylor Mountain were examined, curiously enough, by a local forensics expert named Daris Swindler, who Ann Rule claimed was no relation to Herb Swindler, her friend and the head of the homicide squad. Michaud, however, acknowledged that Daris and Herb were “distant” relatives.

After the Lake Sam disappearances provided the task force with a name, no further disappearances in the area were linked to Ted Bundy. That is not to say that no more girls vanished from the area, but rather that Bundy was no longer living there. He had moved to Utah to attend law school at the University of Utah, where he worked, surprisingly enough, as a campus security guard. The first Utah victim credited to Ted was Nancy Wilcox, last seen on October 2, 1974. She was never seen again, alive or dead. Melissa Smith was the next to vanish, on October 18. Her intact, nude body was found strangled and bludgeoned. The body had been almost entirely drained of blood, and revealed a rather curious fact: Melissa had not been killed immediately, but had been kept alive for up to a week after her disappearance. Strangely though, her make-up was undisturbed, none of her nails were broken, and there were no signs of ligatures. If she was held against her will prior to her murder, there was absolutely no indication of that fact. If it was Ted Bundy who held her for that duration of time, then he most certainly had accomplices; just the day after the girl’s disappearance, Bundy left on a hunting trip with his fiancée’s father. The slain girl was, perhaps significantly and perhaps not, the daughter of the police chief of Midvale, Utah.

Melissa's disappearance was followed by that of Laura Aime, who vanished on Halloween night, 1974. Aime was also reportedly held for up to a week before her murder, and yet the hair on her strangled and bludgeoned corpse had been freshly shampooed just before or just after her death. Forensics tests revealed that she had been drunk at the time of her death. The local sheriff, Mack Holley, was sold on another suspect as Laura's killer—a man who was later convicted of the brutal sex slaying of his girlfriend. Holley once exasperatedly told a Ted Squad member: "Bundy had nothing to do with our case, so forget him. That man didn't do our case. I wish you'd get that through your head." There were indications that Laura had some awareness that her life was in danger. Her mother reported that the girl had said to her a few weeks before her death, out of the blue: "Mother, at my funeral I don't want to be buried in a dress." Her request was honored.

The night of November 8, 1974 was purportedly a very busy one for Ted Bundy. He first allegedly attempted to abduct a girl by the name of Carol DaRonch from a shopping mall in Murray, Utah. Failing in that endeavor, he next struck in Bountiful, abducting Debra Kent from outside the building where a school play was in progress. Kent's body was never found. The problem with this official version of events is that it would have been physically impossible for Ted Bundy, or anyone else, to have committed both of those crimes. First of all, the descriptions given by witnesses at the two crime scenes differed considerably. DaRonch described her attempted abductor as having slicked-back hair and the strong scent of alcohol on his breath. Reappearing at the school, the suspect was described as having long, brown, wavy hair and was said to be handsome and well-dressed, and with no hint of alcohol on his breath. It is possible, of course, that Ted could have changed clothes, washed and restyled his hair, and rid himself of the alcohol smell sometime between the commissions of the two crimes. He would have had to do so, however, while driving a Volkswagen at over 100 miles-per-hour over rain-soaked streets, since the two crime scenes were twenty-six miles apart and only fifteen minutes elapsed between his departure from the DaRonch abduction site and his first sighting at the school. These times were recorded in police logs, so it was well known to the members of the Ted Squad that it would not have been possible for Bundy to essentially be in two places at once. Nevertheless, they pretended as though both crimes were the work of the elusive 'Ted,' even after a drama teacher at the second crime scene positively identified a drug dealer who was the initial suspect in the Kent case.

On December 12, 1974, another law enforcement summit was held: the Intermountain Crime Conference in Nevada. Exactly one month later, Ted allegedly struck again, this time moving his operations to the state of Colorado where, on January 12, Caryn Campbell disappeared from a well-lit, heavily traveled corridor at the Wildwood Inn. She had been seen just steps away from her

room, where she reportedly was heading to pick up a magazine. No one at the Inn saw or heard a thing, and there was no sign that there had been any struggle. Caryn had reportedly argued with her fiancé on the day of her disappearance. Her badly bludgeoned body was later recovered.

The next two alleged victims—Julie Cunningham and Denise Oliverson, who disappeared in March and April of 1975—were never found. After that, the disappearances strangely stopped, although it was another seven months before Ted Bundy was arrested. In the interim, Ted received a Mormon baptismal.

The circumstances of Ted's arrest were, to say the least, rather bizarre. He was stopped by Sergeant Bob Hayward of the Utah Highway Patrol, who just happened to be the brother of Captain Pete Hayward, the chief homicide detective for the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office. The only 'crime' Ted appears to have committed on the night of his arrest, by Bob Hayward's own account, was driving down a street that happened to take him by the officer's house. Nevertheless, Hayward felt compelled to call in back-up for the stop, and he was soon joined by two additional UHP troopers and a Salt Lake County detective. Why this manpower was required to stop a motorist who had not even committed a traffic violation remains a mystery. A thorough search of Bundy's car was conducted, which was illegal without the consent of the owner since the officers, by their own admission, didn't have probable cause to suspect Ted of committing any crime. The officers claimed that the search was consensual, but Bundy maintained otherwise. And Ted would have been a fool to consent to the search, which no one connected to the case has ever accused him of being. Discovered in the trunk of Ted's vehicle were several provocative, though not illegal, items—including a pry bar, a ski mask, a stocking mask, an ice pick, and a pair of handcuffs. That last item was said to connect Ted to the attempted abduction of Carol DaRonch, which involved the use of handcuffs. The cuffs that were found in Ted's car, however, were from a different manufacturer than the pair recovered from DaRonch's wrist.

At the very time that Ted was being taken into custody, yet another law enforcement summit was underway. Convened in Aspen, Colorado, the meeting was attended by detectives and prosecutors from California, Washington, Oregon, Utah, and Colorado. This conference was held behind closed doors and all attendees reportedly took a fraternal vow of secrecy. On November 20, a week after the summit began, Ted was freed after posting a bond. Following his release, he reportedly thoroughly cleaned his VW, going so far as to take a garden hose to the inside of the vehicle. He also made some necessary repairs, and then sold the car to a former classmate of victim Melissa Smith. Investigators later claimed that hair from three different victims managed to survive Ted's clean-up efforts.

Bundy also moved out of his rooming house, which was under police surveillance. Oddly though, the room he vacated was never searched for evidence.

Utah authorities had no real evidence linking Ted to any of his alleged crimes in that state, but they nevertheless proceeded to charge him with the attempted abduction of Carol DaRonch. The victim was unable to identify Bundy from an initial photo line-up, saying: "I don't see anyone in there that resembles him." Investigator Jerry Thompson, after presenting the photos to DaRonch, wrote in his notes: "She really just doesn't know." She had no problem, however, later picking Bundy out of a line-up. Ted was presented in a seven-man line-up alongside of six police detectives who were all a little older and a little heavier than Ted. Police detectives had, for unexplained reasons, rather hastily replaced the inmates who had originally been slated for the line-up. Not only did DaRonch pick Ted out of the line-up, but so too did two witnesses from the school where Debbie Kent had disappeared. Since it was, as previously noted, not possible for Ted to have been at both crime scenes, this line-up clearly had serious problems. It was alleged by some that Captain Hayward, the brother of the UHP officer who arrested Ted, heavily influenced DaRonch's identification.

With Ted set to go to trial in the DaRonch case, a trial that would hinge almost entirely on the victim's rather shaky eyewitness testimony, Bundy's lawyer concocted a most remarkable strategy; at the last minute, he suggested waiving a jury trial and letting the presiding judge, Stewart Hanson, Jr., decide the fate of the defendant. What Bundy's advocate, John O'Connell, didn't tell Ted was that all the principle officers of the court—O'Connell, Judge Hanson, and prosecutor Dave Yocum—had been buddies since their days together as classmates at the University of Utah. Ted Bundy was about to be railroaded, and it would not be for the last time.

During the course of the trial, Judge Hanson regularly took it upon himself to question witnesses, which was roughly akin to a juror interjecting questions whenever he saw fit. The star witness for the prosecution, Carol DaRonch, delivered testimony that was riddled with discrepancies and inconsistencies. She was unable to decide if her would-be abductor had had a mustache or not. She told the court that his car had been white or tan, although she had initially told police that it was blue. She acknowledged on the stand that she had positively identified Bundy's car, even though by the time she did so the car had been altered and no longer looked as it would have on the night of the incident. Many veteran court watchers found her to be somewhat less than credible, as would have, it stands to reason, many jurors. But there were no jurors, and Judge Hanson saw no problem with DaRonch's testimony. He pronounced Bundy guilty as charged on March 1, 1976. Sentencing was initially set for March 22, but was then delayed so that Ted could be psychologically evaluated by a Dr. Al Carlisle.

While Bundy awaited his sentencing, his visitation privileges were severely restricted. Interestingly enough though, Ann Rule had no problem at all being granted a special visit with Ted, even though she was not a relative, she was not on the list of approved visitors, and she showed up on a day that was not a regular visiting day. Any one of those factors alone should have disqualified her from visiting Bundy. Nevertheless, she was not only allowed to visit with the prisoner who was being held nearly incommunicado, but she was allowed to do so without even being searched before being allowed in.

On June 30, 1976, Judge Hanson sentenced Bundy to a 1–15 year prison term, leaving open the possibility that he could be paroled in as little as eighteen months. Ted's legal troubles were just beginning, however; on October 22, a warrant was issued for his arrest by the state of Colorado for the murder of Caryn Campbell. The state's case against Bundy was virtually nonexistent, consisting of: a hair purportedly found in his car; gas purchase receipts that placed him in the state of Colorado at the time of Campbell's disappearance, along with millions of other people; a Colorado Ski Country guidebook that was found in Ted's possession and on which someone—Bundy maintained that it wasn't him—had improbably marked an "X" next to the Wildwood Inn; an alleged eyewitness; and a prison informant.

Also in October, Utah's notorious Gary Gilmore, immortalized in a disinformational Norman Mailer book and a made-for-TV movie, was convicted and sentenced to death. Gilmore immediately and improbably began campaigning to become the first man executed in the United States since 1962. He succeeded, earning himself an appearance before a Utah firing squad on January 19, 1977, and opening the doors to the resumption of state executions.²⁷ Just over a week later, Bundy was taken to Aspen to stand before Judge George Lohr and answer to the charges filed against him in the Campbell case. It would not be the last time that a high-profile execution immediately preceded an important court appearance by Ted Bundy.

Around the time that Bundy was awaiting trial in Colorado, a new woman entered his orbit: Carole Ann Boone, who had previously worked at a Vietnamese resettlement camp. She would later marry Ted and bear him a child.

The judge and the prosecutor assigned to the Campbell case both reeked of corruption. Lohr had just presided over the Claudine Longet trial, which he had

27 More than a quarter-century later, Timothy McVeigh waged a very similar and equally improbable campaign to open the doors to the resumption of federal executions. He succeeded as well. His trial, conviction and execution left many questions about the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building unanswered.

wrapped up by sentencing Longet to an absurdly lax thirty-day jail term for shooting and killing famed skier Spider Sabitch. District Attorney Frank Tucker had seriously compromised the prosecution by ‘losing’ Longet’s diary—reportedly crucial to the state’s case—after opting to take it home. Tucker would later be convicted, not long after handling the Bundy case, of two counts of embezzlement, one count of felony theft, and two misdemeanor counts. He was given a ninety-day delayed sentence, a \$1,000 fine, and was disbarred, prompting him to change careers and enroll in a mortician’s school in—where else?—San Francisco.

Bundy, perhaps catching a whiff of the stench wafting over Aspen, resolved that he would defend himself. As the preliminary trial began in early April, the state’s case began almost immediately to self-destruct. On April 4, the alleged eyewitness took the stand and confidently identified the man she had seen: the Pitkin County Undersheriff. Then the purported prison informant was quietly dropped, leaving the state without either of its witnesses. What was left were: some gas receipts, that proved only that Ted was in the state of Colorado; a tourist brochure, that proved only that Ted may have thought about taking a ski trip to Colorado; and a single hair that an FBI analyst claimed was “microscopically indistinguishable” from Caryn Campbell’s hair and that police claimed was recovered from Ted’s car. The chances of gaining a conviction on that evidence in anything approaching a fair trial lay somewhere between slim and none.

As it happened, there never was a trial. In a rather bizarre turn of events, Bundy opted not to stick around long enough to face trial. During a break in the preliminary proceedings, he purportedly escaped, after being conveniently left unguarded, by jumping out an open window and strolling down the street. Ted then quickly and improbably found his way to an empty cabin that happened to be stocked with food, clothing, a rifle, a flashlight, batteries, blankets and first-aid supplies. He allegedly entered the cabin by prying loose the wire-mesh that had been applied to the windows for security, though a caretaker later said that it would have taken “superhuman strength” to do so with bare hands, as Ted claimed to have done.

Bundy did not remain free for long. He became lost and disoriented, causing him to fail in his quest to get away from the Aspen area, and virtually guaranteeing his recapture. Once back in custody, Ted was assigned new counsel: jet-setting attorney Stephen “Buzzy” Ware. Ware was a flamboyant, larger-than-life character who regularly piloted himself around the country to handle major racketeering and narcotics cases. A few weeks after being assigned the Bundy case, Ware was in a coma. He reportedly crashed into a rock wall in another one of those freak motorcycle accidents. His wife was killed in the crash.

Forced to again represent himself, Bundy filed for a much-needed change of venue, in order to get the case out of Aspen. The motion was granted, but that

was hardly a victory for Ted. The new venue was to be Colorado Springs; statistically speaking, there was no worse place in the state of Colorado for an accused murderer to stand trial. With his trial set to begin on January 9, 1978, Ted again managed to escape from his captors. This time he allegedly climbed through a 12" square hole in the ceiling of his cell, which he had cut with a hacksaw, raising questions of where he obtained the saw, and how he was able to noisily hack through the steel plate without anyone noticing. Once in the crawlspace above his cell, he reportedly scurried over to the space above a deputy's empty apartment, lowered himself down into a closet, and then casually strolled out the door to freedom. A prison snitch is said to have repeatedly reported hearing Ted moving about in the crawlspace at night, but nothing was ever done. It seems very odd, however, that a jail would ever be constructed in such a way as to create a 'crawlspace.'

Once free, Bundy this time quickly located an MG Midget that happened to be outfitted with a set of studded radial tires, a necessity for the snow-covered roads he would be facing, and also happened to have keys already in the ignition. This time, Ted wasted no time getting out of town; by the time his disappearance was discovered at noon the next day, he reportedly was already in Chicago. His commandeered vehicle did not get him far; it apparently broke down on the way to Vail. Luckily though, he was picked up by a helpful GI who gave him a ride. He then traveled by bus from Vail to Denver, and then by plane from Denver to Chicago. Once there, he stole a car and drove it to Atlanta. From there, he made his way to Tallahassee, Florida, acquiring a new identity along the way: Chris Hagen. That is how the official story reads, anyway.

On January 15, 1978, a slaughter took place at the Chi Omega sorority house on the campus of the University of Florida at Tallahassee. This crime did not bear even the slightest resemblance to any of the previous crimes attributed to Ted Bundy, but rather was reminiscent of the attack twelve years earlier that had been attributed to Richard Speck. Four girls were brutally bludgeoned in the early morning hours; two of them died from their injuries. A fifth girl was subsequently attacked at another location not far away. The first attack, at the Chi O house, purportedly occurred just after 3:00 AM and was over in just fifteen minutes. In that brief period of time, a single assailant was allegedly able to go room-to-room, locating and viciously beating four women, in addition to raping and sodomizing two of them.

One of the sorority sisters, Nita Neary, caught a brief glimpse of an intruder in the house as the man was leaving through the front door. She saw him only in profile, and described him as wearing a watch cap pulled down low over his face. His most noticeable feature, she said, was a large nose. Neary had just arrived home, at 3:00 AM, from a campus kegger party, and was quite likely intoxicated

to some degree, although the state claimed that its star witness had been quite sober on the night of the attack. Under hypnosis, she later said that the intruder closely resembled the sorority's houseboy, who looked nothing like Ted. Another sorority sister, Carol Johnston, was only asleep that night for a total of five minutes, from 3:14 AM until 3:19 AM, when she was awakened by Neary and others. Nevertheless, she did not see or hear anything out of the ordinary that night.

The first officers were on the scene by 3:23 AM, just minutes after the dazed and bloodied victims staggered out of their rooms. These officers were quickly joined by a virtual army of city police, campus police, and county sheriff's deputies. The streets surrounding the house were soon brimming with squad cars, detectives' vehicles, ambulances, and a hearse. Nearly forty distraught sorority sisters were milling about the house, many of them with blood dripping from their hands from their efforts to assist the victims. Joining the circus were an unspecified number of curiosity seekers, who were allowed to roam freely about the house. Needless to say, the crime scene was hopelessly compromised before any serious investigation could even begin.

Key evidence was destroyed at the scene, and the evidence that was preserved tended to point away from Ted Bundy as the likely perpetrator. For example, semen found in the bed of Cheryl Thomas, the fifth victim, proved to be from a non-secretor, effectively ruling out Bundy as the donor. Chewing gum that was discovered in the hair of one victim, and that could have yielded both saliva and bite-mark evidence, was destroyed. Saliva that would have likely been present around an alleged bite wound in the buttocks of another victim was swabbed away at the scene. The wound was allegedly photographed at the scene, but the photos that were later produced were not taken with the medical examiner's camera. That camera purportedly malfunctioned, so the photos were taken instead with a standard 35mm camera, allegedly supplied by a crime scene specialist. The section of skin that contained the incriminating marks was excised and placed in saline solution; unfortunately, it was destroyed in the process. A sheriff's deputy on the scene prematurely ordered one victim's body, Margaret Bowman's, taken to the morgue before crime scene technicians had even ascertained whether any evidence was present on the corpse.

And so it went at the Chi Omega house that fateful night. One rather curious fact about the crime scene that doesn't appear to have been commented on by any of Bundy's numerous chroniclers was observed by Ray Crews, one of the first officers on the scene. Crews later testified in court, and later repeated in interviews, that the body of victim Lisa Levy was cool to the touch upon its discovery. According to the official version of events, however, she had been dead for just minutes before her discovery—not long enough for her body to have noticeably cooled. One other rather curious fact, that proves once again that

bizarre ‘coincidences’ appear frequently in the stories of America’s serial killers, was that Daris Swindler—the forensics expert from Seattle—just happened to be in Tallahassee on the night of the killings. Another largely forgotten fact indicated that there was at least a possibility that the victims had not been randomly targeted: a set of keys to Thomas’ house, that likely were used by her killer, were discovered in her backyard.

Not long after the bloody rampage in Tallahassee, twelve-year-old Kimberly Leach disappeared from Lake City Junior High School in broad daylight amid heavy rush-hour traffic. Her body was found two months later, completely drained of blood. The cause of death was listed as “homicidal violence to the neck region.” The day after her disappearance, coincidentally or otherwise, Ted Bundy’s name was added to the FBI’s ‘Ten Most Wanted’ list. There was no indication at that time that Ted had anything to do with the Florida crimes; they certainly didn’t match his supposed MO, and there was no reason to suspect that Bundy was anywhere near the state of Florida.

Ted was arrested shortly thereafter, bearing yet another new name, Kenneth Misner. His last night of freedom was spent, oddly enough, in a wooded area of the Eglin Air Force Base, a restricted military facility. He had in his car at the time an array of credit and identification cards, as well as several photos of girls and young women. After allegedly sending word that he wanted to talk without counsel, Ted was interrogated in Pensacola without an attorney present, and the conversation was taped. His public defenders later loudly complained that they had been refused entry to the interrogation room. The resultant tapes were filled with gaps, allegedly due to the tape-recorder unerringly malfunctioning whenever Ted purportedly made incriminating statements. None of these supposedly confessional statements were recorded, but detectives swore that Ted had in fact made them.

There were some interesting bits of conversation that *were* recorded, including this exchange:

Police Interrogator: Where’d you get the money [that you used after your escape to travel across the country] from?

Ted: “Well, man, there’s other people. Other people are in on it.”

The next day, Bundy was handcuffed and brought to the courtroom under heavy guard, with his attorneys still complaining that they had not yet been allowed to see their client in jail. Following his appearance, Ted was taken away with what chronicler Richard Larsen described as “a strange, aloof look in his eyes.” Bundy walked right past Larsen, who was a friend of his, without any hint

of recognition. The nighttime interrogations of Bundy continued for a week, first in Pensacola and then in Tallahassee.

In the first week of March, Ted was brought to appear before Judge John Rudd, and on April 27 Rudd issued a warrant authorizing Bundy's captors to take dental impressions of their prisoner—by force if necessary. Curiously, prosecutors had waited for over two months before taking steps to obtain this allegedly key piece of evidence. In July, a grand jury was convened to hear secret testimony pertaining to the disappearance of Kimberly Leach. On the 21st, an indictment was handed down, which a judge immediately ordered sealed. The next week, another grand jury was convened to hear evidence in the Chi Omega case.

In December 1978, Judge Rudd was ordered by the Florida Supreme Court to disqualify himself from hearing the case, due to his having shown an obvious bias against the defendant. Rudd was replaced by Judge Edward Cowart, a former Navy man and police officer. On May 31, 1979, Ted was scheduled to appear before Cowart to accept the terms of a plea agreement that would have handily disposed of both the cases in which indictments had been handed down. In exchange for entering three guilty pleas to the three counts of first-degree murder, Ted was to receive three consecutive twenty-five-year prison sentences. This would have been a great deal for Bundy—if he was in fact guilty of the crimes he was charged with, and if the state had a solid case against him to prove that fact. However, there is scant evidence to suggest that that was the case.

To insure that Bundy stuck to the script and entered the guilty pleas, the state of Florida executed John Spenkelink just six days before Ted's scheduled court appearance. The message sent to Bundy could not have been any clearer: take the deal or you too will have an appointment with Florida's "Old Sparky." To further drive that point home, Ted was brought to appear in the very same courtroom where Spenkelink had been condemned to die, with many of the same actors in attendance. For a time, Bundy was even represented by Spenkelink's attorney, Brian Hayes. Spenkelink was, curiously enough, only the second man executed in this country since 1962, the first being, of course, the aforementioned Gary Gilmore. Before his electrocution, Spenkelink was asked if he had any final statement, to which he replied: "I can't talk. The [chin] strap is too tight." That was the only statement he was allowed to make.

Ted was not intimidated; he refused the deal.

On June 25, 1979, the Chi Omega trial began in Miami, Florida. It was the very first trial in U.S. history to be nationally televised. By June 30, final jury selections had already been made. Sitting on that jury, according to at least two of Bundy's chroniclers, was a man named Vernon Swindler—whom Michaud noted had "been to a murder trial before, his cousin's." For those who may have lost count, that brings to three the number of people named Swindler who played a

part in the investigation and prosecution of Ted Bundy: Herb Swindler, the head of the homicide division; Daris Swindler, the forensics expert who examined the alleged victims' remains; and Vernon Swindler, the juror. Nothing unusual about that, I suppose, nor in the fact that Ted's defense team included a 'jury expert' who was actually an Atlanta hypnotist named Emil Spillman.

The case presented by the state was, to put it politely, problematic. A stocking mask was produced that was purportedly found at the Thomas residence and which was said to be identical to the one found in Ted's car during the illegal Utah search—though one has to wonder how different one stocking mask could be from another. The mask from the Florida crime scene was said to have yielded two hairs from the head of Ted Bundy. Interestingly though, the only eyewitness that night, Nita Neary, testified that the man she saw was not wearing any such mask. Of the 260 different fingerprints found in the Chi Omega house by detectives, not one of them matched those of Ted Bundy, even though Neary also said that the intruder she saw was not wearing any gloves. In court, Nita Neary positively identified Bundy, as she reportedly had done from a photo line-up, though she had wavered in that identification when she had first seen Ted in person. And, as previously noted, she had said under hypnosis that the intruder more closely resembled the sorority's houseboy. She had also said that he had a very prominent nose, a feature that Ted was clearly lacking.

The notorious bite-mark evidence was presented to the jury, even though the actual bite wound had been destroyed and the photos purportedly taken of the wound had been shot with a camera other than that of the medical examiner, hopelessly compromising the evidence chain. The bite wound evidence was presented by a man named Dr. Richard Souviron, who had published his supposed findings before the trial even began, thereby contaminating the jury pool. In explaining the techniques that he had used to come to his conclusions, the doctor may well have inadvertently revealed exactly where the photos of the victim's bite wound came from: "I took models [from the castings of Bundy's teeth] and I went to the morgue and I pressed the models into the buttocks area on different individuals and photographed them." The good doctor took the castings of Bundy's teeth and used them to 'bite' the buttocks of corpses, and then photographed those bite wounds with a 35mm camera, but those were, of course, different 35mm bite wound photos than the ones that were allegedly taken of the actual bite wound victim, although those photos were also taken with a 35mm camera, rather than with the ME's camera, and it couldn't actually be proven that there ever was an actual bite wound victim, since the purported physical evidence of the wound itself had been destroyed.

Bob Campbell, a Fort Lauderdale police officer who followed the trial, was skeptical of both the bite-mark testimony and of Neary's dubious identification

of Bundy, despite the fact that he had a vested interest in seeing Bundy convicted, given that it was his sister that Ted had been on trial for killing prior to his escape in Colorado. Dr. Dwayne DeVore was skeptical as well. Even if we take a leap of faith and assume that the photos of the bite wounds were legitimate, DeVore testified that the tooth pattern visible in the photos was a very common one, and “the material of skin is flexible, elastic,” and not at all a good medium from which to compare bite-marks. Bundy himself cast further doubt on the evidence when he attempted to introduce photographs demonstrating that one of his teeth had been chipped *after* the attack at the Chi Omega house. To prove that point, Ted requested a delay in the trial to subpoena all the negatives of photographs taken of him by the media. If Bundy’s bite pattern had in fact changed after his arrest, then proving that would have conclusively proven that the bite wound evidence had been fabricated using castings of Ted’s teeth. The judge disallowed the motion and no photographic evidence was ever reviewed by the court.

This was certainly not the only ruling to go against Bundy. It was clear from the time of the opening defense statement that the court was heavily biased in favor of the prosecution. The defense’s statement, which ordinarily would not be expected to draw objections, ran for just twenty-six minutes and was interrupted with an astounding twenty-nine objections, *twenty-three of which were sustained*. When all was said and done, the jury deliberated for just six hours before finding Bundy guilty on all counts. Following the penalty phase of the trial, the jurors required just an additional hour and forty minutes to deliver two death sentences. Ted was sent to Death Row’s Q Wing, otherwise known as the ‘Bug Wing,’ where he took up residence in John Spinkelink’s recently abandoned cell.

In January 1980, he was back in court to again face murder charges, this time for the death of Kimberly Leach. There was virtually no chance of him receiving a fair trial; his name recognition in Orange County, where he was being tried, was said to be at 98%. Only the comatose were unaware of the notorious Ted Bundy. The state used that fact to their full advantage, brazenly stacking the jury with those who had prior knowledge of the case. As Ted accurately noted, “the state’s case is predicated on knowledge outside this courtroom.” Even Ann Rule acknowledged that the “prospective jurors...appeared willing to say almost anything so that they might be chosen.”

Ted’s defense counsel this time around was a man named Vic Africano, who candidly described Bundy as a “split personality.” Court watchers noted that Bundy seemed to have undergone a radical transformation from his previous trial, during which he had represented himself quite lucidly and animatedly. He now seemed distant, aloof, out of touch with his surroundings. It would later be revealed that Carole Boone kept him supplied with a steady flow of drugs and alcohol throughout the latter proceedings.

There were ostensibly three eyewitnesses to the Leach abduction, but there were serious questions about all of them. The first was a seventy-three-year-old crossing guard who remembered the day of the abduction as having been a “warm, summery day,” when in fact it had been a rain-drenched morning on which the temperature had been near freezing. According to chronicler Michaud, during a deposition this witness had “told the attorney that he knew he’d picked the right man because an FBI agent winked at him when he picked the right picture in a photo lineup.” His testimony was deemed inadmissible, as was that of the second eyewitness, who had been unable to identify Ted for nearly two years before suddenly developing the ability to do so. The third witness, C. L. “Andy” Anderson, had waited for weeks before belatedly reporting his version of the abduction to police. Anderson happened to work at the local fire station, which was, conveniently enough, located in the same building as the Lake City Police Department.

Anderson’s version of the incident was seriously lacking in credibility. He claimed that Bundy, ever the careful criminal, had improbably left his van parked in the street, blocking the only west-bound traffic lane, during the morning rush hour, while he leisurely prowled about the school looking for a suitable victim. In order to ‘enhance’ his memory of that day, Anderson had reportedly been hypnotized. Another witness, a sporting goods dealer, claimed in court that he had sold Bundy a knife shortly before the crime was committed, but there was no evidence that a knife had been used in the commission of the crime, and the witness had initially identified another man in a photo line-up.

The most compelling element of the state’s case, on the surface anyway, was the purported fiber evidence. Fibers from a van that Ted had allegedly stolen and used for a period of ten days were reportedly recovered from Leach’s purse, bra, jersey, and socks. Conversely, fibers from her denim purse and jeans were said to have been found in the van. The problem was that there was no evidence to suggest that Ted had ever stolen, used, or been anywhere near that van. None of Ted’s or Leach’s hair was ever found in the van, even though 100 hair samples were recovered from the vehicle, clearly demonstrating that no effort had been made to cleanse the van of evidence. Similarly, dozens of latent fingerprints were found in the van, but none of them belonged to Ted. Obviously, no effort had been made to wipe the van down, which was not consistent with Bundy’s other alleged actions. For instance, it was claimed that Ted’s Florida apartment had been so thoroughly cleaned before his departure that not a single fingerprint could be found anywhere.

Another problem with the fiber evidence is the notion that a fiber from a pair of denim jeans, a mass produced commodity, can be matched to a particular pair of jeans. There is absolutely nothing unique about any particular pair of blue

jeans that would allow an analyst to ascertain that it was the garment that yielded an individual fiber to the exclusion of all other pairs of jeans. These are not, in other words, fingerprints we are talking about here; these are textiles that are produced in enormous lots. The same is largely true of carpet fibers, including those from the van, which are also a mass produced commodity. The best that can be ascertained is that a fiber came from a particular make of automobile, not from any specific vehicle. Claims to the contrary fly in the face of any sort of logic.

The best that the state could do to connect Bundy to the van was through the testimony of Detective James Parmenter of Jacksonville. Prior to the Leach abduction, his kids had purportedly had an encounter with the van and its driver. Parmenter later arranged for his kids to be hypnotized, out of which allegedly came a positive ID of Bundy as the driver. Bundy was thus ever so tenuously linked to the van, through the manipulated testimony of the two young children of a police detective, and not through any physical evidence whatsoever, and the van was then tenuously linked to Kimberly Leach, though only through dubious fiber evidence.

None of this really mattered, however, as Bundy's guilt was a foregone conclusion for the people of the state of Florida. It took the jury only forty-five minutes to deliver yet another death sentence on February 9—the second anniversary of Leach's disappearance, a fact that surely was not lost on the jurors. Following the verdict, Ted was sent to occupy a cell right next to that of our old friend Ottis Toole.

Throughout the 1980s, long after Ted Bundy had moved on, women continued to vanish in and around the Seattle area—as many as 100 of them by some counts. Most of them were prostitutes, many of them underage. These killings were attributed to the so-called “Green River Killer,” who has never been caught (though recent reports claim that police now have a suspect who will be prosecuted).

In the summer of 1985, the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) was launched at the FBI's headquarters in Quantico, Virginia. Ted Bundy was said to be the prototype on which the system was based. This system, despite the lofty goals implied by the name, has little to do with the apprehension of violent criminals and everything to do with the wholesale erosion of civil rights in this country, using the fear of a manufactured phenomenon, serial killers, to sell repressive measures to the American people. One of the biggest promoters of the system, who did everything but go door-to-door to assist the FBI in its efforts to justify its implementation, was Ann Rule. The very same Ann Rule consented to be a witness for the prosecution during Bundy's so-called “competency trials,” which were an effort on Ted's part to persuade the courts to set his sentences aside and grant him new trials in the Florida cases.

In her book *The Stranger Beside Me*, Rule, a former Chi Omega sorority sister, justifies the selling out of her purported friend by saying: “There would be a very real threat that Ted could work his way back through all his legal thickets.” In other words, if Bundy’s verdicts had been set aside, and if new trials had been ordered, there would have been a very real possibility that his previous trials would have been revealed as the judicial shams that they were. The truth of the matter was, as Stephen Michaud wrote: “in the dozens of cases from Seattle to Florida in which the police have sought to implicate Bundy there has not been a single bit of physical evidence that incontrovertibly demonstrates his involvement in anything more sinister than car theft.” Michaud attributes this to Bundy being some sort of criminal mastermind—a genius who was smart enough to always cover his tracks. In truth, there was never any evidence to suggest that Bundy was a genius. He was no doubt an intelligent man, but there is nothing in his academic records or in his IQ test scores to indicate that he rose to the level of a ‘genius.’

In April 1987, the *Associated Press* reported that the incarcerated Bundy had been corresponding with attempted presidential assassin John Hinckley, Jr., who was in turn corresponding with Manson disciple *cum* attempted presidential assassin Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme. Birds of a feather...

On August 1, 1987—*Lammas* on the occult calendar—Judge Cowart died of a massive heart attack while lying in a private hospital room that he had checked into for observation. He had no prior history of illness. Ted Bundy, calmed by tranquilizers, was put to death by the state of Florida on January 24, 1989. In his final hours, he allegedly confessed on tape to an array of murders, including some in the state of Idaho that he had never been accused of. Many of the details given in these confessions were either wrong or unverifiable, and the tape is difficult to hear—due purportedly to yet another tape-recorder malfunction.

One type of evidence that would have proven tremendously damaging to Bundy had it been introduced at any of his trials was Polaroid photographs of the murders. According to some officials, such photos did exist, taken by Ted himself. As with so many other cases though, such evidence was never produced. Why? Perhaps because those photographs would show actors other than, or in addition to, Theodore Robert Bundy.

Chapter 15

The Next Generation

“Like you have a job, I have a job, he has a job. His job is killing people. That’s what he was trained to do.”

—Cynthia Haden, a juror in the Richard Ramirez trial,
commenting on the convicted Night Stalker

Henry Lee Lucas’ reign of terror ended a mere nine months before another series of violent ‘serial killings’ began in March 1984 in part of Henry’s old stomping ground: the state of Florida. By the time it was over, ten people had met with gruesome, untimely deaths, allegedly at the hands of Bobby Joe Long. Though rarely mentioned in press accounts of the killings, Bobby Joe Long was a cousin of Henry Lee Lucas.

Just over two years after John Wayne Gacy was indicted for the murder of thirty-three young men in Chicago, a new wave of ‘serial killings’ began in the Windy City. A year-and-a-half later, seventeen young women had allegedly fallen victim to the “Ripper Crew,” led by Robin Gecht. Seventeen years after the arrest of the Rippers, and just days before the scheduled execution of one member of the crew, a son of the crew’s charismatic leader was arrested along with three accomplices and charged with homicide as well. Though the connection was almost entirely ignored by the media, Robin Gecht had been one of the young male employees of John Wayne Gacy.

Angelo Buono was still awaiting trial for the Hillside Strangler murders when girls once again began turning up dead on the streets of the San Fernando Valley. These killings were eventually attributed to a man named Douglas Clark and an accomplice named, bizarrely enough, Carole Bundy—though this was not the same woman who acquired that very same name after marrying Ted Bundy. Like Buono, Clark owned an auto upholstery business, located just a short drive from Angelo’s shop. Also like Buono, Clark claimed to have used his business as a front for a prostitution ring. On at least one occasion, Clark had visited Buono’s shop

to purchase supplies. The first victims of the Clark and Bundy team, who were dubbed the “Sunset Strip Killers,” were dumped along the same lonely stretch of Forest Lawn Drive where the body of Strangler victim Yolanda Washington had earlier been discovered, as well as the body of Laura Collins before her. Clark claimed that his large stable of past and present girlfriends included a roommate of one of the Strangler victims. Following his arrest, Clark began a relationship with another woman, as did his partner, Carole Bundy. The woman was Veronica Compton, the girlfriend of Kenneth Bianchi who was convicted of being a “Copycat” Strangler.

Richard Ramirez, whose alleged “Night Stalker” killing spree began just weeks after that of Bobby Joe Long, arose from the very same cesspool that had spawned Henry Lee Lucas, Rafael Resendez-Ramirez, and the Matamoros and Juarez death cults. Just before his arrival in Los Angeles, Ramirez paid a visit to San Francisco to receive inspiration from the high priest of that satanic sewer, Anton LaVey.

* * * * *

Robin Gecht was born on November 30, 1953 at, appropriately enough, the Illinois Masonic Hospital. His parents never married and young Robin was raised primarily by his grandparents. At a fairly young age, Gecht was sent to a school for troubled youth. He was later sent by a judge to a live-in facility that likewise catered to delinquent youth. Still later, as a young teen, Robin formed a close relationship with a man named Thomas Farley, a known pedophile who lived in the same building as the Gecht family. During his teen years, Gecht was accused of molesting his own sister. Around that same time, he began living with Farley, an arrangement that apparently was of no great concern to Gecht’s parents or grandparents. At one point, Robin even took to the road with Farley, journeying to the state of Florida for reasons unknown.²⁸

28 It may by now have occurred to readers that three states seem to play a particularly prominent role in the life stories of an overwhelming number of purported serial killers: California, Texas and Florida. These three states are, coincidentally or not, rife with satanic cult activity. They are also, coincidentally or not, the three points through which virtually all of the drugs trafficked through Mexico and Central and South America enter the United States. As was previously mentioned, two of these three points of entry, again coincidentally or not, have in recent years been under the political control of the Bush family. And as was also mentioned previously, law enforcement officials have spoken of an organized crime pipeline that moves many of the drugs entering Texas to the city of Chicago, Illinois—which could help explain the recurrent phenomenon of spree and serial killers stalking that city.

Robin Gecht married a woman named Rosemary McCaffrey and fathered three children by her. Rosemary has been described by Gecht chronicler Jaye Slade Fletcher as “bizarre looking, with long black hair, Cleopatra eye makeup, long red fingernails, and a hard-eyed stare.” At the urging of Robin, who enjoyed reading books on the torture practices of ancient cultures, she reportedly kept hatpins stuck through her breast. Like Rosemary, her brother Thomas was also thin and chalk-white with jet-black hair. He was later implicated by Robin Gecht in the Ripper murders. Thomas, who denied any involvement in the killings, claimed that one of the accomplices who was later convicted of complicity was a lover of Robin’s, and that another accomplice was a former lover.

In addition to his boyfriends, Robin also reportedly maintained a large stable of girlfriends. Like others profiled in this book, Gecht reportedly had a steady stream of teenage boys and girls coming and going from his house, some of whom stayed there for varying periods of time. One of them, a fifteen-year-old girl, accused Robin of raping her at gunpoint, but the charges were later dropped. Robin apparently was not too picky about who, *or what*, he copulated with; on at least one occasion, he reportedly had sexual relations with his wife’s parents’ dog.

Gecht has been described as a master manipulator who is adept at reading others. He is also said to be an accomplished hypnotist who has an uncanny knack for getting people, especially women, to do what he wants them to do. He has also been described as a sufferer of a multiple personality disorder who speaks in various voices—including those of a small child, a teenager, and a businessman. Experts, of course, have declared this a sham.

Robin frequently visited an unidentified drugstore where he apparently was on close terms with the pharmacist. Associates of Gecht’s have said that he could get whatever he wanted there, in whatever quantities he desired; he was therefore able to keep a large and steady supply of prescription pills of various kinds on hand. All of this—the fascination with hypnotism and the control of others, the fascination with torture, the associations with pedophilia, ready access to drugs, indications of a dissociative disorder—is by now familiar terrain.

Two of Robin’s convicted accomplices were brothers Andy and Tom Kokoraleis. Along with their four siblings, the two boys had been raised by their father following the premature death of their mother. One of those siblings filed numerous complaints with a youth protection agency charging their father with sexual molestation. In one of those strange twists that are forever popping up in serial killer cases, Warren Wilkosz, who served as the lead investigator on the Ripper case, had been a friend of the Kokoraleis family for a number of years.

In April 1982, Robin Gecht suddenly disappeared for several weeks, much as Richard Chase had done several years before. Upon his return, Gecht refused to explain the reason for his sudden disappearance or to discuss where he had gone.

On May 6, just after he returned from his mysterious sojourn, an unidentified Chicago police officer responded to a call of a man with a gun. That man turned out to be Robin Gecht, who was arrested and charged with carrying a loaded weapon. Robin purportedly quickly established a rapport with the officer, despite the circumstances of their meeting. A few days later, the two met at the officer's house and Robin, a building contractor/carpenter, just as Gacy had been, began working for the officer.

Robin's new friend on the force soon opened his home to the entire Gecht family, who essentially lived with him for a period of four months. During that time, Robin was allegedly directly complicit in a string of grisly murders. The first of these occurred just nine days after that fateful, and rather bizarre, meeting between Gecht and the officer. Lorraine Ann Borowski disappeared on May 15, 1982. Borowski shared an apartment with a man who told police investigators that she had not slept at home the night before she disappeared, even though it was quite obvious to the officers that she had. It has never been explained why the man lied to the officers, or why he was not considered a suspect after doing so.

Lorraine had told her mother the day before she vanished that a "big, giant man" in a car had been following her. That was a description that would have fit Ed Kemper, but it was certainly not a description that fit the rather diminutive Robin Gecht. The owner of a nearby liquor store had seen a struggle at the side of a gray or dull silver, older model car. A suspect was identified who had driven such a car until just after the abduction, when he claimed to have sold it. The man was said to have an explosive temper and a fondness for knives and Oriental throwing stars. He had been in-and-out of mental hospitals for a number of years, with release from his most recent confinement having come just the day before the abduction. His younger brother was already serving time for another abduction and murder.

This was not the first abduction/murder that was later attributed to Robin and his crew. It would later be claimed that the killings actually began the year before, and that as many as twelve girls had fallen victim to the Rippers before Lorraine Borowski. Police though were never able to produce more than one of the purported bodies, or to identify who any of the other missing victims might be. The first of them was said to be a Chicago-area prostitute named Linda Sutton, whose nearly skeletal remains were found facedown in a field on June 1, 1981. She had last been seen on May 24 at a family function in the company of a new boyfriend. It was claimed that she had been killed just three days before her remains were discovered, on about the twenty-ninth of May. The advanced decomposition of the body, however, suggested that she had actually died just after the time she was last seen. Her whereabouts between that day and the alleged day of her death were never accounted for.

There is nothing to indicate that Linda Sutton's murder had any connection to those that occurred a year later. And there is no evidence to suggest that any other murders were committed by the Gecht crew between June 1981 and May 1982. In other words, there is nothing to suggest that the killings began before Robin returned from his mysterious sojourn and took up residence with a member of the Chicago Police Department. Indeed, the additional murders appear to have been a fabrication intended to draw attention away from the unusual circumstances surrounding the actual time that the killings began.

On May 29, 1982, a woman named Shui Mak disappeared; her corpse surfaced shortly after that in one of Chicago's most exclusive suburbs. The next month a prostitute named Angel York was attacked and her left breast was brutally slashed, which was to become a distinguishing feature of the Ripper killings. It would later be revealed that the severed left breasts of the victims were utilized by the cult in rituals that involved cannibalism and necrophilia. This preoccupation with the left breast of victims is, perhaps significantly, shared by other serial killers. Included on that list are Richard Chase and the Boston Strangler, one of whose victims was found with eighteen stab wounds forming a ritual pattern on her left breast.

The body of prostitute Sandra Delaware was found on August 28, 1982, bearing the distinctive mutilation wounds of the Ripper Crew. Delaware had been working for a pimp identified only as "The Minister," but had recently left his stable and had subsequently received death threats from him. Just over a week later, Rose Davis was savagely beaten, stabbed and strangled. Robert Ressler, one of the founding fathers of the 'science' of profiling, just happened to be in the Chicago area when Davis' body was found, and he was promptly put to work creating a profile of her killer. Why this was necessary remains largely a mystery, since the police already had a prime suspect in the case. The suspect lived in the apartment building outside of which the crime took place, and he was seen by witnesses at the scene of the crime at the time that police estimated the girl had been killed. He was given a polygraph test that revealed that he had, at the very least, witnessed the murder. The police concluded, bizarrely enough, that the man had heard the assault in progress from inside his apartment, and had gone outside to watch. He was cleared as a suspect.

On October 5, a prostitute named Denise Gardner was found alive but bleeding profusely from severe mutilations. Her left breast had been completely removed and her right breast was nearly severed. She was rushed to Illinois Masonic Hospital where she told investigators that she had been forced to swallow some unidentified blue capsules. She also gave a detailed description of the van that was used to abduct her. The very next day, a drive-by shooting left one known drug dealer dead and one of his associates paralyzed. To investigators, it

looked very much like a routine gang-related drug hit, which is no doubt exactly what it was. Nevertheless, it was credited to the Ripper Crew.

Police pulled over a van two weeks later that closely matched the description that had been given by Gardner of the vehicle that was used to abduct her. The driver of the van was a young man named Eddie Spreitzer. Eddie led the officers to his boss, Robin Gecht, who was the owner of the van. Eddie was then taken in and questioned at length. His interrogation quickly yielded the names of Gecht and the Kokoraleis brothers. Andy Kokoraleis was then taken into custody, and Eddie and Andy were held in separate interrogation rooms for an extended period of time, forced to sleep on couches and endure frequent questioning. They soon confessed to as many as eighteen murders.

Both of the young men displayed a palpable fear of Robin Gecht, who they said had an altar set up in his attic where he performed rituals. Police later found black and red crosses painted in that attic, but the altar had apparently been removed. Gecht was arrested and formally charged with aggravated battery, deviate sexual assault, armed robbery and kidnapping—all in connection with the assault on Gardner. Eddie and Andy were indicted for murder, rape, kidnapping, armed violence, and deviate sexual assault.

On October 25, Gecht was released from custody after posting bail. Six days later, on Halloween, another woman was rushed to the hospital for emergency treatment after having her breasts slashed. Gecht was formally charged with that attack on November 5, but the charges were later dropped on the request of an assistant state's attorney. Eleven days later, with all of the Rippers safely in custody, the mutilated body of another young prostitute was found under a bridge in exactly the same spot where Sandra Delaware's body had been dumped. Authorities deemed that just a bizarre coincidence.

Eddie Spreitzer and Andy Kokoraleis, both teenagers who appeared to be the least culpable of the suspects, took the majority of the fall; both ultimately received death sentences. Eddie initially pled guilty to four counts of murder and one count of attempted murder and received four life sentences plus an additional 360 years. He was then indicted on additional charges and he went to trial, resulting in a death sentence. Andy's first trial, in February 1985, resulted in a life sentence after he was found guilty of murder. Two years later, in a second trial, he was again found guilty. On April 30, 1987—*Walpurgisnacht*—the presiding judge formally sentenced Andy Kokoraleis to death by execution.

The purported leader of the cult, Robin Gecht, never faced murder charges, but he was charged with various lesser crimes. His first trial ended very quickly in a mistrial. At the second, he was convicted of attempted murder, rape, deviate sexual assault, aggravated battery and armed violence; he was given a 120-year sentence. Tommy Kokoraleis was initially given a life sentence for his complicity

in the crimes, but that sentence was later reversed. Facing trial again, he accepted a plea agreement that netted him a seventy year prison sentence. No one else was ever charged in connection with the murders, although there was certainly no shortage of suspects, including the Chicago police officer whose home provided Gecht with his base of operations. The name of another man came up repeatedly during the investigation, and that suspect failed a polygraph examination during which he was questioned directly about being present and participating in the killings. He was released “pending further investigation.”

Some of the witnesses in the case implicated others as well, either directly or indirectly. Some said that Gecht slaughtered animals during ceremonies performed in the woods. They also spoke of his fondness for guns and of his seemingly unlimited access to drugs. Some of them also spoke of orgies that were attended by Gecht’s sister-in-law and her circle of friends. Many of the witnesses warned of a satanic “fad” sweeping through the local high school; students, they said, were wearing pentagrams and carving “666” and inverted crosses into their desks. Secret ceremonies were reportedly being held and candles and witchcraft were hot topics of whispered conversations. Teachers told of finding circles of stones and the skeletal remains of cats and dogs in the wooded area behind the school.

Such stories were largely ignored by the local media, which was uncharacteristically muted in its coverage of the case. Coincidentally or otherwise, the Ripper case was overshadowed by a much more high-profile series of deaths that were attributed to Tylenol packages that had been tampered with. The Tylenol/cyanide case, which succeeded in ratcheting up the level of fear not just in Chicago, but across the country, was never solved. The lackadaisical coverage of the case was likely due to the fact that authorities were forced to acknowledge that the Ripper Crew was indeed a satanic cult that killed as a group, much like the Manson Family. Prosecutors in fact likened Gecht’s followers to Charlie’s, who yearned to please their leader and killed on his command.

* * * * *

The cast of characters involved in the Sunset Strip Murders was a large and colorful one. Many of the key players in that cast reeked of covert military intelligence operations, including the alleged ringleader, Douglas Clark.

Doug was born in 1948, the son of Navy Lieutenant Commander Franklyn Clark. The Clark family moved frequently during Doug’s early years, living for varying periods of time in Pennsylvania, Washington, California and Japan. When Doug was eleven, the family relocated to the Kwajalein Atoll in the

Marshall Islands. By that time, Franklyn had allegedly retired from Naval service to find work in the civilian sector. The family's new home just happened to be an interceptor pad for missiles fired from Vandenberg Air Force Base, but officially Franklyn was now a civilian employee of the Transport Company of Texas. Following this stint in the Pacific, the Clark family returned to the home that they maintained in Berkeley, California, where young Douglas whiled away his time playing with the children of legendary Navy Admiral Chester Nimitz.

The family next lived for a time in India, where Doug remembered living a life of luxury surrounded by numerous household servants. After that, Clark enrolled at *Ecole Internationale de Geneve*, alongside the offspring of royalty, celebrities and diplomats. The rest of the Clark family, meanwhile, moved on first to Venezuela and then to Australia. Doug's next stop was at the prestigious Culver Military Academy in Indiana. While there, he indulged his lifelong fascination with guns by joining a firearms club on campus. He also reportedly spent a considerable amount of time recording audiotapes and taking photographs of his sexual exploits, which he revelled in sharing with others.

After leaving Culver, Clark moved back in with his family, who by that time had resettled in Yosemite. He next embarked on a career in the Air Force, where he worked, strangely enough, in radio intelligence. Like many other future serial killers, he was discharged early, though honorably and with full benefits. Details of his discharge, alas, remain rather murky; some of the records are reportedly missing. In the early 1970s, he married and opened his own upholstery business. By 1976, the marriage had ended and Doug was working for the Department of Water and Power's Valley Generating Station. According to his work records, he once took two weeks off to recover from knife wounds of unspecified origin.

His employment at the generating station was ultimately terminated; strangely enough, on the day of his termination, the plant received a telephone call from the LAPD warning that Clark was headed their way armed with a shotgun. That turned out to be a false alarm. It was never explained why the LAPD made that unusual call.

Clark was known to confide to friends his ultimate dream of owning a country home with a secret torture chamber where he could train and house sex slaves. He also liked to boast of being a contract assassin who had been performing "assigned hits" since his adolescent years. One of Clark's closest associates, John Robert "Jack" Murray, also claimed to be an assassin. Murray was a lounge singer who fancied himself Australia's answer to Tom Jones. He reportedly was known to carry a police badge and a 9mm handgun. He had served in Vietnam in a Special Forces unit of the Australian Army. He claimed that he had served, specifically, as an undercover assassin for the CIA—in other words, as a Phoenix operative. Like

Clark, Murray found it exceptionally easy to attract women and he generally kept a large stable of girlfriends, some of whom he shared with Doug.

Jack's wife, Jeannette, who was well aware of her husband's frequent indiscretions, was a former Marine and the daughter of a Naval officer. Jeannette's father died at the age of forty-two, reportedly by his own hand. Before his death, he was a frequent abuser of his daughter. One of his beatings was severe enough to leave Jeannette with a dislocated shoulder and a concussion. Jack Murray later took over as her primary abuser.

Carol Bundy was another of the key players in this sordid tale. Carol had worked for a brief time as a child actress, the highlight of which was an appearance in the classic film "Miracle on 34th Street." Carol had also suffered through a horrendously abusive childhood. Her sibling recalled watching Carol sitting emotionless (in a dissociative state) while their mother beat her unmercifully. After the beatings, she would just grin at her tormentor. After their mother died at a young age, when Carol was just fourteen, the two girls were temporarily expected to take their mother's place in their father's bed. Their father was remarried just months later, however, and promptly shipped the girls off to foster homes. At about that time, Carol made her first suicide attempt; she made at least two more attempts in later years.

Carol first married at age eighteen, but it apparently was a brief union. Not long after that, her father was found swinging from a rope; his death was ruled a suicide. At around that same time, Carol met a man named Dick Geis, who was the editor of a bizarre and obscure fan-zine and a writer of pornography. Geis was yet another possible player in this tale; he had inside knowledge of the murders, but was not necessarily complicit in them.

Carol eventually moved into an apartment building that was managed by Jack Murray, and soon began an affair with Jack, and also with Doug Clark and with Jeannette's Murray's brother. Carol had two young sons living with her who suffered abuse at the hands of both Carol and Doug, and possibly Jack as well. Some reports held that both of Carol's boys, and an eleven-year-old neighbor girl, were under Doug's control. The neighbor girl had been molested from a very young age by an unidentified "family friend." She had endured such severe abuse that she reportedly had her own pediatric plastic surgeon to mend the damage from her frequent 'accidents.' For Doug and Carol, she served as a model for child pornography photos. She also regularly rode along with Doug to assist him in selecting prostitutes, which was one of his favorite activities.

The names of several of Doug and Jack's girlfriends are woven through this story as well. And Doug and Jack had no shortage of girlfriends, some of whom they shared. Jurors at Doug's trial were amazed at the level of control that he exerted over so many different women. Lydia Crouch was one of them. She had

an eleven-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl who were likely molested by some of the adults in this story. Tammy Spangler was an off-and-on girlfriend of both Doug and Jack over a four-year period. She disappeared while Clark was awaiting trial. Bretta Jo “Joey” Lamphier was a particularly loyal girlfriend of Doug’s. Her phone bill revealed that incriminating calls to witnesses had been placed from her home. Nancy Smith was yet another of Doug’s girlfriends. She fled to Illinois the day after Jack’s body was found without Jack’s head attached to it.

Jack Murray’s head was never found. The possibility exists that it was not really Jack’s body that turned up headless in Jack’s van. And it almost certainly was not Carol Bundy, working alone, that stabbed the victim repeatedly and then chopped off his head. And Jack Murray was certainly more than just a victim in this tale, but that is how he was portrayed by the state.

The murders began in June 1980. The first victims were Cindy Chandler and Gina Moreno, just sixteen and fifteen years old. Their bodies were discovered alongside the Ventura Freeway, in a dumping grounds previously used by Buono and Bianchi. Both girls had .25 caliber slugs in their heads. Both had been sexually violated and, according to accounts by law enforcement officials, photographed with a Polaroid camera after their deaths. Not long before their disappearances, they had attended a party with a Beverly Hills acquaintance, Mindy Cohen, and had apparently been staying at the home of an unnamed Hollywood producer. Mindy’s boyfriend, an attorney, was the host of the party, which was reportedly attended by more than 100 people, many of them judges and lawyers—and many of them nubile young women. After leaving the party, the two girls were taken by Mindy to the home of Rod Stewart and Britt Ekland. It is unclear how long after this eventful evening they remained alive.

Not long after their disappearances, a woman named Laurie Briggs received a troubling phone call from a man who seemed to be attempting to get a physical description of her brother-in-law, Henry Briggs. Henry’s business card was found on the body of one of the two dead girls. Days later, Mindy Cohen received an equally troubling phone call from a man claiming to be an LAPD detective; the police later said that the man had no connection to the department. Two days later, Cohen received a second call from the same man, this time claiming that he had seen her at the party.

On the same day that Mindy received the first phone call, Exxie Wilson and Karen Jones were shot in the head with a .25 caliber automatic. Both of their bodies were found the next day, but it was several more days before Wilson’s severed head was discovered—packed inside a treasure chest manufactured in Juarez, Mexico. Wilson and Jones had both arrived in L.A. just a week before, brought there from Little Rock, Arkansas by their pimp, Derek Albright. Albright had previously served time for murder. Tests conducted on the semen found in

Wilson's throat revealed that it came from a type A secretor; Doug Clark had type O blood. One of the last places that Wilson was seen, on the day that she disappeared, was the Carney's Restaurant on the Sunset Strip from where one of the Strangler victims had been abducted.

Another alleged victim was a seventeen-year-old runaway named Marnett Comer, who had been working the streets since the age of thirteen; she had worked the streets of Sacramento during the time of the Richard Chase killings. She had recently confided to her sister her intention to leave her pimp, and detectives initially suspected that a nationwide organization of pimps was responsible for her death. Another attack attributed to Clark was the brutal stabbing of a prostitute named Charlene Andermann. She was stabbed twenty-six times but managed to survive the attack. Andermann originally identified another man as her assailant, in both a photo line-up and a live line-up. She also described the man as having a mustache and identified the car he was driving as a wood-paneled station wagon. Clark had neither a mustache nor access to a station wagon. Andermann seriously undermined her own credibility when she waffled over where the attack took place; first she placed it inside a motel room, and then later changed her mind and claimed that it had occurred in the vehicle.

The killings ended after Carol Bundy allegedly placed an anonymous call to the police. Doug Clark was arrested and reportedly talked to detectives for over three hours without the benefit of having an attorney present. Cindy Chandler's home phone number was found in his wallet—a rather unusual find given that Chandler was allegedly a randomly chosen victim. Two guns were confiscated, but neighbor Teresa told investigators that that was just the tip of the iceberg; she had once seen an Army bag stuffed full of guns. Doug was charged with multiple counts of murder, three counts of child molestation, one count of attempted murder for the Andermann attack, and one count of being an accessory after the fact in the killing of Jack Murray. While in jail awaiting trial, Clark had no fewer than four fiancées, one of whom was the so-called 'Copycat Strangler,' Veronica Compton.

The case against Clark was prosecuted by Robert Jorgensen, whose life had followed a rather interesting path. Jorgensen had at one time been an executive with General Electric. In the mid-1960s, he decided to resign to attend law school at UC Berkeley. The former defense industry executive was suddenly reborn as a campus radical. He graduated in 1967, at the onset of the 'Summer of Love.' Campus activism was at an all-time high, and covert operatives were lurking everywhere. Following his graduation, Jorgensen drifted south to Los Angeles and promptly began working for the District Attorney's Office. That was, needless to say, a rather odd career choice for an idealistic young radical. Once on the job, he became known as a hard-line right-winger who tended to associate only with young, attractive women.

Carol's appointed attorney was a former homicide detective. As Doug's counsel, the court appointed Maxwell Keith, who had previously represented Manson disciple Leslie Van Houten. Doug was not entirely pleased with the appointment and he repeatedly petitioned the court for permission to represent himself. His requests were denied, but he was allowed to essentially serve as co-counsel to Keith, who delivered one of the most pathetic closing arguments in legal history. His excuse, amazingly enough, was that he had left all his notes at home because he did not expect to have to argue that day. Clark seems to have fared somewhat better; veteran court watchers were said to be impressed with his performance.

Clark's efforts were hampered in a number of ways: he was repeatedly denied contact with his own attorney; on at least one occasion, his cell was searched and his notes were seized; and on another occasion, he was brought into the courtroom manacled and gagged. And Clark likely didn't aid his cause much by hurling at the judge, in open court, such epithets as "sleazy cocksucker," "gutless worm," "Tijuana taxi driver," "goddamned asshole," "stinking faggot," and "spineless bastard."

Perhaps the most damage was done to Doug's case by Carol Bundy, who was called to the stand as a *defense* witness. Though Doug did not know it, Bundy was offered, and she accepted, an immunity deal immediately before she took the stand. The story she told was the one the state wanted to hear. It was a story loaded with discrepancies.

Carol had already provided two different accounts of the crimes, the first in her anonymous phone call and the second in her sworn confession. The two accounts were markedly different. The one she recounted in court was not consistent with either of them. When the defense attempted to enter into evidence an audiotape of the initial phone call to illustrate that point, the judge disallowed the entry of the evidence. He claimed, quite remarkably, that allowing the tape to air would be too damaging to the *defense's* case. Carol also could not be challenged on her ever-changing story of the murder of Jack Murray, since the charges against Clark in that case had been quietly dropped after a private conference in the judge's chambers from which Doug was excluded.

At one point during the trial, prosecutor Jorgensen obtained privileged communications, which normally would result in a mistrial. Jorgensen assured the court that he had not read the communications, and he was taken at his word.

Despite Maxwell Keith's botched closing argument, and the clear bias shown by the court throughout the trial, the first jury vote revealed that two of the jurors were holding out for acquittal. After further votes, Doug was found guilty on all counts, including the charges in the Andermann case. Called to testify during the penalty phase of the trial—purportedly for the defense, although Doug and his entire family refused to cooperate with him—was none other than Dr. Donald

Lunde. Dr. Lunde, as was his custom, assisted in the prosecution's efforts to impose a death sentence on Clark. Somewhat more helpful on the stand was Doug's brother, Walter, who had reportedly been cautioned by his mother not to reveal any family secrets in court.

Three of the jurors initially voted for a sentence of life without the possibility of parole. All were soon swayed to condemn Clark to death. Six times. Considering that two of the jurors were not even convinced of Doug's guilt when deliberations first began, that was a rather remarkable turn of events.

Carol Bundy never had her day in court. On the day her trial was scheduled to begin, she suddenly withdrew her 'not guilty by reason of insanity' plea and entered guilty pleas to two counts of murder. She was given two 25-years-to-life terms. Two days later, her ex-husband was found dead, purportedly from a self-administered overdose.

Doug appealed the court's decision and found himself squaring off against Buono prosecutor Michael Nash. Dr. Dorothy Lewis was retained as a consultant. When she came to visit Doug and asked him about childhood abuse in the Clark house, about those family secrets, he told her to "Get the fuck out the door." Doug proved no match for Nash; the initial verdict withstood the appeal.

Dr. Lunde, meanwhile, surfaced on yet another case not long after he wrapped up his work on the Hillside Strangler and Sunset Strip cases. In 1985, he was called as an expert witness for the defense in a rather notorious case known as 'the girl in the box.' The case involved a girl, Colleen Stan, who was kidnapped in Northern California and held as a sex slave for seven years by a man named Cameron Hooker. During that time, Stan was frequently tortured and forced to live for months at a time in a box roughly the size of a coffin. At other times, she was forced to wear what was called a 'head box,' which was a crudely made, but very effective, sensory deprivation device.

When the case came to court, there was no question that the woman had been held in abhorrent conditions. Hooker had gone to the trouble of documenting his depravities on film, so there was no shortage of evidence. His home yielded the notorious box, along with an array of restraints and torture devices, and some literature suggesting that a ring existed that traded in sex slaves.

It was not the open-and-shut case that it first appeared to be, however. Hooker's defense counsel argued that the living arrangements had been bizarre, but consensual. Evidence was presented that seemed, on the surface, to support that argument. Love letters written from victim to captor were entered into evidence. Most damaging of all, testimony revealed that Colleen had been allowed to visit with her family, unattended, four years into her captivity. Quite unexpectedly, she had first called, and then visited, her parents and siblings at the family home. She did not bother to explain her disappearance and four-year absence,

and apparently her family did not press her on the matter. She visited for a day or two and then her abductor/captor returned to pick her up. The Stan family apparently made little or no attempt to stop her from leaving. She was returned to the box for another three years.

There is no question that she had the opportunity to physically escape from her tormentor. In fact, in the latter years of her captivity, she was allowed to work outside of her captor's home, and she never attempted to escape. Even when she did eventually break free of her psychic bonds, she did not bother to report her ordeal to the police or to her family. She did not bother to report her ordeal to anyone. But she did make numerous phone calls to her former captor.

To explain all of that, prosecutors brought in a psychiatric witness who argued that the woman's period of imprisonment was not consensual, despite outward appearances, because Stan had been deprived of her ability to act of her own free will. She was, the expert explained to the jury, mind controlled. To counter that argument, the defense brought in its own witness: Donald Lunde. Lunde argued that there was no such thing as mind control, and that the woman's actions demonstrated that she remained with her captor voluntarily. Lunde did not fare well on cross-examination.

Surprisingly, the jury rejected Lunde's testimony and the rest of the defense case and convicted Cameron Hooker. That verdict signaled that all twelve jurors concluded that Colleen Stan was not in fact exercising her free will by choosing to remain as a captive sex slave. All twelve jurors, in other words, were convinced by the evidence presented in the courtroom that the victim was mind controlled.

One final note on the case of 'the girl in the box': the jury returned the guilty verdict against Hooker on, of all days, Halloween.

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In probably no other serial killer case on record, with the possible exception of the Boston Strangler case, has the wholesale corruption of the criminal justice system been more clearly on display than in the case of Bobby Joe Long.

Bobby Joe was born on October 14, 1953 to parents Joe Long and Louella Lucas. Both the Long and the Lucas families had a long history of alcoholism and mental illness—and apparently of spawning serial killers as well. Louella Lucas could not remember much of her own troubled childhood. Her father had died when she was three, and she did not remember her mother at all. Louella and Joe first separated when Bobby was just eight months old, thus beginning a long series of break-ups and reconciliations that included the pair remarrying on two occasions.

When he was two-and-a-half years old, Bobby's mother took him to live in Florida. Louella worked the bars there, as a prostitute according to Bobby, and she lived with her son in a series of seedy apartments and boardinghouses. Several other members of the Lucas clan moved to south Florida as well, including Louella's mother, two sisters, a half sister, and seven of Bobby's cousins. It is unclear whether one of those cousins was Henry Lee Lucas. The Lucas clan lived together in cramped quarters as a not-quite happy family, which is generally given as the reason why Bobby shared his mother's bed until he reached the age of thirteen. Long would later reveal that he had powerful childhood memories of being locked in a closet by his cousins and screaming in vain to be let out.

As a young man, Bobby received his requisite 'bleeding' by working as an attendant in a funeral home. He also worked at a variety of medical facilities, most frequently as an X-ray technician. In the late 1960s/early 1970s, Long began experimenting with LSD and reportedly became a heavy user of the drug.

Bobby was first arrested in December 1970 on theft charges, but the charges were later dropped. He was again arrested just two months later, on unrelated charges, and was given probation without being formally convicted. He was next accused of rape, though it is unclear if he was ever formally charged with the crime.

On September 19, 1972, Long was sworn into the Army and sent to Fort Benning, home of the 'School of the Americas'—otherwise known as the 'School of the Assassins,' a notorious training facility for Central and South American death squads. Bobby reportedly spent a considerable amount of time in an Army hospital, ostensibly recovering from a motorcycle accident. He later said that this accident and its aftermath changed him completely. He was ultimately, inevitably perhaps, released early from military service. His family claimed that he was given a medical discharge, but the records are sketchy. He was though given a 40% disability rating and was entitled to full military benefits.

Beginning around 1975, at the same time that his cousin was beginning his career as a serial killer, Bobby allegedly embarked on a career as a serial rapist. An indeterminate number of women in three different Florida counties were accosted by a man with a knife, bound, and then violently raped; their homes were then looted by the attacker dubbed the "Classified Ad Rapist" and the "Ad Man Rapist." No physical evidence linked Bobby to any of these attacks and only one of the numerous witnesses later claimed to be able to identify him. These rapes continued long after the string of killings that Long was also held accountable for began in yet another county. Strangely though, none of the rape victims were ever killed. Despite what the serial killer profilers tell us, Bobby was supposedly able to simultaneously function as a serial rapist in three counties and as a serial killer in a fourth.

On August 21, 1981, Long was accused by his girlfriend of rape and battery, though the charge was later reduced to simple battery. Bobby opted to represent himself and to waive his right to a jury trial, choosing instead to place his fate in the hands of the judge. He was found guilty and sentenced to a thirty-day jail term and six months probation. But then, in a most remarkable turn of events, Long wrote an informal letter to the sentencing judge requesting a new trial, and the judge inexplicably accepted the letter as a valid legal motion for a new trial and released Bobby to await his new hearing. Before the year was out, Long had been charged with sending obscene photos and letters and making obscene telephone calls to the twelve-year-old daughter of a Tampa physician. He entered a plea of “no contest” to the charges and was fined \$65.50 and put on probation for six months.

While continuing to await his new trial on the battery charges, Bobby Joe embarked on an extended cross-country trek. He traveled first to West Virginia, and then on to Southern California, where he stayed for at least six months. At around that same time, cousin Henry was living in Hemet, California. While in California, Long purportedly signed up for a \$9,000 commercial diving class. How the chronically broke and under-employed Long was able to finance the diving lessons, as well as the trip itself, has never been explained—nor has his sudden interest in diving, which was apparently of no interest to him before or after his trip to California. Those with whom Long socialized during his time in California later recalled that he frequently went out by himself and refused to talk about where he had been. These witnesses also described Bobby as being prone to headaches, wild mood swings, and the use of racist terms.

After leaving California, Long slowly made his way back to Florida, again travelling by way of West Virginia. He was arrested there and given a hearing before a judge who just happened to be, conveniently enough for Bobby, a friend of the Long family. He was acquitted of the more serious charge of assault, but convicted of destroying private property. He paid \$68 in court costs and fines and continued on his way. In early 1984, Long stood trial once again for the battery of his former girlfriend. This time he was acquitted, despite the fact that damaging testimony was offered by several credible witnesses, including one who had witnessed the beating that Bobby had administered to the girl.

Just after that trial concluded, the killings began. First to disappear was Ann Wick, on March 28, 1984. She had just recently arrived in the Tampa area. Five months earlier, in October 1983, one of her boyfriends and his brother had beaten their father to death; Wick had been complicit in the crime. She had quickly left town after that without telling anyone where she was going. Once in Florida, she moved in with a police officer, where she remained until her disappearance. When this officer was interviewed by police investigators, he was reportedly almost com-

pletely incoherent. Bobby Long later agreed to unofficially take the rap for the killing of Wick, provided that he was not officially charged. The officer and various others were thereby absolved of any involvement in the crime.

Just over a week later, Long was arrested after attempting to abduct a woman at gunpoint. The woman had thwarted the abduction by intentionally crashing her classic Jaguar. Three months later, Bobby was sentenced to six month's probation and ordered to pay \$1,500 in restitution—needless to say, a preposterously light sentence. Meanwhile, the body count continued to mount.

On May 13, the body of Lana Long was discovered—raped, strangled and posed for maximum shock value. This was the first body to be discovered (Wick's body did not surface for several more months). Judging by the police response, you would have thought it was the first body *ever* to be discovered in Tampa, Florida. Half the police force quickly descended on the crime scene, including much of the department's top brass, who normally were not known to congregate at crime scenes. For no readily apparent reason, a decision was made at the scene to send all evidence directly to FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia by means of a special courier system.

From that point on, the FBI played a central role in building a purported fiber evidence case that became the key component of the state's case against Long. As previously stated, fiber evidence is by far the easiest type of forensics evidence to plant; that fact would become glaringly obvious as the Bobby Joe Long story unfolded. Tellingly, the fiber evidence purportedly being assembled was kept secret and was never mentioned by police or the media throughout the course of the investigation. That is most likely due to the fact that the fiber case did not in fact exist prior to the arrest of Bobby Joe Long as a suspect.

Lana Long, who was of Asian descent and not related to Bobby Joe, had recently come to Tampa from Los Angeles in the company of her boyfriend. Both Lana and her boyfriend had been associated with the owners of several L.A. nightclubs, including Eddie Nash, at whose former club Lana had danced.²⁹ An associate of Lana's had also recently left Los Angeles for Tampa, purportedly to pursue a film role, although you would normally expect that someone pursuing a career in film would head *for* L.A. Of course, this may not have been a typical film role; there was much talk among Tampa's exotic dancers at the time of

29 Eddie Nash, *aka* Adel Gharib Nasrallah, had achieved a considerable amount of notoriety just a few years earlier when he was named as the prime suspect in a mass murder committed in Laurel Canyon that became known alternatively as the 'Wonderland Murders' or the 'Four on the Floor' murders. On July 1, 1981, four people were brutally bludgeoned to death in a home that was described in some reports as a "drug den," and which porn star John "Johnny Wadd" Holmes once described as "an

unidentified men recruiting women for nude modeling jobs and then using them in the production of snuff films. In the last hours of her life, Long was reportedly desperately trying to raise money to get out of town. Needless to say, she did not make it. After she vanished, her boyfriend did not bother to report her disappearance until he was forced to do so by friends, who threatened to report the disappearance themselves if he did not.

Next to be discovered was Michele Denise Simms, found two weeks after Lana Long's remains were discovered. Michele had also just made the journey from Southern California to Tampa, and she had spoken to friends of doing some modeling work. Like Lana, she was known to be a heavy drug user. She was also the product of a seriously dysfunctional family. Michele's mother had died very young, and her father had later been imprisoned for holding Michele and her babysitter at gunpoint.

Elizabeth Loudenback was next to go missing, on June 8, 1984. She was found just over two weeks later. Loudenback had apparently been in fear for her life and had, just two days before her disappearance, left a note affixing blame should anything happen to her. Her efforts were in vain. Her note included the name of

armed camp." The crime scene, just down the street from the home of then-Governor Jerry Brown, was reportedly one of the bloodiest in the city's history. Nash was accused of ordering the hits and Holmes, an LAPD vice squad informant, was indicted for helping to carry out the killings. Holmes had reportedly come home the night of the murders drenched in blood, and he had left a bloody palm print on a headboard above one of the bodies and a fingerprint on a coffee table. Following the murders, the LAPD put Holmes up in a luxury suite at the Bonaventure Hotel, and then moved him to the equally luxurious Biltmore Hotel. District Attorney John Van de Kamp offered him immunity for talking, which Holmes did, except that his statements exonerated the prime suspect, Eddie Nash. Nevertheless, Holmes was released. Then on December 4, 1981, he was arrested and charged with four counts of murder and one count of attempted murder. Following his arrest, Holmes was housed in a "High Power" cell, where he was allowed no physical contact with anyone. Also in "High Power" at that time were the Hillside Stranglers, Angelo Buono and Kenneth Bianchi. Holmes' trial began in May 1982, and he was acquitted the following month. Eddie Nash did not stand trial until 1990. That same year, Liberace's gay lover, Scott Thorson, who had been peripherally involved in the Wonderland murders, was shot five times. John Holmes had conveniently died two years earlier, allegedly of AIDS. Nash's first trial ended in a hung jury after a single juror held out on reaching a guilty verdict. A second jury acquitted him. On September 10, 2001 (the day before "everything changed"), Nash stood in a Los Angeles courtroom and

a man who claimed that he was an informant for both the police and the DEA. Also provided was a description of his vehicle. On other occasions, Elizabeth had reportedly expressed fear of another man as well. Both of these men failed polygraph examinations. Nevertheless, both were cleared as suspects and Bobby Joe was ultimately blamed for Elizabeth's death.

Following Loudenback's disappearance, there was a three-month lull in the killings, which ended on September 7 with the disappearance of Vicky Elliot. Her body would lie exposed to the elements for over two months before being discovered. By that time, her head was reduced to little more than a skull with some strands of hair still attached. Nevertheless, police made the remarkable claim that fibers from Bobby Joe's car, defying all odds, still clung to those strands of hair. The FBI's own experts, it should be noted, acknowledge that fiber evidence is extremely fragile and will be lost or destroyed very quickly with exposure to the elements, particularly the effects of wind and rain. As an FBI bulletin once put it: "fibers which have been transferred are very transient in nature."

By October, the killings were coming in rapid succession and a task force had been officially assembled. Joining that task force were the County Sheriff's Office, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Tampa Police Department, and the FBI's BSU. The profiler assigned to the case, Stan Jacobson, had been a member of the team that engineered the illegal incursion into Panama to capture Manuel Noriega.

admitted paying that holdout juror a \$50,000 bribe. According to the *LA Times*, Nash also "rose to his feet during what was supposed to be a routine court appearance and acknowledged that he had conspired to commit murder and that he had engaged in a long-running racketeering and drug-dealing enterprise." Amazingly, Nash was offered a plea agreement that netted him a mere thirty-seven month sentence. He ultimately served only about one year—as punishment for two decades of rampant criminal activity, including ordering an exceedingly brutal quadruple murder. One of the first investigators on the scene had been a man who allegedly continued to pursue the case for twenty years, and who visited with John Holmes just three days before his death: LAPD Detective Tom Lange. Lange, best known for his self-righteous indignation during the OJ Simpson trial, which afforded him his fifteen minutes of fame, had this to say about the final administration of justice in the Nash case: "I believe it's a righteous plea. How much more do they want to be perceived as beating up on an old man?" Considering that that old man admitted in open court his complicity in a mass murder, I would think quite a bit more. One final interesting note on the Wonderland case: Mark Lindsay, of the band Paul Revere and the Raiders, reportedly had lived at different times at both the Cielo Drive house where Sharon Tate was slaughtered and at the Wonderland house.

Chanel Devon Williams, the next victim, was unlike the others in two significant ways: she was killed by a single gunshot wound to the neck, rather than being bound and strangled, and she was the only black victim. Friends said that she had been forced into prostitution and was planning to leave town to escape from her pimp. Her body was found on October 7. Kimberly Kyle Hopps' mummified and headless corpse was found on Halloween day alongside a road that had been bulldozed just the day before. The circumstances of the discovery suggested that her remains had just been dumped there, though she had been missing since October 4, and had obviously been dead for quite some time. Just before she disappeared, she had had a fight with her pimp/boyfriend Donald Jones, who waited three days before bothering to report her disappearance.

Karen Dinsfriend was abducted, raped and strangled on October 13, and found just twelve hours later. Like most of the victims, she was a prostitute and a drug addict. Unlike the others, however, she was from a very wealthy family. Karen had been arrested on four separate occasions for forging prescriptions for the drug Dilaudid, known on the street as 'hospital heroin.' Virginia Lee Johnson vanished on October 14, just one day after Dinsfriend. Virginia was, not surprisingly, a prostitute with alcohol, cocaine and heroin addictions. Just eighteen years old, she had already compiled a lengthy rap sheet. Her sister, one year her junior, had been murdered the year before. Both of the girls had reportedly been alcoholics since the ages of nine and ten. Both had been physically and sexually abused by their stepfather. Despite the fact that Johnson's corpse remained undiscovered for nearly a month, during which time scavenging animals scattered her nearly skeletal remains over a large area, some of those tenacious carpet fibers from Long's car allegedly clung to her scalp.

Kim Marie Swann's nude and badly beaten body was discovered on November 12. The large-framed girl had been lifted over a guardrail and rolled down a hill. She was a prostitute who had been working for a man known as "Fat George." Kim likely began her career in prostitution at an early age; she reportedly began hanging out in bars at the age of thirteen. She had recently reported two disturbances at her apartment, both involving men trying to break down her front door. Like some of the other victims, her absence was not reported for several days. Her clothes, found near her body, allegedly contained yet more of those notorious carpet fibers.

Lisa McVey was the next to vanish, but, unlike the others, Lisa reappeared just twenty-six hours later. Lisa had a very interesting history, to put it mildly. Only seventeen years old, she had dropped out of school and was living with a man who posed as her father. That man, Marce Rhodes, a wheelchair-bound double amputee, held her hostage in his home as his captive sex slave. McVey's

grandmother, a former girlfriend of Rhodes, was aware of, and apparently approved of, her granddaughter's living arrangements.

Lisa was snatched off the streets of Tampa after leaving work at about 2:30 AM. Her grandmother placed a telephone call to Marce just a half-hour later. She later claimed that she had just called to see how he was doing—at 3:00 in the morning. Throughout the time that Lisa was held captive, she was raped repeatedly, though this was little different, it should be noted, from the life that she led with Rhodes. And even before she moved in with Rhodes, she had established a long history of being victimized. Incredibly enough, relative to her past experiences with men, her abductor and rapist, Bobby Joe Long, did not seem so bad. Not only did he free her after just one day, but he kept a spotlessly clean house and he went out of his way to make sure that she was as comfortable as possible under the circumstances, or so she later told the police. She also provided a description of her abductor that seemed to be deliberately tailored to throw the police off course, if Bobby was indeed the guilty party; she described him as being 5'7" tall and weighing 150 pounds, when in fact Long was 6' tall and weighed 180 pounds.

Lisa's surrogate father, Marce Rhodes, was later arrested for sexual battery. Long was also arrested. At the time of his arrest, the very first thing that one of the detectives on the scene did was to cut a swatch of carpet from the floor of Long's car, purportedly to compare with the fiber evidence that had been secretly compiled by the FBI. It is questionable though whether that fiber evidence even existed prior to the time that that swatch was cut.

The initial interrogation of Long lasted for five-and-a-half hours, even though Bobby Joe requested early on that he be provided the services of an attorney. That interrogation allegedly yielded a confession. The media wasted no time in trying the suspect in the court of public opinion. By the time of his first public appearance, at his presentment hearing, he had already been convicted in that most important of forums.

Bobby was presented to the public as though he posed a clear and present danger, even while in custody; he was brought out with his ankles manacled and his handcuffed wrists shackled to a body belt. He was formally charged with nine counts of kidnapping, eight counts of sexual battery, and eight counts of first-degree murder. A grand jury was convened within twenty-four hours, and murder and rape indictments were returned on November 28. Long was moved from his isolation cell to a special holding cell in the infirmary where he was prevented from having contact with other inmates or with prison personnel.

Interestingly, it was reported in the local press that a group who claimed to be investigators from Tampa had been tailing Long for several months before his arrest, from long before he was ever considered a suspect. Members of this group

apparently questioned witnesses in the case before police arrived to do so. Though locally reported, the matter was never investigated. Who these men were remains a mystery.

On April 15, 1985, the first of Bobby Joe Long's many trials began. He was first tried not for the murders, but for the series of rapes in one of the adjoining counties. Within two days, the trial was over and Bobby Joe had been convicted of armed robbery, armed burglary, kidnapping, and sexual battery. He was sentenced to 693 years in prison, a sentence far in excess of the state of Florida's sentencing guidelines. Just days later, on April 22, jury selection began in Dade County for Long's first murder trial, for the killing of Virginia Johnson. As would become a pattern throughout his trials, the defense readily conceded Bobby's guilt, but maintained that he was unable to control his actions. Presentation of evidence began on April 25; that presentation consisted almost entirely of the fiber evidence that was purportedly recovered from the hair of a skeleton. No defense case of any kind was presented; not a single witness was called to rebut the flimsy case presented by the state.

As would also become a pattern throughout his trials, Bobby's parents and ex-wife were barred from the proceedings with the dubious claim that they were potential witnesses. The detectives that had worked on the case were, needless to say, potential witnesses as well, but they were not prevented from sitting in on the trial. Long is not the only serial killer to have had his family and friends barred from the courtroom. That is a tactic that is used frequently to bias juries by leading them to believe that the defendant is such a loathsome creature that his own family does not care enough to attend the trial.

By April 26, the jury was deliberating over Long's fate. They returned in just forty-four minutes with a guilty verdict. By the next day the penalty phase of the trial was over and the jury once again retired to deliberate. They were back in just thirty-five minutes with a recommendation that Long be executed. On May 3, the judge formally sentenced Bobby to death by electrocution. Long was back in court again the next month to face rape charges in another county. He saved the court the trouble of staging another trial and pled guilty, thereby earning six life sentences, again far in excess of state guidelines.

By that time Long had received one death sentence, six life sentences, and an additional 693 year sentence; he had spent perhaps ten days in court for the three trials combined. The state was just getting warmed up.

On September 24, defense and prosecuting attorneys met to discuss the remaining eight murder counts, and various other outstanding charges. Long inexplicably agreed to enter guilty pleas to all the outstanding murder, kidnapping and sexual assault charges. He was sentenced to twenty-six life sentences, with the provision that the district attorney could still seek an additional death

sentence if he should choose to. Bobby gained absolutely nothing from this plea agreement. Even if it had guaranteed him that he would not receive another death sentence, it was far from an attractive offer. It is difficult to believe that Long would have taken the deal if he was acting of his own free will.

Not surprisingly, Long was brought to trial once again, as the state attempted to pile on one more death sentence. Guilt was not an issue at the trial, since the defendant had already entered a guilty plea to the charge. The jury was only to consider the appropriate sentence. Putting on a rather unorthodox defense, Long's attorney focused on the fact that Bobby was a confessed serial killer, going so far as to credit Long with one more murder than had previously been publicly credited to him. This 'defense' was supposedly intended to demonstrate that Long was insane and unable to control his actions. After little more than an hour's deliberations, Bobby Joe received another death sentence.

In November 1987, the Florida Supreme Court ordered a new trial in the Johnson case, based on the fact that the 'confession' introduced at Long's previous trial had resulted from an illegal interrogation. The confession was tossed out and disallowed for all future trials. In June 1988, the high court tossed aside Long's second death sentence as well.

Not to be deterred, prosecutors ordered a new trial for Johnson's murder. This time around, they used what they claimed was another confession: a two-minute, heavily edited clip from a ninety-minute television interview that Long had given. The defense presented a few psychiatric witnesses and then rested without challenging any of the elements of the state's case. The jury deliberated just sixty-two minutes before finding Long guilty once again. Thirty more minutes of deliberations resulted in a nine to three vote in favor of a death sentence, which the judge obligingly affirmed.

In June 1989, a new sentencing hearing for the Simms case was convened. Three days after it began, the jury returned yet again with a recommendation for death, which the judge not only affirmed but also decided to supplement with two additional life sentences. Bobby had by then accumulated two death sentences, 34 life sentences, and an additional 693 years. His saga was not quite over yet.

In October 1992, the Florida State Supreme Court once again overturned the decision in the Johnson case. All three key elements of the state's case—the edited videotape, the testimony of Lisa McVey, and the evidence of other murders—were deemed to have been inadmissible as evidence. The higher court's decision specifically noted the fact that only four hours of testimony had been presented on the Johnson murder, while three entire days had been spent admitting prejudicial evidence of other murders that Long was not being tried for. On January 31, 1994, a jury was seated to once again hear the case against Bobby Long in the

matter of the death of Virginia Johnson. By the end of the week, he had been found guilty and sentenced to death.

With the exception of the highly questionable fiber evidence, no physical evidence ever linked Bobby Joe to any of the murders. No witnesses could tie Long to any of the dead girls or to any of the crime scenes. There were quite obvious signs that Bobby had been set up, including the dubious fiber case, the unexplained and unidentified surveillance team, and the indications that the bizarre abduction of Lisa McVey was facilitated by others, in order to provide the state with an ‘eyewitness.’

There also were signs that Bobby Joe was involved in any number of heinous crimes. He had a collection of photographs of rapes in progress, and authorities believed that additional photos, perhaps even more violent and disturbing, were in the hands of others. At a deposition hearing, a lead investigator on the case told the court: “It’s believed that Mr. Long photographed his victims as he killed them and he has those photographs.” Though such images were never produced, Bobby’s former wife told police of finding a collection of photos of nude women, some of whom she described as having a very blank look in their eyes.

As in so many other cases discussed thus far, there were also signs that Long did not act alone if he was in fact involved in the killings. Semen evidence, for instance, was recovered from at least two of the victims, and yet there is no indication that that semen was ever matched to Bobby Joe. As in other cases, evidence that conflicted with the official story was consistently ignored by both the prosecution and the defense, and by most media outlets as well. In a letter that Bobby wrote during his incarceration, he referred to others who may have been involved: “I talked, but never mentioned my kinky friends. They’re all gone, her back to California, him back to Miami.”

Standing by Long’s side throughout a portion of his legal odyssey, allegedly serving as his advocate, was ‘defense’ counsel Ellis Rubin—the very same Florida attorney who represented the Collier brothers and received honorable mention in their dubious conspiracy tome *Votescam*.

* * * * *

Perhaps nowhere have the trappings of Satanism in a string of serial killings been more readily apparent than in the case of Richard “The Night Stalker” Ramirez. Indeed, Ramirez’s embrace of Satanism was so obvious that the mainstream media was unable to deny it. Instead, Ramirez was labeled as a “self-styled” satanist, as though he had come up with the ideas that he espoused entirely on his own. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Richard was born in 1960 to Julian and Mercedes Ramirez. Julian endured repeated beatings by both his father and his grandfather before growing up to become a policeman in—of all places—Juarez, Mexico. He eventually left the Juarez force and relocated the family to El Paso, Texas, but he continued to visit several times a week with his police friends in Juarez.

Julian reportedly had an explosive temper that sometimes manifested itself in acts of self-mutilation that his children bore witness to. He once repeatedly bashed his head against a wall until blood ran down his face. On another occasion, he took a hammer to his own head. There were also hints that he may have been sexually abusive towards his wife and children. And there were other adults in the Ramirez children's world who most certainly were abusive.

In El Paso, Julian's two older sons were enrolled in a special class at the local junior high school for kids who were 'slow learners.' The teacher of that special class, Frank McMan, was later identified as a molester of dozens of kids. Shortly after the Ramirez kids were enrolled in his class, McMan began visiting them at home, and taking them away for visits to his own home. Julian and Mercedes appear to not have had a problem with the teacher's peculiar interest in their children. Another pedophile, with whom Richard was known to have had occasional contact, lived just a block away from the Ramirez family.

It is said that the Ramirez family was very private and that they tended to keep to themselves for the most part. Richard was known to spend a considerable amount of his time alone; he could amuse himself for hours acting out various roles in the fantasy world that he frequently inhabited. Later, as an adult, he had a tendency to 'space out.'

Richard had an older cousin named Mike who became something of a mentor to the young boy. In 1965, Mike was sent to Vietnam where he appears to have functioned as a Phoenix assassin. After two tours of duty, and twenty-nine confirmed kills, he returned a hero. His souvenirs of the war included eight shrunken human heads that he had made himself, and a large collection of Polaroid photos that graphically depicted rape, torture, mutilation and murder. These he gleefully shared with young Richard, while regaling him with tales of his barbaric treatment of the Vietnamese people. Mike also taught young Richard techniques of jungle warfare and survival, just as he had been taught before he had been sent off to kill.

On May 4, 1973, Mike casually shot his wife in the face from point-blank range, killing her instantly in full view of his thirteen-year-old protégé. The dead woman's mother, strangely enough, was said to be a skilled practitioner of black magic. Following the shooting, Richard reportedly returned to the crime scene, with his father, and located the slug that had passed through the victim's head. They took it with them as a keepsake, and also gathered some things that Mike

had asked them to retrieve for him. How they were able to enter what should have been a secure crime scene to find evidence that the police should have already found remains a mystery.

Cousin Mike was judged not guilty by reason of insanity and sent to a state mental hospital. Richard, meanwhile, ventured off to Los Angeles, where his older brother Ruben taught him the finer points of the burglary trade. After that, he headed back to El Paso, where he got a job at a Holiday Inn. While working there, Richard bound and attempted to rape a woman in her room. The attack was thwarted when the woman's husband unexpectedly returned to the room and promptly gave Ramirez a beating. All charges against the fifteen-year-old were dropped.

In late 1977, cousin Mike was released after serving just four-and-half years for the cold-blooded killing of his wife. He promptly resumed his role as mentor to his young disciple. Not long after that, in February 1978, Richard once again left El Paso destined for Los Angeles. This time though, he traveled by way of San Francisco, where he was granted a rare one-on-one meeting with high priest Anton LaVey, and where he also attended a Church of Satan ritual. Ramirez, who as a young man frequently slept in a local cemetery, was reportedly a big fan of LaVey's *Satanic Bible*. He also read and admired the writings of the Marquis deSade, whose exploits will be covered elsewhere in this book. Once in Los Angeles, Ramirez lived a shadowy existence; he reportedly preferred to live and hang out in the seedier neighborhoods of the city, and he frequently employed the services of prostitutes. He had at least one run-in with the police, not long before the killings began. On that occasion, he was arrested for stealing a car and leading five LAPD cruisers on a high-speed chase. Strangely though, there is no indication that any charges were filed against him.

The murders attributed to Richard Ramirez officially began on June 27, 1984. However, there is nothing that indicates that the stabbing death of Jennie Vincow in Glassel Park that night had anything to do with the killings that came later; Vincow's murder took place nearly a year before the others, which were all committed in fairly rapid succession. Ramirez's defense team later implied that Vincow's own sons had killed her, or had had her killed, for her money. One of the sons was an unemployed pharmacist who was known to have hit his mother in the past. He was described by investigators as evasive and difficult to interview, and he refused to take a polygraph exam. When Ramirez was ultimately brought to trial for Vincow's murder, Michael Tynan, the presiding judge, refused to allow any questions pertaining to Vincow's financial affairs.

It was not until March 17, 1985 that the Stalker struck again. Two young women, Maria Hernandez and Dayle Okazaki, were shot in their Rosemead home with a .22 caliber weapon. Okazaki did not survive the attack, but

Hernandez did, and she was the first to provide a description of the man who would soon become Los Angeles' most feared serial killer. She said that her attacker was about 5'10" tall, thin, and had black hair and dark, scary eyes. He had walked up to her quite casually, assumed a military firing stance, pointed the gun at her without saying a word, and then fired a single shot. What she described was the actions of a cold and mechanical professional assassin. Strangely, however, the gunman did not take aim for her head, as he did in almost all subsequent attacks.

Maria first tentatively identified a man named Paul Samuels, a military veteran who was known to dress all in black and who had a habit of following underage girls. Samuels matched the physical description given by Hernandez and he was observed by police following two young women and trying to coax them into his car. The suspect was arrested, and the arresting officers discovered a gun in his possession, but it was of a different caliber than the one used in the Rosemead shooting. Samuels was let go, and Ramirez later took the rap, although Maria was unable to identify him in court.

In yet another of those bizarre coincidences that are forever surrounding serial killer cases, Maria Hernandez just happened to be very closely connected to Gil Carrillo, who was one of the two lead detectives on the Night Stalker task force. Carrillo's mother was Maria's godmother, and Maria's mother was a good friend of Carrillo's sister. Carrillo was assisted in running the task force by our old friend Frank Salerno, who also led the Hillside Strangler task force.

On the very same night that Hernandez and Okazaki were shot, Veronica Yu was shot twice with a .22 caliber weapon in Monterey Park. She did not survive her wounds. Two witnesses who claimed to have been near the scene of the crime offered similar descriptions of the gunman—descriptions that clearly did not fit Richard Ramirez. One described the assailant as possibly Asian, 5'6" to 5'8" tall, with wavy hair. The other saw a man who was 5'7" to 5'8" tall, 145–150 pounds, with a light complexion and long, shaggy hair, and possibly with slanted eyes. Both eyewitnesses told police at the scene that they did not get a good enough look at the suspect to be able to identify him. In court, one of the two claimed that he had heard arguing and that he had seen the shooting and heard the shots. None of that was consistent with his earlier statements, nor was his account of how the shooting occurred consistent with the forensics evidence.

Ten days after the shooting deaths of Yu and Okazaki, Vincent and Maxine Zazzara were shot in the head as they lay sleeping in their Whittier home. Both died from the .22 caliber bullet wounds. The hopelessly deformed slugs could not be matched to the slugs recovered from previous victims, as would be the case throughout the investigation. Following the shootings, the Zazzara home was frantically ransacked and Maxine was hideously mutilated. Her eyes were gouged

out and an inverted cross was carved into her left breast. A search of the crime scene revealed that Maxine had a .45 caliber handgun in her purse. That search also uncovered a fingerprint at the point of entry that had not been left by either of the Zazzaras or by Ramirez.

Peter Zazzara, a son of the slain couple, told at least two officers that the killings were a drug-related mob hit. Nevertheless, all evidence and testimony pertaining to drug trafficking and organized crime was later stricken from the pre-trial record, and no questions were allowed at trial about Vincent Zazzara's prison time, the guns found in the house, or the family's ties to organized crime.

The next Stalker attack, like the Zazzara murders, looked very much like a professional contract killing; William Doi was shot and killed with a .22 caliber slug to the head as he lay sleeping in his Montebello home on May 14. His wife, Lillian, was raped and left in handcuffs, but she was not killed. Just as in the Whittier attack, the Doi home was ransacked. Among the missing items was Bill Doi's Masonic ring. A 9mm handgun was found in Bill's nightstand, and several other guns were found strategically placed around the house, as though the Dois had reason to fear for their lives. As at the Zazzara home, an Avia shoeprint was allegedly found outside of the house. Along with it was a combat boot print that was purportedly left by an officer at the scene. At both crime scenes, the Fire Department was, curiously, the first to respond.

Lillian Doi was the second living witness to provide a description of the suspect. Working with her daughter, she filled out a crime scene report that described an assailant other than Richard Ramirez.

Just over two weeks later, Mabel Bell and Nettie Long, both in their eighties, were viciously attacked. The crime bore little, if any, resemblance to the previous killings. Rather than being summarily executed, the victims were tortured with an electrical cord and then brutally bludgeoned with a hammer. Pentagrams were drawn on the wall and on one of the victims. The home in which the pair were attacked was isolated, accessible only by way of a difficult-to-navigate drive up a long and winding route. It was not a house that a random killer would have stumbled upon. To get there, one had to know where one was going. Purportedly tying Richard to the crime was an Avia shoeprint, allegedly left on a clock, but a human hair found at the scene had been left by someone else.

The next attack occurred at the home of Carol Kyle in Burbank. Kyle was raped and sodomized and her home was ransacked, but she was left very much alive. As in the Zazzara and Doi cases, the Fire Department was the first to respond. Working with investigators, Kyle created a composite sketch that looked nothing like the one created earlier by Maria Hernandez, which had somewhat resembled Ramirez. Carol described her assailant as a very good-looking, light-skinned Mexican with an unknown accent who engaged her in a twenty-minute

conversation. She later helped create a second composite that looked more like Ramirez.

The Night Stalker next purportedly attempted to break into the home of an L.A. County Sheriff's deputy, just a few blocks from the Carrillo family home and a half-mile from the Zazzara home. The break-in was aborted, but not before the perpetrator had left an Avia shoeprint in the ground below a window. He then reportedly tried to abduct a girl in Eagle Rock, but failed in that endeavor as well. None of the previous victims, it will be recalled, had been abducted, and there were no further abduction attempts. Just after the failed abduction, the suspect was stopped by LAPD officer John Stavros for running a red light. While Stavros was writing the man a ticket, descriptions of the would-be kidnapper and his car were broadcast over the officer's radio. Although he allegedly had both the man and the car right in front of him, the officer failed to make the connection. The suspect supposedly then drew a pentagram on the car before fleeing on foot. The car was impounded and then largely forgotten; no attempt was made to search the vehicle for fingerprints, although the suspect would surely have had to leave some.

On June 27, Patty Elaine Higgins was brutally beaten and nearly beheaded in her Arcadia home. The attack on Higgins was initially credited to Ramirez, until serological tests demonstrated conclusively that someone else had committed the crime. The charges against Richard were quietly dropped. The defense later attempted to introduce the Higgins case in court, but that attempt was thwarted by Judge Tynan, who quickly prompted prosecutors to object to the introduction of the evidence. The prosecution team complied and Tynan then sustained what was essentially his own objection. Among the details that had emerged from the investigation of the murder was that a pathologist from the Medical Examiner's office had used an ATM directly across the street from the crime scene just before or just after the crime had been committed.

The next attack occurred on July 2, in the Arcadia home of Mary Louise Cannon. She was beaten with a vase while sleeping and her home was ransacked. Cannon's killer apparently cut himself when the vase broke from the force of the blows. Blood found on the murder weapon did not come from either Richard or the victim. A light brown hair was found in the bed where Mary was killed and a fingerprint was recovered from the scene. Neither had been left by Ramirez. What he did allegedly leave behind were two Avia shoeprints on the carpet. Neither could be discerned by jurors either on the carpet swatches that were submitted as evidence or in photos that were taken at the crime scene. Not to be deterred, the prosecution team presented a tissue containing the shoeprint that they rather preposterously claimed had been found on the floor of Cannon's home.

The next attack was on Whitney Bennett, a teenager who was asleep in her family's home in Sierra Madre on July 5, 1985 when an intruder beat her about the head with a tire iron so severely that 478 stitches were required to close her wounds, and yet she miraculously survived. The rest of the family was home sleeping as well at the time of the attack; they were all left alone and the house was not ransacked. A complete Avia shoeprint was supposedly found stamped in blood under the covers of the bed, although it initially had not been seen by police on the scene. A beer bottle of unknown origin that was found in the house yielded a fingerprint. More prints were found near the point of entry that the assailant had used. None of these prints were left by Ramirez, nor were the bloodstains found on the bed sash.

On July 7, Joyce Lucille Nelson and Sophie Dickman were attacked in separate incidents in their respective Monterey Park homes. Nelson was beaten to death and her home was ransacked. Avia shoeprints were claimed to be everywhere, including on both the front and rear patios and stomped into the victim's face. Brown hairs and fingerprints recovered from the scene were not, alas, left by Richard. Dickman's house was also searched, but she was not killed. She claimed that the intruder had attempted to rape her before leaving her handcuffed to her bed, but he was unable to achieve an erection. Evidence, however, indicated otherwise; semen was recovered from her body and she showed evidence of tearing from violent penetration. Her description of her attacker did not fit Richard Ramirez; she recalled him being 5'8" tall and dressed like a hiker or mountain climber, and she specified that he was not Latino, Oriental or Black. She also noted that he wore dark canvas shoes, not the notorious Avias.

Ramirez was considerably taller than the assailant described, and he was quite obviously Latino. He also, according to law enforcement claims, always committed his crimes while clad entirely in black. Interestingly, Sophie Dickman lived right across the street from a female Sheriff's deputy who had worked the Doi crime scene. The deputy's husband, also a deputy, had recently been murdered. He had been a good friend of Gil Carrillo's.

On July 20, Max and Leila Kneiding were butchered in their Glendale home. The crime scene was a veritable bloodbath. Both had been shot multiple times with a .22 and viscously hacked with a machete. Blood was splattered in all directions, indicating that the attack came from a number of different angles. That fact strongly suggested multiple assailants. The bodies of the Kneidings were autopsied by Dr. Irwin Golden, who was later discredited during the OJ Simpson trial, much to the embarrassment of the prosecutors on that case. Hairs found on both the nightstand and atop the pillows did not come from Ramirez.

On the very same night as the attack on the Kneidings, Chainarong Khovananth was killed instantly with a .25 caliber shot to the head. His wife

Somkid was raped, sodomized and left tied up in their Sun Valley home, which was ransacked. On the day of the attack, Somkid told her sister-in-law that her husband's killer was a black man with curly black hair. The by now obligatory Avia shoeprints were found in the hallway and on the rear patio.

Just over two weeks later, Virginia and Chris Petersen were both shot in the head with a .25 caliber automatic. Amazingly, both survived the attack. There were no Avia shoeprints found and their Northridge home was not ransacked. Just days later, Sakina and Elyas Abowath were attacked in their Diamond Bar home. Elyas was killed with a single .25 caliber round to the head; it was claimed that the killer was also armed with a .38 caliber handgun and an Uzi.³⁰ Sakina was raped and sodomized and the house was thoroughly searched, as was the car in their garage. As at so many of the other crime scenes, the killer appeared to be looking for something. As with the Bell and Long home, the Abowath home was in a neighborhood that was difficult to navigate. Some elements of the description given by Sakina fit Ramirez, but others clearly did not, such as the dirty blond hair, the lack of an accent, and the boots. The requisite brown hairs and unidentified fingerprints were found at the scene, as was an African-American pubic hair.

On the day of the Abowath killing, Frank Salerno called in the FBI's fabled Behavioral Sciences Unit. By the end of the month, Richard Ramirez was in custody, charged with an array of crimes.

Before the arrest of Ramirez, Peter and Barbara Pan were both shot in the head in their San Francisco home. The house was ransacked and a pentagram was drawn on the wall. The double murder was blamed on L.A.'s Night Stalker, who reportedly revisited the Bay area on several occasions. Some investigators have blamed Ramirez for at least four unsolved murders in the area, along with a rape and ten burglaries. San Francisco, alas, has more than its share of unsolved homicides.

The final Night Stalker attack came on August 17, at the home of Bill Carns and Carole Smith in Mission Viejo. Carns took three shots to the head, another witness was left alive, and the house was ransacked. So ended the alleged killing spree of the notorious Night Stalker.

Ramirez was captured by a group of irate citizens after his face was plastered on television screens and newspapers all across the city. The hastily assembled posse gave the suspect a fairly severe beating. That beating likely saved his life. An *L.A. Times* reporter working the case has said that an explicit order was given to

30 Ballistics tests would indicate that at least four different guns were used in the Night Stalker killings. As the trial judge would later advise the jury, one of the handguns linked to the crimes went missing from the LAPD evidence inventory.

police: “we don’t want a trial for this guy.” In other words, Ramirez was wanted dead, not alive. He was, nevertheless, turned over to police very much alive. He was taken by the LAPD to their Hollenbeck Station, although the arresting officer was an L.A. Sheriff’s deputy and the arrest was made in the Sheriff’s jurisdiction, not the LAPD’s.

The police wasted no time in getting Ramirez into a line-up—a line-up that was fraudulent by any reasonable interpretation. Richard’s face was staring out from every TV screen and every newsstand, hopelessly compromising any identification. He had a wound on the back of his head from the well-publicized beating he received, and the bandages covering that wound were clearly visible. The various witnesses were, incredibly enough, allowed to converse and compare notes. Richard was standing in the second position in the line-up, and at least two officers in the room held up two fingers, signaling to the witnesses the proper choice. That was later denied in court, but it can be clearly seen on videotape and in still photos. Jurors never saw those images.

After the line-up, Ramirez was transferred to the county jail and placed in the hospital ward, where he was kept in solitary confinement. He began complaining of headaches and claimed that he was being poisoned. As legal counsel, he chose Daniel and Arturo Hernandez, who had, between the two of them, just five years experience practicing law; neither had ever tried a murder case. The judge assigned Public Defender Ray Clark to assist the pair.

Among Richard’s visitors in jail, once he was allowed to have visitors, were Zeena LaVey and the earless Nikolas Schreck. Zeena told Richard that her father and the Church sent their blessings and were praying for him; she also informed him that he was being made an honorary member of the Church of Satan. Occupying the cell next to Richard, for a short time, was actor Sean Penn. Penn’s wife at the time, singer Madonna, reportedly tried to arrange a meeting with Ramirez.

Ramirez was tried on fourteen counts of murder, five counts of attempted murder, fifteen counts of burglary, five counts of robbery, four counts of rape, three counts of forced oral copulation, and four counts of sodomy. Prosecuting the case was Phil Halpin, who had served as co-counsel on the Manson prosecution. Virtually every decision in the preliminary phase of the trial went against the defendant. For example, an early motion for a change of venue, necessary because Ramirez had already been tried and convicted by the local press, was summarily denied. On one occasion, Ramirez was dragged from the courtroom and beaten by bailiffs. The Ramirez family, not surprisingly, was banned from the courtroom, although detectives working the case attended regularly. Richard’s defense attorneys had to fight for disclosure throughout the trial; prosecutors were consistently allowed to stall on handing over evidence.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of Richard's trial was the steady stream of prosecution objections, the overwhelming majority of which were sustained. Another salient feature was the spectacle of Ramirez being kept shackled like an animal throughout the trial, while the media continued to demonize him and the non-sequestered jury soaked it all in.

The *Los Angeles Times* did more than its share to prejudice the jury. Before the trial had begun, the newspaper reported that jailers had purportedly overheard a plan by Ramirez to shoot the prosecutor (although he obviously had no access to a firearm). In response, metal detectors were prominently displayed outside the courtroom. On the day the trial began, the *Times* ran a story in which it was claimed that Ramirez had bragged in jail of being a "super criminal" responsible for twenty murders. A sheriff's deputy quoted Ramirez as having said, "I love all that blood."

A large portion of the prosecution's physical evidence consisted of the Avia shoeprints and what were said to be latex glove prints, but all that that evidence proved, even if the prints were in fact found at the crime scenes, was that whoever committed the murders wore shoes and gloves. The state did have one ace up its sleeve: on May 9, 1985, the home of Clara Hadsall in Monrovia had purportedly been burglarized by Ramirez, who allegedly left highly incriminating evidence at the scene. Though Richard was never charged with the alleged crime, the judge readily admitted the evidence offered by prosecutors, even though, as previously noted, he disallowed evidence from another uncharged crime that would have aided the defense's case.

The officer called to the Hadsall crime scene, Tom Wright, claimed that he had discovered—in the sink below the window through which entry had been gained—an Avia shoeprint. Right alongside that alleged shoeprint was a palm print and fingerprints. Luckily, officer Wright, in a preposterously unlikely scenario, happened to have what must have been the most fully stocked LAPD squad car that the department had to offer. Without calling in evidence technicians, the officer claimed that he single-handedly lifted the various prints, utilizing a fingerprint kit that he just happened to have with him. He also just happened to have the extra-long lifting tape that was required to preserve the oversized shoeprint. Wright also claimed that he made plaster casts of additional prints that he discovered in the ground outside the window, and that he then took photographs of all of this evidence at the scene. The elderly owner of the house, conveniently enough, had passed away, so there was no one to dispute the officer's account.

This rather obviously manufactured evidence was the only way in which the state was able to tie the infamous Avia shoes to Richard Ramirez. The shoes themselves were never found, nor was any receipt for the shoes ever recovered,

and no witnesses were produced who ever saw Ramirez wearing the shoes. In fact, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that Ramirez ever owned or wore a pair of Avia shoes.

In order to believe officer Wright's account, we have to accept that Richard Ramirez, who managed to avoid leaving a single fingerprint at the scenes of any of the crimes for which he was charged, inexplicably left pristine palm and fingerprints at the Hadsall home, and left them right alongside his trademark Avia shoeprints. And he did all that at a crime scene where no witnesses and no evidence could be produced showing that a crime had even been committed there. To account for the fact that detectives were unable to produce any fingerprints from any of the real crime scenes, the state argued that the wily killer had worn latex gloves throughout his crime spree. And yet, at the very same time, the state argued that no gloves had been worn at this one particular crime scene. That rather obvious contradiction in the prosecution's case was never explained.

Other than what was recovered from Hadsall's sink, the only other fingerprint evidence that was presented were prints lifted from items in Richard's car and from items in a bag of his that was recovered from a locker at the local Greyhound station. All that that evidence proved was that Richard left his fingerprints on items of his own personal property.

The defense team did manage to offer into evidence testimony that tended to clear Richard of involvement in at least some of the murders. Ramirez' father, for instance, testified that Richard had been in El Paso at the time that two of the attacks occurred. Though some questioned the father's credibility, two other witnesses confirmed his account. One of them even attempted to introduce into evidence a Polaroid photo taken of Richard in El Paso. The witness informed the court that she had personally witnessed the taking of the photo, but the judge refused to allow it entered into evidence.

One of the most bizarre of the sideshows surrounding the lengthy trial involved Richard's devoted girlfriend, Doreen, and one of his surviving victims, Somkid Khovananth: Doreen sat outside the courtroom and babysat Somkid's five-year-old daughter while Somkid testified. Khovananth apparently had no problem entrusting the care of her child to the girlfriend of the man who had allegedly raped her and killed her husband. And Doreen had no qualms with providing a service that allowed a witness to enter the courtroom for the express purpose of offering incriminating testimony against her boyfriend.

The circus-like atmosphere of the trial continued after the jury began deliberations. Two jurors had to be replaced, one within a week of beginning deliberations, after having sat through a nearly year long trial. One of the two, Phyllis Singletary, was murdered in a brutal, Night Stalker-style attack. She was purportedly killed by her boyfriend for reasons unconnected to her jury service. The

boyfriend, conveniently enough, allegedly killed himself before police could get to him. One of the two replacement jurors, seated without protest, had a family history of violent crime victimization: both of her brothers had been murdered.

Ramirez was ultimately found guilty over forty separate counts. During the sentencing phase of the trial, his defenders opted not to call a single witness. The jurors bestowed nineteen death sentences upon him, even though a few of them later said that they thought the defendant had been railroaded.

Before his capture, Ramirez had talked of plans to buy a house and set up a torture room in the basement. He planned to film his exploits and sell the tapes. He knew, he told others, that there was a market for such things. He also said that the idea of having sex slaves appealed to him. While these goals remained but depraved dreams for Douglas Clark and Richard Ramirez, in the next chapter we will meet some men who attempted to make those dreams a reality, with varying degrees of success.

Chapter 16

The Collectors

“Jeffrey [Dahmer] thought he was the devil. Jeffrey thought he was so evil that he was equal to the devil”

—Attorney Gerald Boyle

Leonard Lake was a collector. He started collecting in the San Francisco area as early as July 1984. Bob Berdella was also a collector. He started collecting in Kansas City, Missouri in July 1984. Gary Heidnik was another collector. He did not start collecting in Philadelphia until November 1986, unless you count his first failed attempt in 1978. Jeffrey Dahmer was probably the best known of the collectors. He started collecting in Milwaukee in 1990, around the same time that Herb Baumeister started collecting in Indianapolis.

In 1963, John Fowles published *The Collector*, a disturbing tale of a man obsessed with control. A butterfly collector in the beginning of the book, he soon enough reveals his desire to collect and control women. His first young victim was named Miranda, which would later become the code name Leonard Lake used for his master plan. *The Collector* was apparently a very influential work. Leonard had a copy of it prominently placed in his concrete bunker, along with Carl von Clausewitz's *Principles of War*. Bob Berdella cited the movie of the same name as having an enormous impact on his life.

In November 1961, Gary Heidnik joined the U.S. Army and requested that he be trained as a military policeman. The Army though opted to send him to Ft. Sam Houston near San Antonio, Texas for training as a medic. When that training was completed, he was sent to an Army hospital in West Germany to work as an orderly. That did not work out too well, however, especially after the Army began experimenting on him with powerful hallucinogenic drugs, as his records would later reveal. He was sent back to a military hospital here in the States and then released early with an honorable discharge. He later became a collector.

In January 1979, Jeffrey Dahmer joined the U.S. Army and requested that he be trained as a military policeman. The Army though opted to send him to Ft. Sam Houston near San Antonio, Texas for training as a medic. When that training was completed, he was sent to an Army hospital in West Germany to work as an orderly. That did not work out too well, however, and Jeffrey was released early with an honorable discharge. He later became a collector.

Now that seems a little odd. And while we are on the subject of Jeffrey Dahmer, his hometown of Bath, Ohio was just fifteen miles from Bob Berdella's hometown of Cuyahoga Falls. That seems a little odd as well.

Collectors generally have much in common. Their primary concern is with control, which they attempt to gain by torturing their victims into submission. Along the way, they tend to take numerous photos and shoot a number of home videos. Some of these they keep for themselves, and some they sell to others. Collectors also like to keep various body parts lying around the house and they generally keep their freezers well stocked with unmarked meat. Some collectors are prone to race-war diatribes and have grand plans to keep large stables of female sex slaves as breeders. These collectors are not unlike Charles Manson, except that their techniques are somewhat cruder. Leonard Lake and Gary Heidnik are examples that type of collector. Other collectors are not concerned with acquiring breeders; they prefer to collect young men and boys. These collectors are not unlike John Wayne Gacy. Bob Berdella, Jeffrey Dahmer and Herb Baumeister all fit into that category.

Here are the stories of the collectors and the havoc they wreaked in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

* * * * *

Leonard Lake was born in San Francisco and raised primarily by a grandmother who reportedly was a strict disciplinarian. His father was said to be abusive and cold. His mother was a licensed practical nurse with experience working in mental wards. She later said that the family always encouraged Leonard to take an interest in the naked human form and to take pictures of girls, including his sisters and cousins. Leonard's brother was reportedly abusive to animals and he had a keen interest in fire. 'Mental illness' ran in every generation of the Lake family.

In January 1964, Lake joined the U.S. Marines and served for seven years. Part of that time was spent in Vietnam, where he earned several medals. His second tour of duty there was cut short due to unspecified medical conditions and he was

shipped back to the States and given a medical discharge. After that, he entered a VA hospital for psychological treatment.

Lake later became a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), described by chronicler Joseph Harrington as a “cult based on medieval worship involving sacrifices.” Lake’s ex-wife, who sometimes modeled for the hardcore S&M videos that Leonard produced and sold, admitted that her former spouse had a longstanding affiliation with a San Francisco “witches coven.” Some of Leonard’s friends later recalled that he often boasted of membership in a secret “death cult.” According to chronicler Joel Norris, Lake “supported himself by making snuff videos and selling drugs.” He also was known to stockpile guns. In his free time, he worked with kids at a local 4-H Club. According to one report, that club was later the target of allegations of ritual abuse.

Partner Charles Ng was the son of a wealthy family in Hong Kong. As a child, he was regularly chained and beaten unmercifully by his father. Later he was shipped off to attend an exclusive prep school in Leeds, England, where his uncle taught. He was arrested in September 1979, after entering the United States, for hit-and-run. All charges were dropped the next month after Ng agreed to enlist in the Marines—despite the fact that he was underage and not a U.S. citizen, and should therefore have been deported.

His military service began on Aleister Crowley’s birthday, October 12, 1979. Exactly two years and one day later, Ng robbed a U.S. Marine armory on Oahu and reportedly made off with machine guns, grenade launchers, night scopes, and pistols. He went AWOL a month later after being questioned about the robbery. He remained at large until the eve of *Walpurgisnacht*, 1982, when he and Lake were both arrested by an FBI SWAT team. On August 15, Ng was convicted and sent to the brig at Fort Leavenworth to begin serving a two-year sentence. Lake, who was not involved in the armory robbery, apparently was not charged.

The next year, Lake’s brother Donald disappeared and was never seen or heard from again. Leonard was later posthumously credited with Donald’s murder, although it is unclear if there is any evidence to support that charge. In July 1984, the entire Dubs family disappeared without a trace. The family was reportedly abducted from their apartment, but no blood or other signs of a struggle were found, and there was no evidence of forced entry. Two neighbors across the street were watching the house at the time of the purported abductions and neither of them saw anything unusual. They did see Charles Ng, who had been released by that time and was reunited with Leonard Lake, leave the apartment, but he did so alone. Henry Dubs, the patriarch of the family, had been a photographer who specialized in shooting children’s parties.

A number of other people disappeared from the San Francisco area in the following months. Their remains would later be discovered on the grounds of a

ranch in Wilseyville, California, just 130 miles east of the city. The property was owned by the Balazs family, Leonard Lake's former in-laws. Leonard called the ranch home. Among the victims found there were Lonnie Bond and Brenda O'Connor, who had been running a methamphetamine lab on the adjacent property. Killed along with the couple were their son, Lonnie Bond, Jr., and Robin Stapley, who had been one of the founders of the San Diego chapter of the Guardian Angels. Stapley had been involved in running the meth lab.

Lake was arrested and taken into custody on June 2, 1985 on a shoplifting charge. A .22 caliber Ruger fitted with a silencer was discovered in a search of his car trunk at the time of the arrest. Sidekick Charles Ng was with Lake at the time, but he managed to escape and quickly find his way to Canada. Less than three weeks before the arrest, a meter reader for PG&E had visited the Wilseyville property and been greeted by a rather macabre scene: Leonard Lake standing shirtless in his front doorway, covered in blood and wearing a blood-encrusted apron. It is unclear whether this incident was reported; there is no indication that any action was taken at the time.

While Leonard was being interrogated, following his arrest, he popped a cyanide capsule that he conveniently, and rather improbably, had hidden in the collar of his shirt. He died without ever regaining consciousness. Before popping the capsule, however, he gave his arresting officers the name of his escaped accomplice.

Police promptly made an appointment to see Claralyn Balazs, Leonard Lake's former wife. When they arrived to question her, she was in the company of Gloria Eberling, Lake's mother, and two of his sisters. The officers arranged with the women to conduct a search of the Wilseyville property. Claralyn told them that the ranch was difficult to find and she offered to lead them there at an agreed upon time. When the officers met Claralyn at the prearranged time, she was again in the company of Eberling. The two women had already been to the property in advance of the search. Balazs admitted that she had removed items from the property, including about a dozen videotapes. She was not arrested for deliberately tampering with the evidence, even though it soon became apparent that she had lied to police about the difficulty of finding the property so as to allow herself the opportunity to visit the ranch before the officers got there. Authorities later claimed that the evidence that she had removed was returned, though there is of course no way of knowing whether the tapes that were returned were the same ones that had been removed. There was also no way of knowing if any other items had been removed.

With the Wilseyville search underway, the first thing that investigators noticed was that the interior of the house on the property contained numerous bullet holes and bloodstains. Also noted was that there were eyebolts anchored to the

bedroom floor at all four corners of the bed, and a powerful 250W floodlight mounted to the wall directly over the bed. Police quickly deduced that the room might have been used as a snuff film studio. Luckily, they happened to have an expert on such things. Tom Eisenmann, a former Navy man, was a veteran investigator of sex crimes involving children. He had in the past worked on cases involving child pornography and snuff films. Why he happened to be around for the initial search, given that the suspect had only been charged with shoplifting at that point, remains a mystery.

Leonard's diary was found under the bed; found therein were such notations as: "I plan to build a prison for sex slaves... The perfect woman for me is one who is totally controlled..." Leonard's prison had already been constructed, in the form of a large concrete bunker that Lake and Ng had reportedly just finished building on April 15. The bunker contained a vast array of military and police equipment, including boots, fatigues, canteens, bayonets, gun belts, rifles, shotguns, assault rifles, machine guns, manacles, handcuffs, hunting knives, a starlight scope, tripods, pistols, butcher knives, and switchblade knives. Also in the bunker was a copy of *The Collector*. Incorporated into the design of the building was a secret, soundproof cell outfitted with a one-way viewing window, hidden cameras, and a list of rules for prisoners. Also found were numerous photographs of children in various stages of undress that had been taken at the South City Juvenile Hall, where Claralyn worked.

Adjacent to the bunker was an incinerator, which investigators logically concluded had been used to dispose of bodies. Hundreds of bone fragments were recovered from the property, most of them burned and then cut into 2–4 inch pieces, making identification all but impossible. A final body count was never achieved, but evidence indicated that as many as twenty-five people had been killed and disposed of at the Wilseyville ranch.

Buried on the grounds of the ranch were five-gallon buckets containing videotapes. The contents of most of those tapes have never been revealed. One of them reportedly featured Leonard's mother, Gloria Eberling, Leonard's former wife, Claralyn Balazs, and Claralyn's parents, Louis and Grace Balazs, listening as Lake animatedly described his plans for the coming Armageddon. He saw himself as the new Adam, and he spoke of building a series of bunkers, each to be stocked with weapons and food and staffed with a sex slave. These slaves were to serve as the mothers of the New World Order that would arise from the ashes of Armageddon. The Wilseyville structure was apparently the prototype for this planned network of bunkers. Lake dubbed his plan "Operation Miranda," in honor of the heroine of Fowles' novel.

Another videotape featured Lake and Ng physically and psychologically torturing two different women, one of whom was their former neighbor, Brenda

O'Connor. On the tape, Lake can be heard telling Brenda: "Suffer... There's people that are going to want to know that we did our job." Additional videotapes were recovered from the abandoned former residence of Charles Ng. The contents of those tapes also remain a mystery.

Early on in the investigation, the local chief of police issued a telling statement: "This may be a case of mass murder or a cult situation... A cult case is a possibility we're not going to exclude at this time." The Department of Justice and the FBI soon descended upon the scene and the official story quickly became that only two men, Leonard Lake and Charles Ng, were involved in the murders.

As the investigation continued, the home of Louis and Grace Balazs was searched. Investigators hauled off six bags of potential evidence, including audiotapes, copies of the photographs of the girls at Juvenile Hall, and a variety of S&M gear. No members of the Balazs family were ever arrested. As the search at Wilseyville continued, body parts continued to be unearthed. Few of these were ever identified, but one skull, featuring a .22 caliber bullet hole next to where the ear had been, had belonged to Randy Jacobson, a Vietnam veteran who had served with Lake. His last known address had been at the Pink Palace in San Francisco's Tenderloin District.

In December 1985, Ng was convicted by a Canadian court on shoplifting and assault charges and given a four-and-a-half-year prison sentence. He had been arrested in early July. Six years would pass before Ng was extradited to the U.S. to face charges arising from his complicity in the Wilseyville operations. Seven more years would pass before his trial got underway.

The lengthy delay in extraditing Ng was due to the fact that he was facing near certain execution in the United States. As in most of the 'civilized' world, capital punishment is considered barbaric in Canada. Canadian law therefore prohibits the extradition of suspects accused of capital crimes. Nevertheless, under pressure from U.S. authorities, the Supreme Court of Canada approved Ng's transfer to America. He was back in the States on September 26, 1991. Ng's attorneys later argued his case before the UN Human Rights Committee, whose members condemned the actions of the Canadian government, but by that time it was a moot point.

The American people, with their famously short memories, had largely forgotten about the Ng case—but that was soon to change. In November 1991, a purported witness took to the national airwaves to claim that he had known Ng in Leavenworth in 1982. The witness said that Ng had talked incessantly about torture and mutilation and had allegedly discussed his fantasy of owning sex slaves. The inflaming of public opinion had begun.

Ng's long and convoluted journey through the U.S. criminal justice system began in early 1992. Throughout that seven-year journey, the media consistently

portrayed the defendant as the party responsible for the repeated delays in the legal proceedings. In truth though, it was the state that was responsible for the vast majority of the delays, as prosecutors manipulated the system in their ceaseless efforts to stage yet another sham 'serial killer' trial.

Ng's first attorney, at his first preliminary trial, was Michael Burt, who was simultaneously serving as an attorney for Richard Ramirez. Over Ng's objections, the presiding judge opted to appoint him new counsel. Ng appealed the judge's decision, but the California Supreme Court denied the appeal and the change of attorney order stood. Throughout the preliminary proceedings, every effort was made to present the defendant as a dangerous, uncontrollable animal. He was shackled to his courtroom chair and surrounded by heavily armed deputies at all times. During court recesses, he was literally kept in a steel cage.

The purpose of a preliminary trial is for the state to present a body of evidence sufficient to convince a judge that the defendant should be held over for trial. This preview of the state's case can be very beneficial to the defense. However, since no defense is offered at such a proceeding, the public initially gets a very one-sided version of events. For that reason, defense attorneys on high-profile cases tend to air their side through the media. At the outset of Ng's preliminary trial, however, a gag order was issued. The result of that order was that the general public only heard the prosecution's case.

Ng repeatedly filed motions for a change of counsel. All such motions were routinely denied. In fact, Ng was not even allowed an evidentiary hearing to present his case for why a change of counsel was needed. He also filed a motion to have the judge dismissed. That motion was not only denied, but was stricken from the trial record.

The preliminary proceedings resulted in indictments on twelve counts of murder. As Charles awaited trial, a Superior Court judge agreed to hear his lawsuit against his new attorneys. The judge indicated that Ng's suit was not, contrary to what the trial judge had ruled, a frivolous one. That soon became a moot point, however, when the trial was moved in September 1994 to Orange County. A new judge took the helm and new attorneys were appointed on both sides. A moving van delivered a mountain of evidence to the offices of both the Orange County District Attorney and Public Defender. The OCPD's office complained loudly about the condition of the evidence they received. Six tons of documents had been stuffed haphazardly and seemingly randomly into produce boxes. Five hundred pages of police reports were missing. All files pertaining to the Justice Department's investigation of the case were missing. The documents produced by the former defense team were reportedly illegible. Hundreds of photographs were unlabeled and unorganized. Thirteen boxes containing the most crucial documents were clearly marked "shred." Well over a hundred

videotapes were included among the evidence, but only one was ever shown at trial.

As the PD's office struggled to make sense of the evidence, while meeting resistance from the Justice Department and others, the new presiding judge opted to order the replacement of the new defense team. Charles Ng filed a request to have his team reinstated, but his motion was denied. The dismissed attorneys had been working to effect the removal of the judge from the case. The Fourth District Court of Appeals ultimately reinstated Ng's attorneys and strongly recommended that the judge be disqualified. A new judge was assigned to the case in February 1997. Through all of that legal maneuvering, it was Ng who was vilified by the press for purportedly manipulating the legal system to delay his fate.

In October, the new presiding judge postponed the start of Ng's trial yet again. A week later, the San Francisco Police Department made the remarkable announcement that it had lost many of its files on the case. Even more incredibly, bullets and blood samples had allegedly been disposed of.

On April 20, 1998, Charles Ng asked the court that he be allowed to represent himself. The next day he requested that his attorneys be dismissed. In May his request to serve as his own counsel was granted. In June, a man to whom Ng had allegedly confessed in prison, and who had been billed as a star witness for the prosecution, died in a single-car crash. The media hinted ominously that Ng had somehow arranged the man's death, but it was actually the state that benefited. The witness's purported testimony was read into the record by a U.S. Marshall. The jury, of course, was not able to gauge the credibility of the man whose words were read in court, and the defense was unable to cross-examine the deceased witness. Those are precisely the reasons why such testimony is virtually always disallowed—except in the Ng case.

On June 17, Charles Ng made his debut as a defense attorney. By August 21, he had lost the right to represent himself.

By mid-September, the preliminary proceedings had been wrapped up and jury selection began. On October 26, 1998, the long awaited trial of Charles Ng finally began. Prosecutors began their presentation by showing the graphic videotape of the two women being tortured and raped. The images on the tape were disturbing, to say the least. Airing it for the jury did considerable damage to the defense's case. The tape, however, did not answer the question of whether Charles Ng was guilty of murder, since the murders of the women were not captured on tape—at least not on the particular tape that was aired in court. What the airing of the videotape did accomplish was to radically inflame the emotions of the jury.

After that first airing in court, excerpts from the video promptly showed up on the evening news. The next day, prosecutors again played the video for the jury. It soon became apparent that that tape was the main plank of the state's case. It was

aired repeatedly throughout the duration of the trial, both in the courtroom and by the media. Two of the jurors though only saw the first couple of airings of the tape, since they were replaced the very first week, before opening arguments had even concluded.

In late January 1999, the prosecution began its closing argument by, surprisingly enough, playing the tape again. Following that, the case would have ordinarily then gone to the jury for deliberations. But this was no ordinary case. So what happened next was that, as the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted, “Ng testified as a surprise witness for his own defense—two days after his own attorneys had rested their case, and one day after prosecutors finished their own final summation of the evidence for the jury.”

On February 1, the state got a shot at cross-examining the surprise witness. The first thing that prosecutors did was to play the tape again. Then they introduced inflammatory illustrations that Ng had drawn while imprisoned in Canada. That evidence had been previously disallowed, before Ng made the inexplicable decision to take the stand. Prosecutors then played the tape yet again. Needless to say, it is difficult to see how Ng aided his cause with his eleventh-hour appearance as a witness.

After more than two weeks of deliberations, the jury returned with verdicts on eleven of the twelve murder counts: guilty. Ng’s trial then moved on to the penalty phase, during which one of the jurors was dismissed and an investigator was charged with prosecutorial misconduct. The judge opted not to declare a mistrial, although such a ruling would seem to have been warranted.

On April 20, that most infamous of dates, Ng’s father was called by the defense. On the stand, he admitted to the severe physical abuse he had inflicted on his son. The next day, Ng’s mother took the stand and confirmed the horrendous level of abuse to which the boy had been subjected. The jury was not swayed. On May 3, they returned from deliberations with the recommendation that Charles be put to death. The next day it was claimed that Ng had somehow managed to contact a juror during deliberations. Two weeks later, that juror’s phone number was allegedly found in his cell. On June 30, 1999, a sentence of death was formally imposed upon Charles Ng, thus ending his fourteen-year legal odyssey.

Michael Rustigan, a criminologist from San Francisco State University, had this to say about that odyssey: “I think it’s perhaps the strangest case in the annals of serial killers from the standpoint of the trial. In terms of legal process, I’d have to say it’s one of the most bizarre, confusing, and outrageous cases I have ever seen.” Perhaps Rustigan just needs to spend a little more time studying serial killer cases, for as bizarre as the Ng case was, it did not really differ dramatically from other serial killer cases—although it was perhaps pushing the boundaries

just a bit when Claralyn Balazs, billed as a star witness, took the stand and then was promptly dismissed after both sides failed to ask her a single question.

Joel Norris, a psychologist, author, and 'expert' on serial crime, has written that Lake and Ng were in possession of "snuff videos that combine violent sex with vivid scenes of actual murders committed on camera, photo portraits of women in chains, snapshots of dead victims moments before their burial, and bags of human bones that had been boiled down into soup." If such evidence did exist, it is inconceivable that it would not have been presented in court. But there is ample reason to believe that such images did exist amongst the hundreds of videotapes and photographic images. Why then was it not produced?

The most logical conclusion is that the images either depicted Ng acting in conjunction with other unacknowledged perpetrators, or they showed that Ng did not actually participate in the murders.

* * * * *

Robert Berdella, Sr., a World War II veteran and member of the Knights of Columbus, was reportedly a physically and emotionally abusive father. His son and namesake was beaten regularly with a leather strap. The elder Berdella died suddenly at the young age of thirty-nine, reportedly of a heart attack. His widow remarried shortly after her husband's untimely death. Her son lived a solitary life, rarely playing outside the family home. He had very few friends. At the age of sixteen, he was raped by a restaurant co-worker.

In 1968, while a sophomore at college, Robert Berdella, Jr. was arrested for selling drugs to an undercover federal agent. He received a five year suspended sentence. Just a month later, he was again arrested on drug charges, but those charges were dropped. The next year, while still a student, Bob financed the purchase of his home. He also performed a bizarre ritual on the grounds of the campus in which a duck was decapitated.

After college, Berdella worked as a chef at many of the most renowned restaurants and country clubs in Kansas City. The ingredient lists of the dishes he prepared became the subject of morbid curiosity and speculation when evidence later emerged of Berdella's possible cannibalism. When Bob was not occupied with his culinary endeavors, he spent much of his time collecting bizarre artifacts, some reportedly fashioned from human body parts. By 1981, his hobby had become his full time job; Berdella was the proprietor of a flea market stand known as Bob's Bizarre Bazaar.

Berdella also helped set up a Neighborhood Watch program, and then served as the liaison to the police and to a couple of nearby youth homes. According to

neighbors, he had a constant flow of young men coming and going from his home. Many of them lived in the home for varying periods of time. One twenty-five-year-old former boarder said that at times as many as four boarders lived at the house, and that large groups of young men regularly attended parties there. These boarders and visitors were a constant feature of the home throughout the 1980s. During that time, an indeterminate number of young men were tortured and killed in the house. Officials claimed that none of the boarders were involved in any of the crimes.

One of Berdella's boarders, a young hustler identified as Freddie Kellogg, took a rather interesting route to reach Bob's house. Kellogg was picked up by an unidentified man who handcuffed and then brutally assaulted him. The assault was stopped by a second unidentified man, who then introduced Kellogg to Berdella. Kellogg thereafter served as what was described as Berdella's "liaison to the streets."

Many of Berdella's young companions, perhaps significantly, regularly signed up as volunteers for unspecified 'medical experiments' at the nearby Quincy Research Center. One group of such volunteers reportedly staged a party at Bob's house to celebrate the completion of a thirty-day program at the center. Many of Berdella's young protégés later said that he frequently claimed to know powerful people who were able to "get things done." He reportedly did have a rather large network of connections for an owner of a flea market stand, including contacts in Africa, Asia, South America, and along the Pacific Rim.

Berdella's first known victim, Jerry Howell, disappeared in July 1984. At least two witnesses told police that they suspected that Berdella had given the young man what they described as a "hot shot." Another witness reported "word on the streets is he [Berdella] does bad things to kids." The police department's Fugitive Apprehension Unit purportedly questioned, watched and harassed the suspect, but there is little indication that any serious effort was made to investigate Berdella. The next known victim disappeared in April 1985, followed by a third on the summer solstice of that same year. In September, Walter James Farris disappeared as well. His wife told investigators that when her husband was last seen, he had been headed for Bob's house. This was the first time in the history of the Fugitive Apprehension Unit that the same suspect was positively linked to two missing persons cases, yet even then little effort was made to investigate Bob Berdella. In June 1986, both Todd Stoops and Larry Pearson disappeared. Pearson was abducted right after Bob returned from a trip to Ohio. He was held captive in the home for six weeks, while boarders and guests freely came and went. After he was killed, his severed head was kept in Berdella's freezer for a week.

There is little doubt that the known victims represent only the tip of the iceberg. Evidence indicated that many more young men were tortured and killed, although authorities denied that fact and made concerted efforts to downplay and cover up the facts of the case.

On March 29, 1988, Chris Bryson was abducted and imprisoned in Bob's house. Bryson, unlike the others, managed to escape from Berdella's three-story home, and in doing so brought about the exposure of Bob's operations. On April 2, Chris leapt to freedom from a window. He was naked and dazed, with visible wounds from the depravities that had been inflicted upon him. During his days of confinement, he had been kept heavily drugged and subjected to severe torture that was designed specifically to affect his vision, hearing, voice and hands. Fingers and chemical swabs had been jabbed into his eyes, his hands had been beaten with a tire iron and tightly bound with piano wire, and electric shocks had been administered to his eyes, ears and genitals. His ears had been packed full of caulking compound. He had been injected with various chemicals, including drain cleaner. He had been branded, subjected to Bob's version of acupuncture, and beaten about the head with a rubber mallet. And throughout it all, he had been photographed repeatedly.

Officers Lloyd Harvey and Larry Lewis were the first officers to respond to the call of Bryson's escape. They were soon joined by officers John Metzger and Cynthia Cherry, who appear to have taken charge of the scene. Metzger volunteered to take the report. At least some of the officers on the scene were skeptical of Bryson's claims, despite the fact that he had severely reddened eyes, visible scars and burns on his face, arms, legs and back, and unmistakable rope burns on his wrists, mouth and ankles.

Bryson initially claimed that Berdella had been assisted in the abduction by a blond woman; that fact was later expunged from the official story. He also reported that Berdella had told him that there were others with whom he would later be shared. Bob had also warned him that he might be sent off to a remote location in Wyoming where his abuse would continue indefinitely.

Police promptly assembled a twelve-man task force to investigate the case. Assigned to lead that task force was a man named Troy Cole, who later co-authored a self-serving book about the Berdella case. The selection of Cole was a provocative one: he was, by his own admission, a 'former' employee of the CIA. Cole's law enforcement career began at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia in 1968. He was assigned to the White House. Two years later, he left the employ of the CIA, officially at least, to work for the District of Columbia police force. In 1972, he joined the Kansas City force, where he was assigned to homicide and, naturally enough, the department's intelligence unit.

The search warrant for Berdella's home was obtained by officer Tom Eikel, who had been to Bob's house previously, with two young male hustler/informants, on an undercover assignment to make a drug purchase. No arrests had been made and no charges had been filed following that transaction. The search of Bob's Bazaar was led by detective Lee Floyd, who had been a visitor to the shop in the past. Floyd knew Bob and he knew Bob's landlord at the flea market, who happened to be a former Kansas City police officer.

Multiple searches of the home, which reportedly had a putrid odor, uncovered a wealth of evidence. Voluminous notes kept by Berdella were found, as well as meticulously detailed logs of the tortures he had inflicted upon his victims. Hundreds of photographs taken into custody depicted as many as twenty different men being tortured. Numerous videotapes, audiotapes and films were taken into custody as well, but their contents were never revealed. Human skulls were found. Tests revealed that two large plastic trash barrels and a smaller bucket had at one time been filled with blood. A sizable stockpile of powerful pharmaceuticals was seized, including Acepromazine, Chlorpromazine, and Ketamine. In the yard were human vertebrae that had been cut into pieces with a Skilsaw, just as Leonard Lake and Charles Ng had done at Wilseyville.

Amazingly enough, despite all the evidence, Troy Cole announced that the investigation was not being treated as a homicide case. That stance became somewhat harder to justify when the housing of a chainsaw discovered at the house was found to be packed with human flesh, blood and hair. Around the time of that discovery, the FBI was brought in to assist on the case.

Victim Chris Bryson had been taken, strangely enough, to the Research Psychiatric Center to recover from his injuries. Berdella had been arrested and placed in a medical unit; his cell was a steel box with no bars and no windows. He was cut off from all contact with other inmates and kept heavily drugged with sleeping pills. Bob's dogs had been sent to the city pound, where they reportedly refused to eat dog food. At home, they had dined on "mystery meat." Boarders spoke of eating "mystery meat" as well. Many in the community recalled with horror how Berdella had often prepared casseroles for potluck dinners at the flea market, and for neighborhood functions.

Bob was allowed one frequent, though quite clandestine, visitor—a Reverend Roger Coleman. The two men had a longstanding relationship, as evidenced by the fact that Coleman had been at the grand opening of Bob's Bazaar. In a bid to get him released from prison, he offered to let Berdella stay at his home, with his family, if the state agreed to release him on bond. Coleman later held a press conference and arranged a public television interview on Berdella's behalf.

More information about Berdella emerged as investigators continued to talk to witnesses. Some reports linked Bob to the disappearances of two paperboys in

Des Moines, Iowa—the same disappearances that were linked to Larry King and Michael Aquino. Some witnesses claimed that Berdella had been killing his victims in satanic ritual sacrifices. Others told of Bob making regular trips to a farm south of the city, frequently accompanied by heavy trash bags. Three different farms in the area were later identified, but it was deemed impractical to search them.

As frequently happens in serial killer cases, prosecutors chose to take their evidence to a grand jury, whose proceedings are conducted in secrecy, rather than holding a public preliminary trial. The grand jury handed down an indictment for the murder of Larry Pearson. Evidence reportedly included a detailed torture log, about sixty Polaroid photos, and Pearson's skull. A public defender appeared in court to represent Berdella, but the judge informed him that his services would not be needed; instead, the judge had opted to appoint private counsel for the defendant. Bob promptly entered a plea of guilty to the single count of first-degree murder. As the judge questioned him about his plea, he gave responses that his chroniclers described as "flat" and "emotionless." He was given a life sentence with no possibility for parole. Berdella's trial was over before it had even begun.

In September 1988, Bob was arraigned on additional murder counts. This time, he entered pleas of not guilty. The next month, Geraldo Rivera hosted a Halloween special on Satanism as only Geraldo can—which means that the subject was relegated to television's equivalent of the tabloid press. Nevertheless, Geraldo managed to round up a number of witnesses who claimed that Berdella had been involved in a satanic cult. One of those witnesses was detective Lee Orr of the Kansas City, Kansas police force. One woman claimed to have witnessed Berdella performing a ritual murder.

It should not have come as much of a surprise to the investigators who searched Berdella's house and shop to find that Bob had a keen interest in the occult. Satanic and occult artifacts were scattered throughout the house. At least twenty books on Satanism and/or witchcraft were found, along with books on sadism and a literary work entitled *How to Create Poisons and Antidotes to Them*. A record album entitled *Black Mass for Lucifer* sat atop Bob's turntable. Clippings of serial killer stories were scattered about. Buried in the yard was a jar containing bird feathers. The Bizarre Bazaar was filled with occult paraphernalia.

Lead investigator Troy Cole, nevertheless, scoffed at the claims made on the show and insisted that the Berdella case had nothing to do with Satanism. Cole was not the only one to scoff at the claims; Michael Aquino did as well. Aquino was one of those to appear on Geraldo's special. His primary goal appeared to have been to denounce any and all prosecutions of satanic crime as "witch hunts." The morning after the special aired, police received a call from the wife of one of Berdella's known victims. She told them that she had information for them but

could not talk about it at the time. She promised to call back. She was never heard from again.

With Berdella serving a life term, a rather morbid auction was scheduled to dispose of all his property, both from his home and from his place of business. A local millionaire and convicted bank robber named Delbert Dunmire consistently outbid all other bidders for such items as a custom-designed torture bed and a collection of ceremonial robes. The auction was ultimately cancelled when Dunmire offered to purchase the remaining inventory. The next month, he bought Bob's house as well. He then leveled it, destroying all remaining evidence, and sold the vacant lot. It seems very likely that those actions were taken to hide evidence of the involvement of others, including possibly Dunmire himself.³¹

Cole's team claimed that Berdella gave full confessions to his crimes. But they appear to have been very carefully crafted 'confessions' that were given in total secrecy. All of the confession sessions were held in a private room in the county jail. Rather than employing the services of a court reporter, the task force brought in a private stenographer. All aspects of the resulting confessions were tailored to conform to the state's version of events. Bob confessed to precisely six murders, which was the official tally. No new names appeared in the confessions. Bob claimed that he disposed of the bodies in the trash, not at the farms that he frequently visited. He denied having any links to any satanic groups. He took sole responsibility for all of the crimes. He quashed the recurrent rumors of police involvement. He claimed that a torture log that did not match up with any of the six official victims referred to experiments he had performed on a stray dog. And, most provocatively, he explained away a specific reference in one of his logs to Lt. Col. Oliver North. His claim was as follows: "We just had the TV on, and apparently something about Ollie North came on." There is no indication that Berdella felt compelled at any other time to dutifully record in his logs what was transpiring on the television.

31 It will be recalled that Henry Lee Lucas claimed that the upper echelons of the cult that he was involved with included men of wealth and power. Berkowitz has made the same claims of the 'Son of Sam' cult. Journalist Maury Terry has uncovered evidence suggesting the involvement of such figures as high-rolling art dealer Andrew Crispo and would-be *Cotton Club* producer Roy Radin. Crispo admitted to being present at the scene of a ritual homicide, accompanied by the son of a UN executive, but he denied participating in the grisly murder. Radin, on the other hand, became a victim of one of the cult's ritual executions. He was shot repeatedly in the head with a shotgun by three of magazine publisher Larry Flynt's former bodyguards. One of them was Manson associate Bill Mentzer.

Berdella ultimately received two life sentences and two conditional life sentences. They would prove to be very short life sentences. He served only a few years at a maximum-security facility before he died, officially of a heart attack. Many suspect the true cause of death was poisoning. Bob Berdella was just forty-three.

* * * * *

Gary Heidnik was born in 1943 to a father who was described as a strict disciplinarian. In the ninth grade, Gary enrolled at the prestigious Staunton Military Academy in Virginia. In 1961, he joined the Army and was, as previously noted, sent for medic training and then assigned to a field hospital in West Germany. After three months there, he went on sick call and was given Stelazine, a powerful tranquilizer normally used to treat severely psychotic states. Records do not indicate that Gary was suffering from such a condition at that time.

In January 1963, Heidnik was honorably discharged with a service-related mental disability. Not long after that, he earned a degree as a licensed practical nurse and then began training as a psychiatric nurse at a VA hospital. Over the next two-and-a-half decades, he would be hospitalized as a psychiatric patient at least twenty-five times, and he would attempt suicide at least seventeen times. And those figures are far from complete, since there is an unexplained six-year gap in Gary's medical records.

On Halloween night, 1966, Heidnik drove his motorcycle into a head-on collision. Four years later, his mother succeeded in doing what Gary and his brother Terry had failed at repeatedly: she killed herself.

In the spring of 1971, Gary paid a visit to Malibu, California. It is unclear what the purpose of that trip was, but just after returning to Philadelphia Heidnik decided to start his own church. On October 12, 1971, the birth date of Aleister Crowley, the United Church of the Ministers of God was formally incorporated. Gary and Terry Heidnik were both founding members. Most of the initial members of the congregation were institutionalized black women whom the state had labeled 'retarded.' At that same time, elsewhere in the country, Jim Jones was getting his church up and running as well—and he was going about it the same way: by recruiting institutionalized black women.

In September 1972, Heidnik was released from one of his numerous stays in institutions. From that point forward, there is a six-year gap in Gary's records. Very little can be discerned of his activities during that time period. No one, including Heidnik, can account for most of that six-year span. It is almost as if Gary Heidnik ceased to exist for an extended period of time, and then he reappeared. All that is known is that in 1975, on the vernal equinox, 'Bishop' Heidnik

opened a tax-free Merrill Lynch account on behalf of his church with an initial deposit of \$1,500. It was not long before that account was valued at an astounding \$545,000. In 1976, Heidnik reportedly fired a gun at an unidentified man. The bullet grazed the victim's face. Gary was charged only with aggravated assault and carrying a gun without a license, although assault with a deadly weapon and attempted murder would have been more appropriate charges. After one week, the charges were dropped entirely.

Heidnik was not heard from again until 1978. It was at that time that he came up with the idea of checking a girl out of an institution and chaining her in his basement, where he could repeatedly torture and rape her. Gary was caught in fairly short order and charged with an array of crimes, including kidnapping, rape, false imprisonment, unlawful restraint, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, interfering with the custody of a committed person, and recklessly endangering another person. In November 1978, Gary waived his right to a jury trial and placed his fate in the hands of the judge. It proved to be a wise decision. The judge dropped all the felony counts after determining that the victim was too 'retarded' to testify. Heidnik was found guilty only of various misdemeanor charges. He received a 3–7 year prison sentence, but never set foot in an actual prison. Instead, he spent four-and-a-half years institutionalized at various hospitals and was set free on April 12, 1983. By 1986, his church was thriving and he had a steady flow of women passing through his home. On November 26, 1986, one of them, Josefina Rivera, found herself imprisoned in Heidnik's basement.

Three days later, Sandra Lindsay joined Rivera in the basement. Lindsay had known Gary since the two had been institutionalized together at the Elwyn Institute, where she had been formally classified as 'mildly retarded.' Lindsay's family knew Heidnik as well, and they knew a man named Tony Brown, who sometimes lived at Gary's house. Brown was a regular visitor to the Lindsay home. Heidnik and Brown reportedly shared a number of girlfriends.

Sandra's mother reported her daughter's disappearance and she gave the investigating officers Heidnik's name, address and telephone number. Little effort was made to contact him. In his basement, Sandra was subjected to all manner of physical and psychological torture. Gary's prisoners were either not fed at all or they were fed dog food. That was later supplemented with the ground flesh of the prisoners who did not survive their ordeal. Survivors were given a choice between starvation and cannibalism. They were repeatedly raped by their captor and forced to sexually assault each other. They were kept chained at all times, sometimes in a manner that forced them to remain in an awkward standing position for hours. They were tortured with electric shocks. On occasion, they were forced into a covered pit. Their eardrums were gouged with a screwdriver to prevent them from hearing when their captor came and went from the house.

On the winter solstice of 1986, Gary added Lisa Thomas to his collection. Deborah Dudley was added as well, around the same time. Heidnik by then had several women chained in his basement, and yet, throughout the time that he was collecting his sex slaves, he continued to have consensual sexual encounters with other women, some of whom he regularly brought to his home. One of those women later said that Josefina Rivera sometimes accompanied Gary on his dates, and *appeared* to do so voluntarily.

In January 1987, Heidnik appeared in court, acting as his own attorney, to answer charges that he had fallen behind on support payments to his ex-wife. The previous January, following attacks on his estranged wife, Gary had been charged by the DA's office with spousal rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse and indecent assault. Those charges were all dismissed.

On February 7, 1987, one of Heidnik's sex-slaves-in-training, Sandra Lindsay, died. Shortly afterwards, the remaining prisoners heard the sounds of a power saw and an industrial food processor that Gary had rushed out to buy. He reportedly ground up some parts of Lindsay's corpse and cooked others. His remaining captives wisely began to work out an escape plan, but Rivera tipped Heidnik off and the plan was foiled. Three days after Sandra's death, neighbors became concerned about the stench of burning flesh emanating from Heidnik's home. The police were called and quickly discovered that it was impossible to see into the home and difficult to gain entry. The shades were all drawn tight and rips in them had been carefully and thoroughly duct taped. A security steel door had been installed and all the home's windows were heavily barred. Neighbors demanded that the responding officer knock down the door and search the residence, but he declined to do so. It does not appear that there was any follow-up investigation after that initial visit to the house.

About five weeks later, Gary lost another of his prisoners: Deborah Dudley was electrocuted while immersed in the water-filled pit. Around that same time, Josefina Rivera began going out with Gary to troll for replacement sex slaves. On March 23, just after the spring equinox, the two of them abducted Agnes Adams. The next day the prisoners broke free, looking very much like they had just emerged from a prisoner-of-war camp. Heidnik was promptly arrested, along with Tony Brown, who was initially charged as an accomplice. Gary was taken to the Philadelphia Detention Center and held in isolation, cut off from contact with other inmates. Brown was the first to relate to detectives the morbid details of the crimes. He claimed that he had seen Heidnik cutting up and raping a corpse. The freezer in the house was partially filled with human body parts. Human bones were found in the yard, cut up with a saw—just as Lake and Berdella had done. Also discovered in the home, not surprisingly, was a large cache of Thorazine.

Investigators soon discovered that Heidnik had considerable financial resources. In addition to his church's investment account, valued at well over \$500,000, he had at least one personal account with a substantial balance. He also had a new, fully-loaded Cadillac, a Rolls Royce, a Dodge van and a Dodge Dart. When taken into custody, he had \$2,000 cash in his pocket.

Heidnik's preliminary hearing began in April 1987. The prosecution team was led by Ronald Castille, a former Marine platoon commander in Vietnam. Heidnik was charged with an array of crimes, including murder, kidnapping, rape, aggravated assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, indecent exposure, false imprisonment, unlawful restraint, simple assault, recklessly endangering another person, indecent assault, criminal solicitation, and possession and abuse of a corpse. Gary's victims were called to offer their testimony at the preliminary proceedings. Josefina Rivera reportedly spoke in a detached, flat, emotionless voice. The other women testified that Rivera frequently beat them, even when Gary was not there, and seemed to enjoy doing so. She was referred to as the "boss of the basement."

On April 6, victim Lisa Thomas filed a civil petition asking for the assets of Heidnik's church to be frozen and a conservator appointed pending resolution of a civil suit brought against Heidnik by the victims. The church's assets were frozen, but the judge opted to hold off for two weeks on appointing the conservator, who was appointed on April 20. Two hours before that appointment, however, Heidnik filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Eight days later, federal courts claimed jurisdiction over the assets case. Strangely, Heidnik's will specified that those assets should go to the Veteran's Administration and the Peace Corps.

On May 1, Tony Brown was quietly released from custody. Two weeks after Heidnik's trial concluded, all charges against him were dropped and authorities thereafter pretended as though he had never been named as an accomplice.

On August 9, 1987, police raided a local apartment and made a gruesome discovery. The remains of five women were found in a bedroom that had been nailed shut. Another body was found in a closet that had also been nailed shut. Parts of a seventh body were found on the roof of the building and in the basement of a neighboring building. A 'retarded' black man named Harrison "Marty" Graham was taken into custody and dubbed the "Madman of Marshall Street." He confessed that his killings had begun the previous winter, about the time that Gary began collecting his victims. Graham also confessed to having committed acts of necrophilia. Officials denied that there were any connections between the Heidnik and Graham cases. Their homes were less than two miles apart.

Chuck Peruto was assigned as Heidnik's defense counsel. Trial watchers noted that he had a penchant for young, shapely women. Lynne Abraham was

the presiding judge. She had previously worked for District Attorney Arlen Specter, most notable for concocting the 'single bullet theory' to explain the Kennedy assassination. She had also worked for HUD and for Mayor Frank Rizzo's Redevelopment Authority before being elevated to the bench. During her tenure as a prosecutor, Abraham had been known to surprise the city's medical examiners by showing up to view autopsies, for reasons best known only to her. During the opening phase of Heidnik's trial, she distinguished herself by repeatedly interrupting the questioning of potential jurors. Even so, the jury was seated in just one-and-a-half days, a notable feat for such a high-profile case.

Gary was kept heavily dosed with Thorazine throughout the trial. He sat at the defense table staring straight ahead, saying nothing and, by all appearances, hearing and seeing nothing. He was described by trial watchers as nearly catatonic. His fitness to stand trial and participate in his own defense was apparently never questioned. His attorney's opening statement would have been remarkable were it not for the fact that it was virtually the same opening statement that has been offered by so many other serial killer advocates: "The judge said something this morning about people being innocent until proven guilty. My client is not innocent. He is very, very guilty."

All testimony concerning the medical treatment that Heidnik received while in the military in Germany was disallowed. The jury never saw the documentation of Gary's unwitting participation in military LSD experiments. The jury never heard that only 1 in 79,000 military veterans who apply for benefits due to a mental disability get a 100% disability rating and are awarded benefits for life. Heidnik had received such a deal, and *he had not even filed for it*. A man named Jack Apshe—a former helicopter door-gunner in Vietnam turned psychologist specializing in records research—arrived in court with extensive, meticulously organized records of Heidnik's psychiatric history (minus the six years for which no records exist). Virtually all of Apshe's well-documented evidence was disallowed. The ruling by the judge to disallow the introduction of that evidence was a most unusual one, however, in that it seemed to bar only the defense from introducing the material, but not the prosecution or the judge herself. The state was allowed to pick and choose which documents it wanted entered into evidence, and Judge Abraham even handpicked some of the documents and read them into the record.

The judge also disallowed all questions pertaining to the possible involvement of Tony Brown. What she did allow introduced into evidence was Heidnik's past criminal record. While that would normally be inadmissible, Abraham allowed it in through a back-door route: the testimony of his former captives to whom he had bragged of his past exploits. He had also told them that he had killed six

women in all, though no other victims were ever identified. The picture of Josefina Rivera that emerged at trial was of a mind-controlled accomplice to Gary. Victim Agnes Adams testified that she had seen Josefina working the streets two weeks before her own capture, which occurred several weeks after Rivera had been imprisoned. Rivera herself admitted on the stand that there were times when she was left unsupervised and could have escaped. The other victims named her along with Heidnik in the civil suits that were filed.

A Dr. Clancy MacKenzie was called as a witness for the defense, but his testimony certainly did not benefit the defendant. Peruto went so far as to label his own witness a “flake” in comments that appeared in print. He did not bother though to explain why it was he who had called that flake to the stand.

Following the feeble attempt to mount a defense, the jury was sequestered to begin deliberations. Strangely, a gag order that had been issued early on, purportedly so as not to contaminate the jury, remained in effect. The jury returned guilty verdicts on two counts of murder and multiple counts of rape, kidnapping, aggravated assault, and involuntary deviate sexual intercourse. During the penalty phase that followed, not a single defense witnesses was called. Peruto’s closing argument, with his client’s life on the line, lasted just four minutes. Two death sentences were delivered after less than two hours of deliberations.

A psychiatric report prepared after the trial stated: “From Gary Heidnik’s history it was clear that his first psychosis was facilitated by a near lethal dose of hallucinogenic substance given to him while he was in Germany in the military.” The same report noted, “Heidnik’s recall of the four months with the women is very hazy and dream-like.” Whether such information would have influenced the jury, whose members likely had no awareness of the implications of the MK-ULTRA projects in which Heidnik was verifiably involved, is largely a matter of speculation. One of those jurors was, oddly enough, a research chemist with PPG Industries.

* * * * *

Jeffrey Dahmer was born in 1960, the son of a research chemist with PPG Industries. Father Lionel Dahmer, Ph.D.—who admitted that he, as a boy, had been fascinated with fire and the art of bomb making—recalled that at thirteen he had wanted to hypnotize a girl so that he “could control her entirely.” Lionel Dahmer also said that Jeffrey had been molested at the age of eight, purportedly by a neighborhood boy. By the age of ten, Jeff was experimenting with dead animals and learning to use acid to dispose of the bodies. In 1975, three neighborhood

kids found a mutilated dog in the woods behind the Dahmer home, its decapitated, gutted carcass hanging from a tree. A cross of sticks was nearby.

Three years later, while on a senior class trip to Washington, D.C., Jeffrey Dahmer made a call from a payphone and then announced to his high school classmates that he had secured them an appointment to visit the office of the vice-president of the United States. Though his friends naturally were skeptical, Jeffrey did indeed lead them on a tour of Walter Mondale's office, followed by a visit to the office of prominent writer Art Buchwald. It has never been explained how the aspiring serial killer had established such impressive contacts in Washington. And it has never been revealed who it was that Dahmer called that day to arrange the impromptu private tours.

A girl who dated Jeffrey briefly during their senior year recalled one date during which a séance was conducted at the Dahmer home. Someone in the group had suggested that it might be a good idea to try to contact Satan. The girl made a hasty exit from the house. Just after Jeffrey's graduation, in 1978, his parents filed for divorce, both of them accusing the other of extreme cruelty. Jeffrey later claimed that he killed for the first time that summer, but no evidence was ever produced to support that claim. The identity of the purported victim was determined by having Dahmer choose from a collection of photographs of boys who had been reported missing around that time.

Jeff enrolled at Ohio State University but attended for just one quarter before being taken to a military recruiter by his father. He began his military career on January 12, 1979. Like Heidnik, Dahmer sought training as a military policeman but was instead trained as a medic. He completed his training on the summer solstice and he was then assigned to a West German military hospital. Dahmer was processed out of the service at Fort Jackson, South Carolina on March 26, 1981. His release came early, allegedly due to chronic alcoholism, but it was an honorable discharge with full benefits.

Jeffrey next surfaced in Miami, Florida, where he briefly stayed before moving back home and in with his father and stepmother. In October 1981, he was arrested for disorderly conduct, possession of an open container of alcohol and resisting arrest. He paid a \$60.00 fine and was sent on his way. Shortly after that, he moved in with his paternal grandmother. In 1982, he was arrested for indecent exposure. He again paid a nominal fine. In January 1985, he began working at the Ambrosia Chocolate Company. At about that same time, he began regularly visiting Milwaukee's gay bars and bathhouses, experimenting on unsuspecting victims with surreptitious druggings. The Club Bath Milwaukee was a favored lab for his field experiments. The bathhouse owners were well aware of Jeffrey's activities, but little if anything was done to curtail them.

In March 1987, Dahmer was again arrested for indecent exposure, after masturbating in front of two young boys. He paid \$42 in court costs and was given a one-year suspended sentence, from which he was released in March 1988. At that time, Dahmer was still living with his grandmother. It was in her basement that he allegedly began dismembering and dissolving bodies. His first victim was purportedly killed in a hotel and then brought back to grandma's house in a suitcase transported by taxi. The body of his second victim was allegedly allowed to ripen in her basement for a week. The odor, needless to say, would have been unbearable. Nevertheless, it was claimed that grandma had no idea what Jeffrey was up to in the basement.

In September 1988, Dahmer got his own apartment, which soon became one of America's most infamous death houses. That very same month he was accused of molesting a young boy. The following May he was convicted of second-degree sexual assault. Despite an appeal to the court by Lionel Dahmer, Jeffrey received a three-year sentence. He served just ten months in a minimum-security facility on a work release program that allowed him to continue working at the chocolate factory. He reportedly kept a mummified head and genitals in his work locker during that time. On Thanksgiving, Dahmer was given a rare gift: twelve hours of freedom. He returned late and visibly intoxicated, with no repercussions.

In early 1990, Dahmer was released on parole. He remained on parole throughout his killing spree, but no one ever visited his home to check up on him.³² That would later become the basis of a lawsuit filed by the survivors of some of Dahmer's victims. The suit plausibly contended that a routine visit would have saved countless lives. Before Jeffrey's parole records were made public, they were, in the words of chronicler Don Davis, "well vacuumed" and "mostly blanked out." The Wisconsin Department of Corrections ordered Dahmer's parole officer, Donna Chester, not to talk to the press.

In July 1990, Dahmer hit a fifteen-year-old boy over the head with a rubber mallet and then attempted to strangle him. Following the attack, he then inexplicably called the kid a taxi and sent him on his way. The victim was taken to a medical center where he gave police an address and a description of his assailant. No one bothered to investigate the incident. At about that same time, Jeffrey acquired a 57-gallon drum of acid, which he purportedly brought home in a taxi (he never owned a car) and muscled up to his apartment by himself. Two men and a moving dolly were required to remove the drum.

32 Dahmer's situation was not a unique one; Ed Kemper was supposed to have regular contact with both a parole officer and a social worker throughout his killing spree, but he never contacted either of them and no one was ever sent to check on him.

In May 1991, a fourteen-year-old boy was seen fleeing Dahmer's apartment by two young women who called the police to report the incident. The boy was naked, bleeding and drugged into a near-stupor. The responding officers chose to believe Dahmer's tale of a lover's quarrel, even though the witnesses, who were still on the scene, angrily informed them that they had seen the terror-stricken boy actively resisting Dahmer's efforts to restrain him, and despite the fact that the victim was clearly a minor. The witnesses claimed that the officers told them go away and refused to take their names. They opted not to run a routine background check on the possible suspect, which would have revealed that Dahmer was a convicted child molester who was still on parole from his previous molestation conviction. The victim of that previous molestation was the *brother* of the bleeding, terrified young boy in front of Jeffrey Dahmer's apartment.

Amazingly enough, the three officers on the scene claimed that they actually accompanied the pair back to Dahmer's apartment and noticed nothing amiss there. That was in spite of the fact that there was a three-day-old rotting corpse lying on the bed, with the attendant smell of death permeating the apartment. There was also an abundance of morbid artifacts and photos lying about the home. Nevertheless, the officers purportedly saw nothing wrong and left the scene with the victim still in Dahmer's custody. As soon as they left, Dahmer killed the boy and then raped and disemboweled the corpse. The mother of one of the two witnesses called the police after reading a newspaper account of a missing boy who closely resembled the naked young man, but her concerns were dismissed. She then contacted the local FBI office, but she was rebuffed there as well. The woman claimed that she was instructed not to talk to the press.

Dahmer's last intended victim was Tracy Edwards, a thirty-one-year-old father of six. Edwards had recently jumped bail in Mississippi on charges of sexually battering a thirteen-year-old girl. He escaped from his would-be abductor and went to authorities with a description of the assailant and his rancid smelling apartment. Edwards told police that he had seen Dahmer undergo a sudden, radical transformation: "His face was completely changed. I wouldn't have recognized him. It was as if the devil himself stood in front of me." The apartment, he said, was filled with photos of male torsos.

It was filled with considerably more than that. There were bloodstains on the bed. There was an extensive collection of photos depicting bodies in various stages of dismemberment. Four intact heads were found, one in the refrigerator and three in a freezer. Another freezer was filled with wrapped, unmarked meat and a human heart. A file drawer was filled with bones. The barrel of acid was brimming with miscellaneous body parts. One kettle was filled with skulls and another contained severed hands and penises. Seven skulls in all were found. Gruesome photo albums were scattered about the house.

Dahmer was initially charged with four counts of murder, and his bail was set at \$1,000,000. Prosecutors soon added eight additional murder counts and raised the bail amount to \$5,000,000. Another three counts were then added, although there were no body parts or photos to support the additional charges. Prosecutors claimed that one photo album had been destroyed. They also claimed that the bodies of the victims depicted in that particular album had been, conveniently enough, tossed out with the trash.

Jeffrey's trial began in January 1992. His attorney, Gerald Boyle, who had previously set his sights on becoming the city's District Attorney, had waived his client's right to a preliminary trial. Boyle had also allowed his client to give detailed confessions to his crimes during lengthy interrogations. Dahmer entered a plea of guilty but insane. He was given a 937-year prison sentence. By the end of the year, his apartment building had been destroyed. The three police officers who had, unknowingly or otherwise, aided and abetted the serial killer were cleared of any wrongdoing.

There were, inevitably, questions that were left unanswered by the trial. Two of the victims had been abducted from Chicago, and Dahmer did not own or have the use of a car. How were those victims transported? The remains of some victims were never found. Were their bodies really disposed of in the trash? And if so, why did Dahmer choose to dispose of only a select few bodies? Some aspects of Jeffrey's confessions were completely unsupported by the evidence. To what extent did Dahmer's interrogators shape those confessions? One victim's grandmother reported receiving several phone calls during which she heard groaning, choking and faint cries of "help me, help me, help me." Those calls came a few weeks after the disappearance of her grandson. Was he kept alive for an extended period of time?

Dahmer, like all collectors, was obsessed with gaining control over his victims. His preferred means of doing so, and of disposing of the bodies that accumulated from his failed experiments, was through the use of chemicals—an interest that was acquired, perhaps, from his research chemist father. Jeff was reportedly working on perfecting a home lobotomy procedure that involved drilling a hole in the victim's forehead and then injecting various combinations of chemicals.

Dahmer has been described as a 'dabbler' in Satanism, but it is likely that he was more than just a dabbler. In his apartment, he had a detailed plan for constructing a satanic altar. The plan incorporated the human skulls and other artifacts that he had been collecting. He told authorities that he believed that by constructing the altar, and by consuming the flesh of his victims, he would be infused with "special powers and energies" that would help him to succeed socially and financially. Oddly enough, in March 1999 the brother of one of

Dahmer's victims was found stabbed to death. Police described the young man's death as a ritual sacrifice.

Dahmer served just two years of his prison sentence before he was inexplicably paired with two homicidal inmates on an unsupervised work detail. Only one of the three made it through the day. It was not, needless to say, Jeffrey Dahmer. After his death, Lionel Dahmer waged a macabre battle with Jeff's mother over preserving his brain for study.

* * * * *

As a child, Herb Baumeister reportedly never showed any emotion, even when his father became physical, which apparently happened quite frequently. Herb Baumeister, Sr. had served in WWII, after which he graduated from Indiana University's School of Medicine and began work as an anesthesiologist. His son and namesake initially set out to follow in his father's academic footsteps, by enrolling in college as an anatomy major. Unlike his father, however, Herb, Jr. dropped out of school. He then married Juliana Saiter, the daughter of a superintendent at the Naval Air Warfare Center. Herb and Juliana were both members of the Young Republicans, as was Ted Bundy.

Not long after the marriage, Herb's father had his newlywed son committed to Larue D. Carter Memorial Hospital, a state-run mental hospital. The Carter facility catered to patients with serious mental impairments, yet there is no indication that Herb was, at that time, seriously impaired. And if he had been, his father was an extremely wealthy man who could have easily afforded to get his son private care. Herb, Sr.'s choice of facilities, therefore, was a rather odd one. Long before the confinement at Carter, Herb, Sr. had reportedly secreted his young son off to be administered 'mental examinations.'

Herb was released from the Carter facility after two months. His diagnosis noted that he exhibited two or more distinct personalities. Following his confinement, Baumeister took a job at the *Indianapolis Star*. The position that he took at the newspaper was known to be regularly filled by the sons and daughters of the wealthy and powerful. Herb's next job, driving a hearse, provided him with his requisite 'blooding.' Herb, Sr. then once again pulled some strings to land Herb, Jr. a position with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, where one of his duties was serving as the Bureau's liaison to the Indiana state police.

Herb left the Bureau in 1985 and thereafter remained unemployed while wife Juliana occupied her time doing volunteer work. In 1986, warrants were issued for Herb's arrest on charges of theft and conspiracy to commit theft. True to form, Baumeister opted to waive his right to a jury trial and place his fate in the

hands of a judge. The bench trial, such as it was, was over in just one day; Herb was found not guilty on all counts.

By that time, the Baumeisters had been living quite well for an extended period of time, even though neither of them was gainfully employed. Herb then decided that the time was right to start up his own business. With a \$350,000 loan from his mother, he opened a thrift store. In 1988, in conjunction with the Children's Bureau of Indianapolis, he founded Thrift Management, Inc. Herb's close association with the Children's Bureau—which primarily catered to orphans, the type of victims who aren't likely to be missed—hints at the possibility that his thrift store business was a cover for more profitable, and nefarious, business pursuits.

By 1990, Herb's company was growing rapidly and a second Sav-A-Lot outlet opened its doors for business. To staff his stores, Herb assembled a workforce of attractive, young, male employees—just as John Gacy had done. By all outward appearances, things were going quite well for the Baumeisters. In November 1991, Herb, Juliana and their three kids moved into a new home: a four-bedroom, five-bathroom estate with an indoor pool situated on 18.5 acres. Known as 'Fox Hollow Farm,' the property also featured a barn and horse stables. The family maintained a second home as well, and also had access to a condominium on Lake Wawasee owned by Herb's mother.

Three years after moving to Fox Hollow Farm, thirteen-year-old Erich Baumeister discovered a skeleton in the backyard. He dutifully reported his find to his mother, but Julie told no one, including the police, of her son's discovery. By that time, young gay men and male prostitutes in the Indianapolis area³³ had been disappearing for a very long time. From about 1980 on, their bodies began surfacing in Indiana and western Ohio. Many were strangled and deposited along Ohio's Interstate 70. One victim had his arms, legs and head severed and his torso completely drained of blood. The severed parts were never recovered. Four bodies were found clustered together on October 14, 1983, in what was described as a private graveyard. A nearby barn was found to contain both a pentagram and an inverted cross.

In the mid-1980s, a man from Terre Haute, Indiana named Larry Eyler confessed to kidnapping, torturing and murdering as many as twenty-three of the victims. The second victim that he took credit for killing disappeared on the eve of Halloween, 1982; the sixth went missing on the spring equinox of 1983. Eyler claimed that for six of the torture murders, he worked with accomplices. Among the accomplices he fingered was Robert David Little, a professor at Indiana State

33 Indianapolis, interestingly enough, is where the Reverend Jim Jones launched the first incarnation of his People's Temple and gathered his first recruits.

University and the former head of the Terre Haute chapter of the ACLU. Little and Eyler had lived together since 1975.

In May 1983, a task force was formed. The following month, dozens of law enforcement officials gathered for a summit to review the case. The task force made little progress, however, until an anonymous tipster turned in Eyler. From that point on, Eyler was purportedly under constant surveillance, but the disappearances and killings continued.

Eyler had previously been arrested in August 1978 after attacking and stabbing a hitchhiker, who he then left for dead. When taken into custody, Eyler was in possession of a sword, three knives and a canister of tear gas. He was charged with attempted murder and his bond was initially set at \$50,000. After one day, his bail was lowered to \$10,000, allowing his friends to free him. Eyler's attorney paid off the victim with a check for \$2,500 and all charges were dropped. On November 13, the presiding judge dismissed the case and ordered Eyler to pay just \$43 in court costs. Three years later, in 1981, Eyler was again arrested, for drugging a fourteen-year-old boy and then dumping his unconscious body. It is unclear how that case was disposed of.

When Eyler was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the I-70 murders, officers reportedly found a bloodstained knife in his truck. The boots that he was wearing, which were also bloodstained, matched plaster casts of boot-prints taken from one of the crime scenes. The tires on his truck also matched plaster casts of tracks present at one of the murder scenes. As legal counsel, Eyler retained David Schippers, who later achieved notoriety as the Democratic attorney who presented the Republican-controlled House Judiciary Committee's legally specious case for the impeachment of President Clinton, and who later still achieved yet more notoriety by raising his voice to question limited aspects of the official September 11 story.

In the Eyler case, Schippers promptly filed a motion to suppress all evidence seized in the case. His motion was granted and the state's case against his client essentially evaporated. Eyler was freed and he immediately packed up and moved to John Gacy's Chicago, where he was later seen dumping trash bags filled with body parts into the trash bin of an apartment building. He was described as having a "glassy" look in his eyes as he went about his task. In addition to his fingerprints on the trash bags, investigators who searched his apartment found bloodstains, a hacksaw, more trash bags, and a T-shirt belonging to the dismembered victim. Schippers opted not to represent Eyler again, but he did serve as an adviser to the defense team.

Eyler was convicted and, on October 3, 1986, sentenced to death. Four years later, he fingered Professor Robert David Little as the mastermind behind the killings. He also claimed that the professor had photographed the sadistic murders

in progress. Eyler was administered a polygraph examination, which he reportedly passed. Search warrants were served at the home that Little had shared with Eyler as well as at Little's University office. A number of videotapes and photographs were seized. Seized phone records revealed that Eyler had established a pattern of making late-night telephone calls to the house from various locations, though it is unclear if those locations corresponded to the locations of the disappearances. Little was indicted, brought to trial, and then acquitted on April 17, 1991. Eyler though continued to supply information to investigators, who were attempting to build a case against Little and other accomplices. Those efforts came to an abrupt end in March 1994, when Eyler died, reportedly from AIDS.

Many of his victims disappeared from the very same two-square-mile section of Indianapolis, peppered with gay bars, that served as Herb's hunting grounds. Like Eyler, who was supplied by a doctor with Placidyl to drug his victims, Herb had ready access to drugs, thanks to his father's prescription pads. Herb had also been to Ohio dozens of times in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Police first approached Herb and Julie to question them about the disappearances in November 1995. Herb immediately retained an attorney: James Voyles, the lawyer who a few years before had won an acquittal for Robert David Little. In May 1996, the Children's Bureau terminated its contract with Herb and began publicly distancing itself from his operation, purportedly because the Sav-A-Lot stores were in financial trouble. On June 20, Herb informed his wife that he was taking the kids for physical examinations and then enrolling them in a summer program at the Culver Military Academy—where aspiring serial killer Doug Clark once resided. Julie had other plans, however, and on June 23 she consented to a police search of the property.

When the search began the next day, Herb was away at the lake house with his son Erich. Investigators almost immediately discovered human bones and bone fragments on the property. They were not hard to find, since they were scattered about in plain sight—and there were literally thousands of them. Even though indications were that this was a multiple homicide case, it was assigned to Detective Sergeant Kenneth Whisman, who had never handled a homicide case. Police promptly, and rather ridiculously, claimed that they were days, if not weeks, away from being ready to question Herb Baumeister.

The majority of the bones found at Fox Hollow Farm had been burned, crushed and scattered, making identification nearly impossible. It was not possible to even estimate the number of victims, though it was determined that there were no less than eleven. More than 6,000 bones and bone fragments were recovered. Strangely though, no skulls were ever found. Although the site where the bodies had been burned, readily identifiable by the scorched ground, was in clear view of the home's kitchen window, Julie Baumeister swore that she knew nothing about

the murders. Neighbors, however, questioned how the avid gardener, who spent a good deal of time in her yard, could have been unaware of thousands of bones, many of them visible to the naked eye.

Julie Baumeister told police investigators that her husband was an avid videographer who maintained a private collection of hundreds of tapes. When she led them to the storage closet where the tapes were normally kept, however, all of them had suddenly gone missing. Investigators noted that a vent in the wall appeared to have been used to hide a video camera for surreptitious filming. A witness who had been taken to Fox Hollow Farm by Herb, and whose tips had led to the initial questioning of the Baumeisters, reported seeing a closet filled with professional video equipment, including cameras, lenses, tripods, and lighting equipment. No such equipment was found during the search. Police seized only ten items from the house; five of those items were videotapes.

Two days after the search of the property began, Julie Baumeister obtained an emergency order for temporary custody of her son, Erich. Officers were dispatched to the lake house where Herb was staying and the child was brought back. Despite the fact that authorities had already spent two full days excavating Baumeister's eighteen-acre graveyard, he was not questioned about the discoveries on his property. As soon as the officers left with Erich, Herb promptly disappeared, which did not seem to concern police investigators. Over the next few days, searchers discovered a drainage ditch on the property that contained an abundance of large bones, but still no skulls. Whisman still insisted that there was not enough evidence to issue a warrant for Baumeister's arrest.

On July 2, a Canadian police officer found Herb sleeping in his car near Ontario Park. The officer observed a number of items in the car, including an overnight bag, envelopes, newspapers, piles of other, unidentified papers, and what appeared to be videotapes. The next day, police again found Herb. This time he was in the park by the water's edge, with a .357 magnum bullet hole in his head. His car had been emptied of all personal items. A search of the area yielded no evidence that Herb had disposed of any of the items that had been in his possession just the night before. None of his possessions were ever recovered or accounted for. What was said to be a suicide note was found. It was addressed, rather bizarrely, "Attention Canadian Authorities."

Around that same time, Baumeister's older brother Brad was found floating in a hot tub in Texas. Brad's death remains an unsolved mystery. Perhaps the Baumeister family just had a run of bad luck.

The day after Herb Baumeister's body was discovered in a park, it was autopsied by Canadian authorities, who promptly announced that the autopsy report would not be ready for release for "about a year." Since some of the I-70 murders remained unsolved, Indianapolis officials were under intense pressure

to investigate any possible connections to the Baumeister case. Police had two key pieces of physical evidence that had been gathered from the scenes of the unsolved killings: a semen sample and a palm print. The semen sample, however, just sort of disappeared. With only the palm print remaining, a technician was duly dispatched to obtain a print from Herb's corpse, still in the custody of Canadian officials.

What followed, purportedly, was a ridiculous series of errors. The technician purportedly returned from Canada with a print that was unusable. The official story holds that the print simply "didn't take," but it was never explained why the technician got all the way back to the States before realizing that. He was sent back to try again, and once again returned with a print that 'didn't take.' Not to be deterred, the technician was sent back a third time, only to find that the corpse had been cremated, destroying the last chance that authorities had to definitively tie Herb to the I-70 murders with hard physical evidence. Why officials would have repeatedly sent the same obviously incompetent technician has never been explained.

Through witness statements and circumstantial evidence, however, Baumeister was ultimately tied to at least one of the I-70 victims. No one, needless to say, ever stood trial for the unsolved I-70 killings, or for the mass murder that occurred at Fox Hollow Farm. Herb was posthumously declared solely responsible for the deaths of the four victims whose remains could be identified. All were local gay men who had been reported missing. They were just four of at least ten local men who had been reported missing after frequenting area gay bars over the previous three years. The police, and the local press, had consistently ignored and/or downplayed the disappearances.

The Herb Baumeister story would not be complete without the mention of a colorful character named Virgil Vandagriff, who played a prominent role in the Baumeister investigation. Vandagriff was a former sheriff turned private investigator. In the mid-1970s, he had been sent to the LAPD academy for hypnosis training. His father reportedly 'dabbled' in hypnosis as well. In 1977, not long after receiving that special training, Vandagriff worked on the case of Brett Kimberlin, the so-called Speedway Bomber. The very same Brett Kimberlin resurfaced in 1988, claiming that he had been vice-presidential nominee Dan Quayle's college drug supplier. Kimberlin was promptly put into solitary confinement and cut off from press access.

Vandagriff was hired by the families of two of the missing victims, both of whom felt that the police were doing next to nothing to find their sons. In August 1994, the aforementioned witness who survived a visit to Herb's house first talked to Vandagriff. He described Fox Hollow Farm and the strange man who had taken him there. One of Vandagriff's associates reportedly located Fox Hollow

based on the man's description. For unexplained reasons, the associate obtained aerial photographs of the property that he presented to the witness for identification. The witness, who of course had never seen the ranch from the air, was unable to ID the property from the photographs. As a result, there was a considerable delay in identifying Herb Baumeister as the prime suspect. Why Vandagriff's investigator did not present the witness with surveillance photos of the property from the perspective that he had actually viewed it is another of the lingering mysteries surrounding the Baumeister case.

In November 1997, Vandagriff's secretary, Connie Pierce, who had worked closely with the witness in the Baumeister case, died suddenly at the age of forty-six. In the spring of that same year, bones were still being uncovered at Fox Hollow Farm.

Chapter 17

Patsies and Assassins

“It has always been my theory that for every person arrested and charged with multiple homicide there are probably a good five more out there.”

—Theodore Robert Bundy

In the dark and ugly netherworld where violent crime and covert operations collide, there appear to be two general categories into which a large majority of those we label ‘serial killers’ can be sorted: controlled assassins, and controlled patsies. In this chapter, we will look at what could be described as ‘textbook cases’ of both of these recurring archetypes.

We begin with the case of the man whom the *New York Times* referred to in December 2001 as “the first of America’s modern serial killers”: Albert Henry DeSalvo, otherwise known as the Boston Strangler. Nearly forty years after the infamous murders, and almost thirty after the purported killer was permanently silenced, it is now being acknowledged by some in the law enforcement community that DeSalvo was innocent. What is not acknowledged, even today, is that DeSalvo was deliberately framed to take the fall for the crimes. The story generally put forth by those who acknowledge DeSalvo’s innocence is that he willingly confessed to crimes that he did not commit in the belief that he could make a good deal of money from his notoriety. The facts of the case, however, suggest otherwise.

At the other end of the spectrum are men like Arthur Shawcross, who began killing for the United States Army in 1968, the year after DeSalvo was convicted. It was nearly a quarter-century later before Shawcross was first convicted of homicide. There is little question that he was guilty of a number of violent crimes, first in the late 1960s, then again in the early 1970s, and yet again in the late 1980s. There is some question though as to whether Arthur was acting alone during his various murder sprees.

The third alleged serial killer profiled here is Danny Rolling, a man whose story has parallels to both Shawcross and DeSalvo.

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Albert Henry DeSalvo, the purported Boston Strangler, ranks as one of the most infamous of all the serial killers, despite the inconvenient fact that, in the four decades since the notorious murders were committed, no one has been able to produce a shred of evidence indicating that DeSalvo ever killed anyone. The task of manufacturing a case against DeSalvo was largely led by a legendary attorney by the name of F. Lee Bailey,³⁴ who received a considerable amount of help from a cast of characters whose surnames should be familiar to any serious student of U.S. politics—names like McNamara, Donovan, Mellon, Moynihan and Bryan.

Frank DeSalvo, Albert's father, regularly beat his wife and kids with his fists, as well as with belts and a pipe. He once reportedly pulled a gun on his wife. Another time he reportedly broke her fingers one-by-one as her young son watched in horror. Frank was also fond of bringing prostitutes home and having his way with them in front of his children. On one rather noteworthy occasion, he actually sold his kids as slaves to a farmer in Maine. Though the details of that transaction remain murky, family friends and social workers have confirmed that the incident did occur. The boys' mother spent nearly six months searching for her sons.

Albert was first arrested in 1943, at the age of thirteen, for assault and battery with intent to commit robbery. He was sentenced to a reformatory, but his sentence was suspended. Later that same year he was again arrested on the same charge and again convicted. That time his sentence was enforced. He was paroled from the reformatory on October 26, 1944. Two years later, he wound up back again for making unlawful use of a car. Early in 1947, he was again paroled.

In September 1948, Albert was inducted into the U.S. Army. He was just seventeen years old and on parole, but Uncle Sam did not seem to mind. DeSalvo first served from September 16, 1948 to June 25, 1951, when he was honorably discharged. Strangely though, he re-enlisted the very next day and served from

34 A minor role was also played by San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli, with whom Bailey consulted on the case. It was not too many years later that Belli played his notorious role in the Zodiac case. He later became involved in the McMartin case, and then later conferred with Richard "The Night Stalker" Ramirez and considered representing him.

June 26, 1951 to February 15, 1956, when he was again honorably discharged. Much of that seven-and-a-half-year stretch was served in West Germany, where Gary Heidnik was subjected to MK-ULTRA experimentation not too many years later, and where Jeffrey Dahmer later served as well. While in Germany, Albert reportedly mastered the art of hand-to-hand combat and became a boxing champion.

On January 5, 1955, while still in the military, DeSalvo was arrested in New Jersey on suspicion of carnally abusing a nine-year-old girl. The case was never prosecuted. In March, he was arrested again, for loitering. For that offense, he was fined. Two years later, in the spring of 1957, Albert spent two months in a VA hospital, where he reportedly was treated for an unspecified problem with his left shoulder. In the early months of 1958, he was arrested repeatedly for the crime of breaking and entering. The first arrest was on January 8, the second on February 15, and the third on April 18. He was convicted all three times, and each time he received a suspended sentence.

Three years later, on March 17, 1961, DeSalvo was again arrested for breaking and entering. Once in custody, he reportedly began spontaneously confessing to a wave of notorious sexual assaults that had been dubbed the “Measuring Man” attacks. He was promptly sent to Westborough State Hospital for a psychiatric examination. On May 3, he went to trial on multiple counts of breaking and entering and assault and battery. He was convicted of the charges, but in a rather remarkable turn of events, the judge opted to sentence him to just two years for each offense, with all of the sentences to be served *concurrently*. Even more remarkably, that same judge later reduced the already bizarrely lenient sentence and in April 1962, Albert was released after serving less than one year for his multiple convictions. Two months later, a fifty-six-year-old Latvian immigrant named Anna Slesers became the first victim of the Boston Strangler.

Anna was strangled with her housecoat cord and had a gaping laceration to the back of her head. She had been sexually assaulted with an unidentified object and her apartment had been searched. As would be the case with all the murder scenes, there was no sign of forced entry, indicating that the killer(s) may very well have been known to the victims. Nina Nichols, age sixty-eight, was the second victim. Nichols was strangled with two nylon stockings. Helen Blake, sixty-five, was likewise strangled with two stockings on the very same day. Both women had dried blood in their ears and both suffered genital lacerations from a sexual assault.

Just a week-and-a-half later, on July 11, 1962, Margaret Davis was found dead in a hotel room. She had been manually strangled. Other than the victim's age, sixty, there was no indication that her death was connected to the deaths of the other women. Margaret had checked into the hotel with an unidentified man.

The couple had registered as Mr. and Mrs. Byron Spinney. Davis was also known to use the names Ethyl Johnson, Anne Cunningham, Winnie Hughes, and Tobey. Exactly what her business was with her male escort is largely a matter of speculation, but there is little doubt that that is what got her killed.

After a brief lull, the killings resumed on August 19. The victim was Ida Irga, who was strangled both manually and with a pillowcase. Like the earlier victims, Irga had genital injuries, but unlike the others, the seventy-five-year-old woman was left posed, her splayed legs facing the front door. Just two days later, Jane Sullivan was strangled and left partially submerged in her bathtub. She had two stockings around her neck and matted blood on her scalp. The sixty-seven-year-old was found on her knees with her posterior jutting out of the tub.

The next victim, Modeste Freeman, was found on October 13. She hardly fit the victim profile that had been previously established: Freeman was just thirty-seven and was the first black victim. She was both strangled and brutally bludgeoned, her head reduced to a bloody pulp. She was also the first victim found outdoors, in a yard. She had a wooden stick protruding from her vagina and an alarmingly high blood-alcohol level. Her body was nude when it was discovered. On December 5, the killer claimed his next victim—another black girl, this one just twenty years old. She was found with a stocking and a half-slip around her neck. There was no sign of genital injuries, but there was a semen stain on the rug. It was left by someone other than Albert DeSalvo.

By that time, the city of Boston was in a full-scale panic. The killings of the young black victims sent a clear signal that all women, regardless of age or ethnicity, were fair game. The demand for dogs, locks and guns skyrocketed.

Patricia Bisette was the next victim claimed by the Strangler, on December 31, 1962. Like the previous two victims, Bisette was young—just twenty-three—but like the earlier victims, she was white. She had a blouse and three stockings tied around her neck, and her bedcovers were discretely pulled up to her chin. She had had intercourse and showed signs of injury to her rectum. She was also carrying a one-month-old fetus. On March 6, 1963, Mary Brown became the next Strangler victim. Like the first batch of victims, Brown was in her sixties. Unlike the others, her death was attributed to bludgeoning, though she was also strangled and stabbed. She was found with degenerated sperm in her vagina and a kitchen utensil buried up to the handle in her left breast.

The next victim, killed on May 8, was stabbed seventeen times in and around her left breast in what was described as a ritual pattern. Beverly Samans was also slashed four times about her neck, around which a scarf and two nylon stockings were tied, though it was the knife wounds that killed her. There was no evidence of rape or sexual assault. After a four-month break, the purported Strangler struck again. The victim was Evelyn Corbin, whose age was listed as either fifty-one or

fifty-eight. She had two stockings around her neck and one around her left ankle. There was blood on the scene, including in both of the victim's ears. Semen was found in her mouth, and traces of dried semen were found elsewhere.

Two-and-a-half months later, twenty-three-year-old Joanne Graff was strangled with a leotard leg and two stockings. She had been raped and her vagina was lacerated and bloody. The final victim was Mary Sullivan, the youngest at just nineteen. She was killed on January 4, 1964. Her death scene was the most gruesome of them all. She had two scarves and a stocking around her neck and a broom handle protruding from her vagina. Her breasts had been mauled. She was posed in a sitting position on her bed with fresh semen dripping from her mouth. A macabre greeting card was propped up by her foot.

There were no further murders attributed to the Boston Strangler, even though Albert DeSalvo remained free for ten months after the death of Sullivan.

Two weeks after the discovery of Sullivan's body, Massachusetts Attorney General Edward Brooke took over the investigation of all fourteen murders, which had been being handled by five different city police departments and three district attorney's offices. Brooke assembled a task force and assigned Assistant Attorney General John Bottomly to lead it, even though Bottomly had no experience whatsoever with criminal law. Considering that the Strangler case was arguably the most high-profile criminal case in the state's history, it was a very unusual assignment.

Bottomly had been involved in 'telepathic' experiments conducted at NASA. Such experiments, it should be noted, were and are one of many covers used to veil various aspects of the intelligence community's MK-ULTRA program. Bottomly's mother was said to be fascinated with ESP. At one point in the investigation, the task force leader brought in famed 'psychic' Peter Hurkos, who a few years later helped Roman Polanski 'investigate' the Tate murders. Hurkos identified a suspect who had, it was claimed, already been considered by the task force. The suspect subsequently voluntarily (according to reports) committed himself to a mental hospital and was quickly forgotten. According to some reports, he later surfaced at Bridgewater State Hospital.

Among those working under Bottomly were a medical/psychiatric committee and Special Officer James Mellon of the Boston Police Department. Also deeply involved in the investigation was the Boston Police Department's new Commissioner, Edmund McNamara, who had formerly worked for the FBI. John Donovan, the former chief of the BPD's homicide squad, was the top detective on the case. Seven months into the investigation, Brooke's office wrote up a progress report that stated: "At an early stage of the coordinated deliberations it was concluded that certain homicides bore little relationship to the so-called

‘stranglings’ or to each other.” That rather self-evident fact was later swept under the rug.

In the fall of 1964, Albert DeSalvo was arrested and charged with various crimes that he allegedly committed during a series of sexual assaults in the state of Connecticut. Those crimes, dubbed the “Green Man” assaults, had been perpetrated during the ten-month period following the death of Mary Sullivan. We are to believe then that DeSalvo, having successfully committed fourteen murders, decided to stop killing and instead cross state lines to commit sexual assaults.

Albert was arraigned on November 3, 1964 for the Green Man attacks. He was not, at that time, among the more than 300 Strangler suspects listed by the task force. There was no evidence of any kind that suggested that he was involved in any way with the brutal killings. Three days after his arraignment, he was sent to Bridgewater State Hospital, where he remained until December 10, when he was sent back to jail. On January 14, 1965, DeSalvo was again sent to Bridgewater. Four days later, he was joined there by a man named George Nassar, who had been arrested for a murder committed on September 29, 1964. The victim had been shot six times at close range and then stabbed in the back. The getaway car used in the crime had reportedly been stolen from near prestigious MIT in Cambridge, and later abandoned adjacent to the exclusive Phillip’s Academy in Andover. The vehicle was registered to an unidentified Navy lieutenant, as were the two handguns found under the front seat.

Nassar had previously served sixteen years of a life sentence he received for an earlier murder conviction. He had been paroled in 1961. Following his release, he reportedly worked as a reporter and a hospital attendant, and also taught Sunday school and occasionally was allowed to take over the pulpit to deliver sermons. In his free time, he reportedly participated in between seventeen and thirty contract murders during a period of gang warfare in Boston. Nassar is frequently described as a genius and a “master manipulator” who quickly took Albert under his wing at Bridgewater. So tight was his control over DeSalvo that Albert’s own family complained that they were unable to visit him without Nassar being present.

A committee was quickly formed to raise legal fees for Nassar. His innocence was loudly proclaimed by his supporters, including a minister and a local talk-radio host. As legal counsel, Nassar retained F. Lee Bailey, already a national figure at the age of thirty-one. The flamboyant attorney and former Marine pilot was known to carry a gun and enormous rolls of cash.

It was Nassar who purportedly first obtained a ‘confession’ from Albert DeSalvo. He then arranged for DeSalvo a meeting with Bailey, even though Lee was not DeSalvo’s attorney of record. That was only the first breach of legal ethics by Bailey. There would be many more.

Bailey promptly contacted John Donovan and obtained classified information on the case, purportedly to check the veracity of Albert's confessions, though it appears that the details of the murders were in fact fed to DeSalvo by Bailey and Nassar—with assistance from CIA-connected hypnotist William Jennings Bryan III,³⁵ who was brought onboard by Bailey on the spring equinox. Bryan's 'questions' to DeSalvo while under hypnosis were loaded with incriminating details of the crimes. The 'confessions' that resulted from this collaboration between Bailey, Nassar and Bryan, using information supplied by Donovan, were taped by Bailey and turned over to the police. They were, to put it bluntly, blatantly fraudulent.

Many of the crime-scene details recounted by Albert, who was said to have a photographic memory, were incorrect. No physical evidence corroborated his accounts and no witnesses could place Albert near any of the crime scenes or connect him to any of the killings. The problem was not that there were no witnesses available; there were in fact a number of them, but none who identified Albert as the man they had seen. At least three of the witnesses described the suspect as a light-skinned black man with combed-back hair. None of the composite sketches created from witness descriptions resembled DeSalvo. Any reasonably skilled interrogator, through a thorough questioning of the suspect, could have quickly revealed the 'confessions' for the shams that they were. No police, however, were ever allowed to question DeSalvo, who was kept under constant guard.

On April 8, 1966—just three weeks before Anton LaVey declared the dawn of the Age of Satan—Assistant Attorney General Bottomly abruptly resigned his

35 Bryan was later connected to two other rather notorious individuals. One of them was Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, the purported assassin of Robert F. Kennedy. Bryan was known to boast of having 'treated' Sirhan. Oddly enough, the name "Albert DeSalvo" is written repeatedly throughout Sirhan's diaries, in what appears to be a display of a hypnotic phenomenon known as "automatic writing." Researcher and author Jonathan Vankin quotes a former U.S. intelligence officer who tested Sirhan: "Everything in the PSE (Psychological Stress Evaluation) charts tells me that someone else was involved in the assassination—and that Sirhan was programmed through hypnosis to kill RFK." Like other players in this sordid cast, Sirhan had a keen interest in the occult; researchers have connected him to both the Rosicrucians (a 'secret society' claiming origins in ancient Egypt), and the ever-popular Process Church of the Final Judgment. Bryan was also linked to Candy Jones, the famous model who told her tale of being a mind-controlled courier (and possibly assassin as well) in *The Control of Candy Jones*. Not long after publication of the book, Bryan was tied to the Candy Jones case by journalists investigating her claims. He soon thereafter turned up dead in a Las Vegas hotel room.

post, taking with him the original confession tapes. He quickly went to work as an attorney for DeSalvo's ex-wife, and also contracted out his services to *Fox* as a consultant on the screen version of Gerold Frank's *The Boston Strangler*. Bailey had convinced DeSalvo to sign an agreement with Frank to pen the disinformational book, which declared Albert guilty of not only the stranglings but of some 2,000 rapes as well. Bailey served as a witness to the signing of the release, and Bottomly ordered his task force to cooperate fully with Frank. The book was an immediate bestseller. The widely read work, and the widely viewed film, reinforced in the public's mind the idea that the killings had been solved. Bailey, meanwhile, pocketed the advance money that was supposed to go to DeSalvo, prompting Albert to file complaints with the state bar association. Those complaints were consistently ignored. The money for the film rights likewise ended up in Bailey's pocket.

In mid-April 1966, Bailey and Brooke agreed to bring DeSalvo to trial to face the charges arising from the Green Man case. By that time, several members of the task force had left to work for Bailey—which amounted not to them having switched sides, but to them having taken a more active role in the railroading of the designated patsy. The key players decided not to bring Albert to trial for the stranglings, no doubt reasoning that the 'evidence' was so glaringly fraudulent that it would not withstand public scrutiny even in a carefully controlled trial. The public, however, was clamoring for resolution of the case. Luckily then, Bailey came up with a way to indirectly try Albert on the murder charges—by presenting what had to be the most preposterous and unethical defense in the history of American jurisprudence. As Bailey himself described his 'strategy': "I wanted the right to defend a man for robbery and assault by proving that he had committed thirteen murders."

In other words, rather than defending his client against the relatively minor charges that he was actually facing, Bailey opted to proclaim DeSalvo's guilt on those charges, but argued that he should be found innocent by reason of insanity *based on the fact that he had also committed thirteen murders!* Now *that's* a hell of a defense.

The trial commenced in January 1967 with Albert standing before Judge Cornelius Moynihan accused of rape, robbery, and the commission of unnatural acts. He had already been convicted by the media and the public of far more serious crimes. The first witness called by the state was a Bridgewater inmate who knew both Nassar and DeSalvo, and who, strangely enough, listed F. Lee Bailey as his attorney of record. As would be the case with all the prosecution witnesses, Bailey did not bother to cross-examine his own client. In fact, he made no effort whatsoever to rebut the charges DeSalvo was facing. Instead, he presented a ridiculously flimsy case for DeSalvo's guilt in the Strangler killings—a case that

would never have stood up to cross-examination. That was not really a concern, however, since when it is the defense attorney presenting the state's case, there isn't anyone to conduct a cross-examination.

Just days into the trial, a recess was called as a mysterious meeting took place between Bailey, prosecutor Donald Conn and Judge Moynihan. The purpose of that meeting has never been revealed.

Closing arguments, such as they were, were delivered on January 18, and the jury was then sent off to deliberate. They returned the same day. There was never any question about what the verdict would be. The jury was not sequestered for the trial, and media headlines, not to mention Hollywood's offerings, regularly proclaimed DeSalvo to be the Boston Strangler. The trial was routinely referred to as the "Strangler trial," despite the fact that Albert had never even been charged with those crimes. The book and movie, released *before* the trial even began, had ingrained the official story in the public's mind. The defendant's own attorney had openly and repeatedly proclaimed his client's guilt. The jury was well aware of what it was expected to do.

The end result was that DeSalvo was found guilty of robbery and assault by the jury, and guilty of murder in the court of public opinion—which is, by all appearances, exactly what was intended. Albert was given a life sentence, despite the fact that the charges he was convicted of would normally have earned him a maximum twenty-five-year sentence with the possibility of parole after ten. As for Nassar, he was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death, but the sentence was never carried out. He remains incarcerated to this day.

Just five weeks after his conviction, DeSalvo—perhaps the most feared and closely guarded inmate in America—managed to escape from Bridgewater. Another wave of panic and fear gripped the city. Albert, however, was quickly recaptured. His two brothers were implicated in the escape and indicted on charges of aiding and abetting, but they never went to trial for their alleged crimes. On January 4 of the following year, Albert's appeal of his conviction, for which there was more than adequate grounds, was quickly denied.

In 1973, Albert DeSalvo was stabbed sixteen times while in the infirmary of the maximum-security prison at Walpole, Massachusetts.³⁶ The previous evening

36 Two years later, in March 1975, another of F. Lee Bailey's former high-profile clients, Charles "The Pied Piper of Tucson" Schmid, was stabbed to death in prison as well. Schmid sustained some twenty wounds to the face and chest and died ten days later. He had been convicted of the murders of three young teenage girls, the first of whom was killed just five months after the Boston Strangler claimed his last victim. Charles Schmid stood just 5'4" tall and was somewhat odd in demeanor and appearance, but he was intelligent and charismatic and had an uncanny ability to attract both women

he had placed an urgent call to Dr. Ames Robey, a prison psychiatrist who had spent a considerable amount of time with the inmate. DeSalvo had told Robey that he wanted to meet with the doctor and a reporter early the next morning. Robey recalls what happened next:

He was going to tell us who the Boston Strangler really was, and what the whole thing was about. He had asked to be placed in the infirmary under special lockup about a week before. Something was going on within the prison, and I think he felt he had to talk quickly. There were people in the prison, including guards, that were not happy with him...Somebody had to leave an awful lot of doors open, which meant—because there were several guards one would have to go by—there had to be a fair number of people paid or asked to turn their backs or something. But somebody put a knife into Albert DeSalvo's heart sometime between evening check and the morning.

and devoted young followers, not unlike Charles Manson. Also like Manson, Schmid had a passion for singing and playing the guitar and he claimed to possess psychic powers. Several of his followers were complicit in either committing, or covering up, the three murders; two of those followers pled guilty to various charges and served prison time. The subtext of the Tucson murders included talk of a teenage drug and prostitution ring, the involvement of a shadowy group referred to as the "Tucson Mafia," and Schmid's quickie Mexican wedding to one of his fifteen-year-old admirers just a couple weeks before his arrest. At one bizarre juncture of the investigation, suspect Schmid was arrested for impersonating an FBI agent after he reportedly had been questioning people in San Diego, California. He was supposedly in San Diego working on behalf of the "Tucson Mafia"; strangely enough, he had contacted the FBI not long before leaving for California. Arrested in November 1965, Schmid first faced trial in February 1966. He was quickly convicted of two of the murders, although his trial was marked by the usual irregularities, one of which was that testimony concerning the third murder, which Schmid had not yet faced trial for, was allowed into evidence. In fact, the third murder was a key element of the state's case, with prosecutors arguing that the second and third victims were killed to cover up the murder of the first girl. It took the jury just two hours to return the guilty verdicts, which earned Schmid a death sentence. In June 1966, F. Lee Bailey made his entrance into the Schmid case, as "Smitty's" defense attorney for the second trial. Bailey, who had just finished obtaining De Salvo's 'confessions' and was awaiting trial on that case, was brought on board the Schmid case by writer John Gilmore, who was working on a

Richard DeSalvo had a similar recollection:

He was going to, at some point in time, when it was right, he was going to talk, and name names—heads were going to roll. He said real big, important people were going to, their heads were going to roll when he opens his mouth.

Richard DeSalvo, who spoke to his brother by telephone on the evening of his death, has also said that Albert may have been drugged that night. That would explain why he was unable to fend off his attackers, since he was otherwise quite proficient at the art of hand-to-hand combat. Three inmates were indicted and twice faced trial for the murder, which prosecutors rather preposterously portrayed as motivated by a desire to prevent DeSalvo from entering the prison drug trade. The first trial ended with a deadlocked jury and the second with a mistrial, after which the charges were dropped.

book on Schmid. Shortly after the second trial began, again with the usual irregularities, Bailey and his co-counsel convinced a reluctant Schmid to enter a guilty plea to the lesser charge of second-degree murder, thereby short-circuiting the trial. Schmid received a 50-year-to-life sentence. The following January, Bailey returned to Boston to deliver his craven performance in the Albert DeSalvo trial. Meanwhile, Charles Schmid wrote a letter to the judge asking for a new trial and accusing his attorneys of coercing him to take the plea deal. The judge agreed to hear the motion, but Schmid then inexplicably withdrew his request. In 1971, Schmid's death sentence was set aside when the state of Arizona temporarily abolished capital punishment. Schmid subsequently escaped, but, like De Salvo, he was quickly recaptured. John Gilmore, the son of an LAPD officer and a former child actor, went on to write a book about Charles Manson. Years later, he penned a book on the 1947 murder of Elizabeth Short, better known as the Black Dahlia. Gilmore's book appears to be little more than an effort to close the Dahlia case by pinning the notorious, unsolved crime on a very unlikely patsy. Playing the role of F. Lee Bailey, Gilmore—possibly acting in collusion with elements of the LAPD, including famed homicide detective “Jigsaw” John St. John—purportedly obtained ‘confession’ tapes from the alleged suspect. Those audiotapes, however, do not actually exist; all that Gilmore has ever produced is a photograph of three cassette tapes and transcripts that he likely penned himself. Before the alleged suspect, whose ‘confessions’ were entirely uncorroborated, could be picked up for questioning, he conveniently burned to death in a seedy Los Angeles hotel. The Black Dahlia case remains officially unsolved.

Following his death, a manuscript that Albert had been working on was conspicuously missing from his personal effects. A copy of the autopsy report was handed to the DeSalvo family by, of all people, George Nassar. And so ended the case of the Boston Strangler, except that questions surrounding the killings persist to this day, forty years after the last victim was killed. Even as these words are being written, surviving family members of both Albert DeSalvo and his last purported victim, Mary Sullivan, are clamoring for the investigation to be reopened.

Sullivan's body was exhumed in October 2000 and a forensics examination revealed that the condition of her corpse was not consistent with DeSalvo's confessed version of how she was killed. Her remains also yielded two DNA samples, one from a semen stain on her pubic hair. Neither of the samples were a match for Albert DeSalvo, whose body was exhumed in October 2001. George Washington University law professor James E. Starrs, who is leading the new forensics investigation, proclaimed: "We have evidence that is strongly indicative that Albert DeSalvo was not the rapist-murderer of Mary Sullivan." He promised a "blockbuster" report once the investigation has been completed.

There has never been a shortage of suspects in the case. Near the top of the list is George Nassar, considered by many in the law enforcement community to be a serial assassin. Nassar bore a striking resemblance to one of the composite sketches of the Strangler, and he was tentatively identified by some of the crime scene witnesses. Investigative author Susan Kelly has identified other suspects as well. She has also put forth a convincing argument that many of the murders were unrelated.

In the Sullivan case, police had two suspects before DeSalvo 'cleared' them by confessing to the murder. The more likely of the two was her former boyfriend, William Ivey. Police had built a strong case against him and he had failed two polygraph examinations. Nevertheless, Ivey was never prosecuted.

Patricia Bisette's death was probably also unconnected to the others. The prime suspect in her death was her boss, a defense contractor named Jules Rothman. Bisette, who had a flair for foreign languages, frequently traveled out-of-state with Rothman, with whom she was having an affair. It was likely Rothman's child that she was secretly carrying. It was also Rothman who discovered her body and spent time alone in her apartment with the corpse before police arrived. A photo album was missing from Bisette's apartment, as were numerous loose photographs and almost all of her personal correspondence, which she was known to save. Rothman was very close to being indicted when DeSalvo confessed.

Sophie Clark's killer was likely Albert Williams, the son of a Cambridge minister. Williams had received a medical discharge from the army and he was known

to suffer from blackouts. He had a long criminal record and was said to be a bisexual sadist. Like Ivey, he failed two polygraph examinations.

The more intriguing suspects identified by Kelly are three men who had connections to several of the killings. They were, perhaps, the real 'serial killers.' The three had been friends and classmates at Harvard. One was Bradley Waring Schereschewsky, the son of a controller at what Kelly refers to as a prestigious New England prep school—very likely Phillips Academy considering that the Schereschewsky family lived in Andover. Andover and Philips Academy were just a few miles from two of the death scenes. Bradley was first incarcerated on September 22, 1951, for the Oedipal crimes of savagely beating his father and attempting to rape his mother. Since 1959, he had been in and out of various mental hospitals. When not institutionalized, he reportedly worked as a gravedigger.

Friends with Schereschewsky was fellow suspect William Axel Lindahl, the son of a Boston cop. Lindahl's mother died when he was just an infant, and he was subsequently raised by his physically abusive father. At Harvard, he joined the naval ROTC, where he tried to strangle his drill instructor. He also tried to strangle his girlfriend. He later obtained a teaching job at Lake Forest Academy in Illinois, and he was said to be fluent in fourteen languages. In 1970, the wife of one of his Harvard friends, who had long suspected Lindahl of being the Strangler, turned up dead. Her husband was tried and convicted for her murder. That same year a reporter for the *Boston Globe*, who was another of Lindahl's college chums, was also accused of killing his wife.

The final member of the trio was Peter Howard Denton, the genius son of a doctor and a nurse. Denton won a congressional appointment to West Point and from there went on to Harvard. His first arrest came on April 19, 1961, when he and four other Harvard men were found to be in possession of high explosives. What he and his cronies were planning to do with the explosives on the eve of the *Fuhrer's* birthday is unknown. Three years later, Denton wound up in a place well known to Albert DeSalvo and George Nassar: Bridgewater State Hospital. Still later, he set up a drug lab and was reportedly a heavy drug user himself, with a particular fondness for hallucinogens. Violent murders seemed to follow Denton wherever he roamed; he lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan when a string of girls turned up dead there, and he was in Los Angeles during the reign of the Hillside Strangers.

It is extremely unlikely that the new official investigation will reveal the truth about the 'Boston Strangler.' Meanwhile, the state of Massachusetts recently refused to release evidence to a private investigative team, claiming that, forty years after the fact, the case was still considered an ongoing investigation.

Arthur Shawcross was a brutally efficient assassin who accumulated a career total of over fifty kills, although the first thirty-nine were not considered crimes. And yet they were murders that were every bit as barbaric as those committed by any of the other ‘serial killers’ discussed previously—complete with torture, mutilation, cannibalism and necrophilia. One female victim was decapitated and her head displayed on a stake. Shawcross then roasted and ate her thigh—all while another victim was forced to watch. The second victim was then beheaded, strung up by her feet and gutted like a slaughtered animal carcass.

How then could these actions not be considered crimes?

Simply put, it was because the victims were all Vietnamese nationals, and Arthur was just doing his job: terrorizing the Vietnamese people into acceding to U.S. demands. It was the same job that everyone else involved in the Phoenix Program was engaged in. Shawcross did not become a criminal until he brought home the skills taught to him by the U.S. military.

Arthur had a rather interesting history, one that likely made him an ideal candidate to serve as an assassin for Uncle Sam. He was born just before the end of World War II in a naval hospital to a naval officer father, who lived a rather shadowy existence, reportedly with a parallel life in Australia complete with another wife and son.³⁷ Young Art grew up in a multi-generational family whose members all lived within about 100 feet of each other at a place the locals called ‘Shawcross Corners.’ Incest and pedophilia apparently ran rampant within the Shawcross clan. Arthur has claimed that he was introduced to sex by his Aunt Tina, and that his younger sister “allowed him” to sodomize her at a very young age. He also engaged in sexual antics with his cousin and with a young boy and girl who lived down the road. At the age of ten, he also began regularly having sex with a male friend named Mike. Art and Mike were introduced to bestiality by some men who owned a local sheep farm. Sexual partners the pair encountered there included sheep, chickens, a cow, a dog and a horse.

Mike later killed his wife, his kids, and then himself.

Art’s mother occasionally raped her son with a broomstick, once causing severe internal injuries, as confirmed by hospital records. In addition to the sexual abuse, Arthur received frequent beatings with a belt and a broom handle. Little wonder then that Shawcross had a number of imaginary friends as a child and he was known to speak to himself in strange voices.

At the tender age of eight, Shawcross was alone in a room with the father of a friend when the man reportedly died of a heart attack. What he was doing alone in the room with the man at the time is unknown, but it is clear that Shawcross

37 Aviator Charles Lindbergh, who we will return to in the final chapter of this book, also lived a parallel life overseas, with a second family that remained a secret for decades.

had his first exposure to death while still quite young. By the age of ten or eleven, he was regularly running away from home. By fourteen, he was known to disappear for as long as four weeks at a time, venturing off alone to places unknown. At about that same point in his life, he was reportedly raped by an older man.

By the age of fifteen, Arthur was committing burglaries with his friend Mike. He was convicted and he received probation for one such offense in 1963. Two years later, he was again convicted of burglary and again given probation. Not long after that, Shawcross began his military service—service that would soon take him into the jungles of Vietnam and, by his own accounting, transform his life. But before he even left the States, Art reportedly went AWOL, a transgression for which he strangely suffered no repercussions.

Shawcross spent thirteen months in Southeast Asia as a weapons specialist, although his apparently falsified military records indicate that he served as a supply clerk. Sometime in 1968, he was sent to Hawaii for R&R; he later reported that he spent that time champing at the bit to get back to the jungles of Vietnam. After his return, he spent long periods of time alone in the bush, becoming—as he described himself—a “predator” and a “ghoul.” He claimed that he became quite adept at modifying weapons for special purposes. He became, he said, a silent assassin—or as he described it: “I was a ghost in the jungle...one bullet and no sound.” By the time he came home, he had recorded thirty-nine kills; many of his victims were women and children.

Upon his return from Vietnam, he suffered blindingly painful headaches and he was treated by an Army psychiatrist. He was stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he was assigned to train recruits and set up exhibits of weapons for military shows. Uncle Sam apparently thought quite highly of the man who once explained that if you roast human flesh until it is well done, you can then snack on it for several days before it goes bad. Years later, after Art had put his acquired skills to work at home on non-Vietnamese victims, police asked him how he was “able to kill these girls so easily...Where did you learn to do that?” Shawcross responded simply: “Ask Uncle Sam.” Asked where he had learned to butcher bodies so that they would decompose faster, he gave the same response.

Arthur experienced a bit of a surprise upon his return home from Vietnam when he was informed that he had married a woman named Linda Neary just before he had shipped out. He had no recollection of having done so. Nevertheless, Neary had received and spent all of his service paychecks. Shawcross later said that Neary’s family, which he claimed was into witchcraft, would not allow him to leave.

Not long after his return to the States, Shawcross burned down both a barn and Crowley’s Cheese Company. He then set yet another fire at a paper mill on April 24, 1969. In September of that year, he was tried, convicted and sentenced to serve

five years, but he was out in just two, after spending time at both Attica and Auburn prisons. After his release, Art remarried and worked for the Watertown Public Works Department—public works jobs being a popular pastime with many serial killers. He was apparently very popular with the local kids, many of whom he knew. One of those local kids was Jack Blake, a ten-year-old boy who visited with Shawcross frequently and enjoyed fishing with the older man.

On June 4, 1972, Art raped, strangled, mutilated and cannibalized his young friend. He subsequently returned on several occasions to rape the boy's rotting corpse. Three months after Jack's disappearance, Shawcross similarly assaulted and killed an eight-year-old girl. He had been reported previously for wrestling neighborhood boys to the ground and stuffing grass into their pants and mouths. For that he had been fined ten dollars by the parole board. He was also reported by Jack's mother, Mary Blake, who told police of threats made against another boy. Nevertheless, it took authorities a good while to connect the disappearances of the two kids to Arthur Shawcross. Once caught, he was charged only with the murder of the girl. Despite the fact that he confessed to killing the boy as well, and led investigators to the body, he was never charged with any crimes in connection with the death of Jack Blake.

He was also never charged with the rape, torture, mutilation, or cannibalization of either victim. Offered an outrageously lenient plea-bargain deal, Shawcross pled guilty to one count of manslaughter and received a twenty-five-year sentence; he served just fifteen before being released to kill again. This was just another example of how the law enforcement and judicial communities frequently take actions that seem designed specifically to keep America's real killers on the streets—while simultaneously meting out draconian sentences to obvious patsies. If that is not the case, then how else are we to explain the incongruously lenient treatment afforded certain killers, particularly in a nation with what is arguably the harshest criminal justice system in the 'civilized' world?

Arthur was hardly a model prisoner for the first eight years of his incarceration. He was repeatedly disciplined for such infractions as fighting, possession of contraband, and setting fires. He was also questioned about the deaths of three of his fellow inmates. For the last seven years, however, Shawcross did reportedly become a model prisoner. He was even given a job counseling mental patients, even though he himself was being 'treated' by several prison psychiatrists and he complained frequently of hearing voices in his head.

In March 1987, Art was set free. After being chased out of four local communities, the probation department decided to 'hide' him in Rochester, the hometown of Hillside Strangler Kenneth Bianchi. Shawcross was purportedly closely monitored and he had very strict conditions placed upon his parole: absolutely no contact with children, no drinking, no consorting with prostitutes, no guns,

and an 11:00PM to 7:00AM curfew. Nevertheless, Art was well known in the part of town where the community's prostitutes plied their trade. He was rumored to be selling drugs to the working girls, as well as to teenage runaways. On March 25, 1988, he was ticketed for driving without a license and for having two unrestrained children in the car—children that he was not supposed to be anywhere near. He was not charged with a parole violation.

The kids were the grandchildren of Clara Neal, one of many women with whom Art was having affairs. Shawcross was also friends with Clara's son Donnie (his hunting partner), and he occasionally spent time with her daughter Loretta. Arthur's paramours also included several of his victims. When Art was not servicing and/or killing one of his female acquaintances, he could frequently be found hanging out at the local doughnut shop chatting with the city's police officers.

The first victims of the serial killer variously referred to as the 'Rochester Nightstalker,' the 'Rochester Strangler,' or the 'Genesee River Killer,' were found in the summer and early fall of 1989. At the time, Arthur was officially under the supervision of the local parole board, mental health workers, and social workers. Most of the victims could be directly linked to Shawcross, a known sex offender and multiple murderer. As he later said: "I knew 'em all, and they knew me." Nevertheless, eleven women were killed before authorities got around to connecting the murders to Arthur Shawcross.

One of the victims was Dorothy Keller, one of Art's on-and-off girlfriends who also knew his wife, Rose Shawcross. Prior to her death, Keller was an occasional visitor to the Shawcross apartment. Patty Ives was another victim who was quite well known to her killer, as was June Stotts, a 'mildly retarded' friend of the Shawcross family who was a frequent visitor to their home and who was regularly seen with Art at a local eatery. After her death, she was cut open from her neck to her anus, gutted, cannibalized and sexually violated.

None of Art's victims appeared to have put up a struggle; no defensive wounds were present on any of the bodies and there were no signs that the victims had been physically restrained. Police reportedly marveled over the killer's ability to completely control both the victims and the crime scenes. Some investigators speculated that a stun gun might have been used to disable the women.

Law enforcement officials initially assumed that two or three separate killers were at work simultaneously. The manner in which the women were killed varied, not surprisingly, and included beheading, strangulation, bludgeoning, and suffocation/drowning. One victim, Lisa Gibson, was found in another county, many miles away from where the other bodies were deposited. Some of the corpses that were found during Art's reign were of black prostitutes. One of them, Felicia Stephens, was found in the same park where two of Art's admitted victims surfaced. Shawcross, however, declined to take credit for the murders of the black victims.

In January 1990, Art was captured and he proceeded to give his captors a full confession—after being interrogated without an attorney. Little evidence other than his confession directly linked Shawcross to the killings; the crime scenes had been left remarkably free of any incriminating evidence. Arthur Shawcross had apparently been very well trained. He went to trial in 1991, with his defense counsel claiming insanity. He was said to be suffering from Multiple Personality Disorder. Under hypnosis, he reportedly spoke as a 13th century cannibal named Ariemes, an eleven-year-old boy, and his own mother.

Dr. Dorothy Otnow Lewis concluded that Shawcross had been “severely” sexually abused and had, therefore, “developed a dissociative style of coping with his intolerable situation.” She added: “this kind of phenomenon is characteristic of severely abused children who eventually dissociate to the point of becoming multiple personalities.” Dr. Park Elliot Dietz of the FBI’s BSU, called as a psychiatric witness for the prosecution, disputed the MPD claims. That is the sort of thing that Dietz makes a career of doing. He can be seen with appalling frequency on the television screen speaking as an ‘expert’ on serial killer cases.

The jury rejected the insanity defense and the claims of a dissociative disorder and convicted Shawcross of ten counts of murder, largely on the strength of his illegally obtained confession. He was sentenced to ten consecutive twenty-five-year sentences. There is little question though that Art did indeed have a serious dissociative disorder. He suffered from blackouts all of his life. He reportedly had a strong tendency to “space out,” to such an extent that he sometimes had to be physically shaken to get a response. He also was known to frequently wander off and then find himself in an unknown place with no awareness of how he had gotten there.

Author Joel Norris has written that Shawcross once described the killings to him as occurring in “a kind of dream state in which another person inside of him was reacting in his place.” During those times, the killer was able to completely shut out the world around him, to such an extent that, as Art recalled, he “didn’t hear anything around me...I couldn’t figure that out...Other times in my life I have had the feeling of leaving my body.” What remained in that body was a highly efficient, emotionless, programmed assassin—one of Uncle Sam’s finest.

There is little question that Arthur Shawcross committed numerous murders in his life. But where does the real guilt for his crimes lie? With Shawcross, or with those who deliberately and systematically trained him to be a remorseless killer?

Daniel Rolling was raised by his mother, Claudia Beatrice Rolling, and his physically abusive father, James Harold Rolling. James had served in the Korean War, from which he returned as a highly decorated hero. He has been described as an extremely controlling man with a violent temper. He reportedly tied his sons up frequently, and on one occasion locked then thirteen-year-old Danny up in a jail cell for two weeks. He also derived a perverse pleasure from trapping neighborhood cats, shooting them, and then watching them die.

The Rolling family had a long history of mental illness, violence and suicide. Danny's great-grandfather had slit his wife's throat from ear to ear, killing her in full view of Danny's father. The family also had a history of working in law enforcement. Danny's grandfather had worked for the County Sheriff's Office, and his father joined the local force in Shreveport, Louisiana and quickly made lieutenant.

In June 1971, Danny became an airman in the U.S. Air Force. Like Albert DeSalvo, he was just seventeen at the time of his enlistment; his father signed for him. Two years later he found himself in a military prison, gaining a discharge after an Air Force psychiatrist determined that he had an antisocial personality disorder. By late 1973, he was back home in Shreveport where he regularly attended church, sang in the choir, and played his beloved guitar. Like so many other accused serial killers, Rolling viewed himself as an artist—in this case, a singer/songwriter/guitarist, not unlike Charlie Manson.

On September 6, 1974, Danny married. He was at the time working for the local Water Department. By 1977, Rolling's wife had filed for divorce. She later married a cop. Danny, meanwhile, embarked on a career in crime. In 1979, he was charged with two counts of armed robbery. Following his conviction on the charges, he was sentenced to a six-year prison term. Not long into his incarceration, Rolling managed to escape, but he was recaptured just hours later. For his efforts, he had an extra year tacked onto his sentence. In February 1980, he pled guilty to a charge of armed robbery in the state of Alabama, earning him a ten-year sentence in that state.

On June 7, 1982, Danny was released by the state of Louisiana after serving less than half his sentence. He immediately began serving time in Alabama for his conviction there. The very next month he escaped again, but he was recaptured after two days. Nevertheless, he was released after just two years, having served a total of just five years of his combined seventeen-year sentence. Upon his release, he headed west to California, for reasons unknown, and then drifted his way back east. In Mississippi he was charged with grand larceny and armed robbery and given a fifteen-year sentence, which he began serving on July 25, 1985. Rolling was regularly put into solitary confinement in a cold, damp, sewage-infested cell. Eventually he graduated up to being put on a chain gang. On July 29, 1988, after

serving just three years of his sentence, he was again released. Upon his return home, he immediately began attracting neighborhood kids, just as Shawcross had done upon his return from prison.

On May 17, 1990, James Harold Rolling opened fire with his service revolver on his son Danny. More than once he had told his wife that he wished the boy were dead. But it was not Danny that almost died that day; Rolling returned his father's fire, hitting the senior Rolling and knocking him down. Danny then shot him again, in the face, from close range. He then kicked his father's prone and nearly dead body. James though miraculously survived. Danny, meanwhile, fled to Sarasota, Florida, allegedly assuming the identity of a Vietnam veteran named Michael J. Kennedy who had died in 1975.

Danny/Michael left Sarasota suddenly on August 18 and headed for Gainesville, where he set up camp in a wooded area. Rolling's arrival in Gainesville coincided with *Money Magazine's* ranking of the city as the thirteenth safest place to live in the United States. It was about to be rocked by five brutal and seemingly senseless murders in the space of less than forty-eight hours.

Gainesville police officer Ray Berber discovered the first two bodies on August 26, 1990. He was the first officer on the scene and he spent time alone in the apartment of the two dead college students, who had been stabbed repeatedly, mutilated, and left posed as a macabre greeting for their discoverers. One of the girls was in her bed, the other on the floor of the apartment's living room. One had been raped. Both bodies had been washed with detergent to cleanse them of forensic evidence. It appeared as though the killer, or killers, had thoroughly searched the apartment. One body was left spread-eagle on the floor facing the front door, a gaping hole in her chest where her breasts had been removed. Some of the parts carved from the two girls had been taken by the killer(s). Evidence suggested that duct tape had been used as a restraint, but the tape had subsequently been removed. Most of the blood spilled by the victims had been wiped away.

In a remarkably short time, the crime scene was crawling with law enforcement personnel. Twenty or more officials were on the scene within minutes, including the Gainesville police chief and a state's attorney. Just nine hours later, a similar scene played out elsewhere in Gainesville. In a rather unlikely scenario, the first officer at that crime scene was officer Gail Berber, the wife of Ray Berber. The victim was Christa Hoyt, whom Gail had trained as a Sheriff's Explorer. Christa had subsequently gone to work full-time in the record's department of the Sheriff's Office. Her head had been cleanly severed and placed on a bookshelf facing the front door. Her headless corpse had been carefully posed. Her nipples had been removed and placed alongside of the body. Her breasts were then removed and wrapped-up to go, but the killer had apparently forgotten to take

them. Christa had been sliced open from her breastbone to her pubic bone with surgical precision, without any damage done to any of her internal organs. *A&E* noted, “the cuts were precise—ritualistic.” As with the first crime scene, there was evidence of rape and restraint with adhesive tape, and the body had been washed with soap and water. The home appeared to have been methodically searched.

The crime scene clearly suggested that multiple perpetrators were responsible for the brutal murder. A bookcase had been moved down the hall, past the bathroom and into the bedroom. Investigators doubted that one man alone could have moved the heavy and unwieldy unit. Another heavy bookcase had likewise been moved—to allow Christa’s head to be positioned for maximum effect. The body had been moved several hours after death, indicating that the killer(s) either remained at the scene for a considerable amount of time or returned to the scene for reasons unknown. It was later claimed that Danny Rolling returned to retrieve his wallet, although that claim begs the question of why a serial killer, and veteran criminal, would be carrying such an incriminating piece of evidence that could be inadvertently left behind.

Hoyt, who put up a fight against her killer(s), had spent a summer at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Entomology Lab. She aspired to be a chemist working in criminal forensics, and towards that end had joined the Sheriff’s Explorers in her senior year of high school. She was reportedly having an office romance with a deputy sheriff. She also had a fondness for the color black, with her car, most of her wardrobe, and the black roses on her birthday cake chosen accordingly. She had also, curiously, made mention of a “devil cult” living in the immediate vicinity.

A task force, which included no fewer than ten members of the FBI’s Behavioral Sciences Unit, was immediately assembled. The principal agent working the case for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement was J.O. Jackson, who had served in the same capacity on the case of the recently executed Ted Bundy. In addition to the FBI’s team of profilers, which included the ubiquitous John Douglas, and the FDLE agents, the task force included local police, state troopers, and U.S. Navy reservists. The show of force by the police was unprecedented and a highly militarized atmosphere soon enveloped the college town, with various law enforcement agencies conducting coordinated paramilitary maneuvers.

It looked very much like a dress rehearsal for a declaration of martial law.³⁸

38 Eleven years later, immediately *before* the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Florida Governor Jeb Bush signed legislation that paved the way for a declaration of martial law.

The day after Christa Hoyt's body was found, two more victims were discovered. One of them was a 6'3" tall, 200+ pound, powerfully built college athlete who had struggled valiantly with his attacker(s), suffering thirty-one stab wounds to his chest, face, arms, hands, and legs, many of them defensive wounds. Though it was ultimately claimed that Danny Rolling, acting alone, killed Manny Toboada, the truth is that he did not appear to be physically up to the task. Toboada's roommate, Tracey Paules, was killed along with Manny, raising further doubts that a single killer was responsible. Paules had been raped anally and left on display. There was semen present and five pubic hairs were found.

There were marked differences between the Toboada/Paules crime scene and the two previous ones. Blood was splattered everywhere about the home the two students shared. No attempt had been made to clean up the bodies or the crime scene. Though the two victims had died exceedingly violent deaths, there were no gratuitous mutilations to the bodies.

A maintenance man discovered the victims when he opened the door to what he thought was a burglarized apartment and peered in. He reported seeing a dark-colored bag on the floor near Tracey's head. He immediately turned around, locked the door and left to await the arrival of police. When he returned with the officers, he found that the door was unlocked and the bag was missing.

Following the discovery of the last two bodies, the rash of killings ended just as suddenly and just as mysteriously as it had begun.

On the same day that Manny and Tracey were found dead, a known drug dealer named Tony Danzy and a man alleged to be Danny Rolling were seen lurking in the woods. Though Rolling avoided capture, various items from the pair's campsite were seized as evidence, including a cassette recorder and cash that was said to be linked to a bank robbery from the previous day. From this we can surmise that in the midst of his two-day killing frenzy Rolling took a short break to rob a bank with a sidekick, who, of course, had nothing to do with the murders.

Two days after the last victims were discovered, a man named Edward Lewis Humphrey had a violent altercation with his grandmother. Humphrey was one of three prime suspects in the case, and he remained a prime suspect throughout the next year, although he was never formally charged. Humphrey had made violent threats in the past, and he was known for displays of erratic behavior. He was aware of unreleased details of the crimes, including the nature of the wounds received by the victims. He also lived very close to the Toboada/Paules crime scene and his brother George knew victim Tracey Paules. Humphrey was the offspring of an alcoholic mother and an abusive father. He had in the past been diagnosed as manic-depressive and committed to a psychiatric facility. Ed's sister believed that it was while he was institutionalized that he began getting crazy thoughts in his head—such as that Satan was after him. Indeed, Ed thought that

Satan was everywhere. He also developed a sudden interest in knives and militaristic behavior. Friends reported that he frequently put on Army fatigues and ventured off into the woods saying that he was going out on “recon.” Neighbors had seen him returning from the woods late at night carrying a hunting knife. Ed also claimed to be the middleman for a high-volume drug dealer—this despite the fact that he lived directly below a Gainesville police officer.

Following his arrest for the attack on his grandmother, Ed was taken to Regional Medical Center and questioned for more than twenty-four hours without an attorney present. Although he was a first-time offender charged only with aggravated assault, his bail was set at \$1 million. Following his conviction, he was sentenced to serve twenty-two months at Chattahoochie State Hospital, which seemed to please his mother: “you should know this: many of Ed’s friends are bad boys and Ed is in a good place now...and if he commits suicide, well, that’s life.” Humphrey was suspected of being afflicted with Multiple Personality Disorder. He admitted to knowing about the killings, but he blamed them on alter identities that he said he had no control over. One of his fellow inmates, Stephen Michael Bates, claimed that he had participated in the murders with Humphrey and a third man. He also said that Humphrey was involved in “satanic stuff.”

The Gainesville campus was rife with talk of a satanic cult at work. Of the lead suspects other than Humphrey, one reportedly had satanic writings in his home (another, described as a “charmer with the ladies,” was suspected of a multiple stabbing murder in Ohio). Some of the items on the list of evidence sought by the task force—which included a black hood; photographs, audiotapes, or videotapes of the murders being performed; human flesh; severed nipples; and human blood—hinted at satanic involvement in the crimes.

On September 25, 1990, investigators announced that semen samples recovered from two of the crime scenes matched. A full year later, in September 1991, Rolling was convicted on robbery charges and sentenced to life in prison as an habitual offender. No one had yet been arrested or charged for the five murders. Danny had never been considered a suspect. Over the course of the next two months, Rolling was convicted on two separate counts of burglary. For the three convictions, he was sentenced to a total of three life terms plus an additional 170 years. And the state of Florida was not done with Danny Rolling.

While he was in custody, samples of Rolling’s blood and hair were surreptitiously gathered—the blood from a tooth extraction and the hair from a haircut. Prosecutors later returned with a warrant and gathered the very same samples from Danny, making no mention of the samples gathered previously. On November 1, a grand jury was convened to hear the purported case against Danny Rolling for the five grisly murders. Two weeks later, Rolling was indicted on murder charges. Following that, he reportedly made several suicide attempts,

which led to his being transferred to Chattahoochie State Hospital. Meanwhile, the officer who had served as the police spokesman on the murder cases moved on to the FBI Academy at Quantico.

At around that same time, Danny began a relationship with a rather notorious character named Sondra London, a serial killer groupie³⁹ and true-crime writer. London—who claims as friends such notables as prolific author Ann Rule and the Behavioral Sciences Unit’s resident ritual abuse denier, Kenneth Lanning—urged Danny to publicly take credit for the Gainesville murders. Rolling’s cell-mate, convicted murderer Bobby Lewis, also played a key role in that effort. Danny soon reportedly ‘confessed’ to the murders, but it was actually Lewis who did all the talking. Rolling’s role was to sit nearby in a nearly catatonic state and occasionally nod in agreement or mumble an affirmative response. The first such ‘confession’ was audiotaped and the second was videotaped. It is clear from both that Rolling was almost completely incapacitated. The killings were blamed on an alter-ego named “Gemini,” who acted alone. Danny claimed to have no control over the actions of his alter identities (which was probably true). The confessions were largely unverifiable, but in an attempt to verify some aspect of them, police investigators searched for the murder weapon based on information supplied by Rolling. They came up empty handed.

Rolling’s trial on the homicide charges was repeatedly postponed. First scheduled for September 1992, it did not begin until February 15, 1994. The jury was barely seated when its services were rendered unnecessary; Danny shocked the court and all involved in the case by entering guilty pleas to all the charges he was facing. The trial, therefore, immediately shifted to the penalty phase, with the jury reduced to an advisory role. Rolling claimed that he had entered the pleas in order to keep the details of the murders from being aired in open court. His intent was allegedly to allow Ms. London to publish his exclusive story, just as she had gotten Schaefer’s ‘serial killer fiction’ published by Feral House—the publishing house owned by Adam Parfrey that has exclusive rights to the copious writings of Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey.

Whether that was Rolling’s true intent remains an open question. If it was, then the plan failed miserably. Prosecutors proceeded to air their case, such as it was, regardless of the guilty pleas. And since guilt was no longer an issue, the case that was presented went almost completely unchallenged, with nary an objection to be heard from the defense team, despite that fact that the primary evidence

39 London had previously been romantically involved with Florida cop *cum* serial killer and child rapist, Gerard John Schaefer. Schaefer was found dead in his prison cell in 1995. Some have blamed our old friend Ottis Toole for his death.

was, at best, problematic. The state claimed, for instance, that a Stanley screwdriver found at the campsite was the tool used to gain access to the murder scenes. Pry marks found at the scenes purportedly matched the blade of that particular screwdriver, although it is difficult to conceive how the literally thousands of identical screwdrivers manufactured by Stanley could have been excluded. Another problem was that the screwdriver, even if it could be linked to the crimes, could not be linked to Rolling. There was no evidence that he had ever purchased or owned it. The state simply claimed that Danny had stolen the screwdriver, but there was no evidence to support that claim.

Prosecutors also claimed that Rolling had stolen duct tape and two pairs of athletic gloves that were allegedly found at the campsite, but there was also no evidence to support that contention. No physical evidence, such as fingerprints, tied any of the items to Danny. No murder weapon could be linked to the defendant, but that did not stop prosecutors from claiming, without documentation, that Danny had purchased a knife in Tallahassee using an assumed name. A pair of black pants that were allegedly recovered from the campsite, and that were allegedly stained with Manny Toboada's blood, were presented as evidence. Prosecutors did not bother though to explain how the bloodstains could be on the pants when it was known that Toboada's killer had thoroughly cleansed himself by taking a dip in the building's pool immediately after the murders.

Other evidence included: the bizarre, videotaped 'third party' confession; a clothing fiber purportedly found at one of the crime scenes; a note found at one scene that allegedly matched Rolling's handwriting; and a pubic hair from Christa Hoyt that was allegedly found at the campsite. It was never explained why all the alleged campsite evidence was not produced until a year after the investigation had begun. The state claimed that a "genetic blueprint" in blood and semen samples positively identified Rolling as the killer. Such a claim, however, would be somewhat more credible if investigators building the case against Danny had not clandestinely gathered biological samples from him—samples that could easily have been planted as evidence.

Another item purportedly found at the campsite was a cassette tape-recorder. Inside was a tape that Rolling had made for his family. That tape reportedly was not listened to until months after it was seized and booked into evidence. Danny had ended the tape with the following statement: "Well, I'm gonna sign off for a little bit. I got something I gotta do. I love ya. Bye." That rather innocuous comment was touted by the state, rather creatively, as irrefutable proof of the defendant's guilt. Though it hardly needs to be stated, most people at any given time have "something they gotta do." Very rarely does that involve committing mass murder.

In a scenario that precisely mirrored the circumstances of Ted Bundy's kidnapping trial, Danny Rolling's defense attorneys, the presiding judge, and the prosecutors had all been classmates together at the University of Florida law school. It is, indeed, a small world that serial killers inhabit.

Appearing before the court as a defense witness, Rolling's mother offered testimony concerning possible demonic possession and detailed the family's history of mental illness and institutionalization. Danny, who was frequently described as a "Jekyll and Hyde," claimed via his 'confessional' videotape that he suffered from multiple personalities. All the experts called to the stand, however, disputed that contention. After just five hours of deliberations, the jury returned with a recommendation that Rolling be given five death sentences. The judge opted to let a few weeks pass before formally imposing sentence on Danny—doing so, appropriately enough, on April 20, 1994. In the interim, Rolling's father was cited for battery of his terminally ill wife.

"Civilization, it's not of the lord, it's of the devil, brother... Old Lucifer, he was at me for a long time—knocking on the door to my mind."

—Danny Rolling, who, curiously, was missing
a portion of his left ring finger

Chapter 18

The Profiler and the Patsy

“After the use of the hypnotic drug I had the strange compulsion to take the blame for all the charges pressed against me. It must have been a post-hypnotic influence.”

—William Heirens

The FBI's Behavioral Sciences Unit, which gave the world the 'science' of 'criminal profiling,' first began taking shape around 1969, the year that the Manson Family first captured national headlines. The new unit did not really take off though until 1972, when the FBI Academy opened in Quantico, Virginia. Robert Ressler joined the BSU team in 1974 and, along with John Douglas, he became one of the most well known of the unit's profilers, and one of the most prolific of its chroniclers. At the time that he joined, the unit had no operational functions; it existed solely for the purpose of teaching the principles of profiling. Ressler was taught by the pioneers of the 'science': Howard Teeten and Pat Mullany.

In 1977, a pilot program was begun to study the rapid proliferation of what were soon to be dubbed "serial killers." The program included such notable members as Robert Ressler, John Douglas, Ann Burgess and Ralph D'Agostino. In 1978, Ressler spearheaded the operational unit of the BSU. At around that same time, he was credited with coining the now ubiquitous term "serial killer." During his fabled career, Ressler sat down to chat with a number of the high-profile criminals whose stories have been told in the pages of this book. He was among the first to interview Ted Bundy, and one of the last to talk to John Wayne Gacy. He held court with Charles Manson, Sirhan Sirhan, Richard Speck, Ed Kemper, Jeffrey Dahmer, and many others. He also served as the first Program Manager for VICAP, the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program that Ann Rule so tirelessly campaigned for.

Ressler once gave an interviewer the following capsule history of criminal profiling:

The original profilers pretty much emanated from the behavioral science work at Quantico, and it spread from law enforcement to the academic. By bringing in Dr. Park Dietz and others like him, we started spilling it over into the professional community, and where psychiatry had initially been at odds with the FBI approach, a lot of mental health professionals then got on board. Over the years, the forensic community has pretty much accepted what we were doing in behavioral science and absorbed it.

In other words, in the last 25–30 years the FBI has managed, despite initial resistance, to thoroughly co-opt the fields of law enforcement, academia, mental health, and the forensic sciences. In doing so, the FBI's profilers have successfully molded public opinion and firmly ingrained in the mind of the average American the concept of the 'serial killer.' This effort has been so successful that it has become all but impossible to question whether the contemporary view of violent crime is at all accurate.

In August 1990, Ressler ostensibly retired from government service, though he has spent his retirement years introducing VICAP to Japan, South Africa, Poland, and several other countries. Since his retirement, he has served as the director of an entity called Forensics Behavioral Services International. One of the primary goals of the enterprise, according to one of Ressler's associates, Dr. Christine Kokonos, is a complete and seamless merging of the fields of law enforcement and psychology.

Robert Ressler's bio reads as though it was lifted off the pages of a Hollywood screenplay. He grew up in Chicago—with a boy whose name may be familiar from a previous chapter: John Wayne Gacy. Bobby and John lived on the same street and were Boy Scouts together in the same scout troop. It was the classic story of two boys whose lives took radically divergent paths...at least by outward appearances. Ressler later returned to Chicago to assist in investigating the Gacy case, and still later helped to prepare the prosecution case against his childhood acquaintance.

Ressler claims that his first foray into gaining an understanding of the criminal mind came as a young boy, when he started his own private investigation firm. The agency was founded specifically to look into the case of William Heirens, who allegedly stalked the streets of Chicago long before Richard Speck, John

Wayne Gacy or Robin Gecht walked that beat. You could say that the Heirens case provided Ressler with his first opportunity to try his hand at ‘profiling.’

* * * * *

William Heirens was, according to the official narrative, the country’s first post-war serial killer. His alleged crimes were committed during a period in America’s history when crime rates were soaring all across the nation, particularly in the big cities. The year was 1945. World War II had just ended and tens of thousands of young men desensitized to extreme levels of human brutality were coming home.

The city of Chicago recorded 109 robberies, 265 burglaries, 109 stolen cars, four rapes, and eight murders in just the first ten days of December 1945. Those were staggeringly high numbers in those days. It is interesting then that three particular murders stunned not just the city of Chicago, but the entire country. The first of the three occurred in June 1945, just weeks after the United States had declared “Victory in Europe.” The last, and by far the grisliest, was in January 1946. All three were ultimately attributed to William Heirens, who was just sixteen years old at the time of the first murder.

Heirens was born in November 1928 to a mother and father who were known to have frequent violent arguments. Young Bill reportedly developed a habit of leaving the house by himself, so as to avoid the violent confrontations. Not surprisingly, he was often described as a loner. Heirens first ran afoul of the law at the age of thirteen, when he was found to be in possession of a loaded gun at school. Eight more weapons were found stashed in his home. As punishment, he was sent to the Catholic-run Gibault School in Terre Haute, Indiana. The year was 1942. Heirens had barely walked out the door of the institution when a new student arrived at the Gibault School: Charles Milles Manson.

Shortly after his release, Heirens managed to get himself arrested once again. That time he was sent to the Benedictine monk-run St. Bede’s Academy in Peru, Illinois. Following that, he was urged to take a test for admittance to a “special learning program” at the University of Chicago. He was reportedly an exceptionally gifted student. Soon he discovered girls, however, and his grades began to slip. That was when, purportedly, he decided to go on a killing spree. He also reportedly developed a fondness for dressing in women’s clothes and an interest in Hitler and the trappings of Nazism.

The first of the victims was Josephine Ross, a forty-three-year-old, thrice-divorced woman who was said to be on a quest for husband number four; she was known to visit psychics and fortune-tellers to assist in attaining that goal. Ross

was found sprawled on her bed in a room heavily splattered with blood. Her throat had been slashed multiple times and her bloodied head was wrapped in a dress. There was blood on the walls, the floor, the drapes and the furniture. Bloody water and clothes were left in the bathtub, where the body had been washed. No fingerprints could be found anywhere at the scene.

About four months later, on October 5, 1945, a prowler allegedly entered the apartment of an Army nurse. Surprised by the occupant, the intruder hit her and fled, leaving behind fingerprints and an eyewitness. The prints were allegedly later identified as belonging to William Heirens. Strangely though, the prints were not initially identified at all, despite the fact that Heirens' prints were on file with the police. Authorities never explained why the alleged 'serial killer' chose not to attack the victim.

Two months later, on December 10, a former U.S. Army WAV named Francis Brown was brutally shot and stabbed to death. Her nude body was found sprawled over her bathtub, her head wrapped in pajamas. There was a butcher knife buried in her neck and a bullet in her head. A blood trail led from the splattered bed to the bathroom. As in the Josephine Ross case, the home had been thoroughly searched, though nothing appeared to be missing. A bloody fingerprint was allegedly left behind on a doorjamb, but it was only belatedly 'discovered.' A man described as being 35–40 years of age was reportedly seen leaving the property. Heirens was less than half that age.

A local butcher named George Carraboni confessed to murdering Francis Brown, but police discounted his confession, claiming that Carraboni's story kept changing. Carraboni was at that time already under investigation in Cleveland for thirteen murders involving beheadings and mutilations.

On January 7, 1946, the six-year-old daughter of an official with the Office of Price Administration disappeared from an occupied home in a kidnapping/murder case that seemed to borrow heavily from the infamous Lindbergh kidnapping. There were two families living in the home from which Suzanne Degnan vanished, and yet no one living there reportedly saw or heard a thing. After she was reported missing, the house immediately filled with police. A note was found that no one had previously noticed, purportedly because it was mistaken for a discarded tissue. Outside the home, a seven-foot ladder was found that, naturally, was just tall enough to reach to the girl's bedroom window.

The alleged kidnapper demanded \$20,000 from the Degnan family for Suzanne's return, but no amount of ransom money was going to bring her back; she had already been skillfully chopped up (by a trained butcher, authorities initially suspected) and then scattered in the city's sewers.

Initially arrested for the murder was the sixty-five-year-old janitor of a nearby apartment building named Hector Verburgh. Police confidently announced to

the press that they had their man. They then spent the next two days tirelessly torturing their suspect—before quietly admitting that they had the wrong man. Verburgh was paid \$20,000 (a not insignificant amount of money in the 1940s) to settle his claim against the city.

Heirens was arrested on June 26, 1946, nearly six months after the last murder, on burglary charges. The arrest, which followed a botched break-in, was facilitated by an off-duty officer who just happened to be on-hand to smash a few large flowerpots over Heirens' head. Bill was not in custody long before his captors began accusing him of the murder of Suzanne Degnan. However, he was not initially accused of either the Ross or Brown homicides, which had no known connection to the Degnan kidnapping and murder. He was though accused of another homicide, which was also unrelated to the Degnan case. Police eventually realized that they were not going to be able to make that murder charge stick, since Heirens had been in school in Indiana at the time.

Shortly before Heirens had been arrested, a man named Richard Thomas confessed to the murder of Suzanne Degnan. Thomas had been in Chicago at the time of the Degnan slaying, working near the Degnan home. At the time of his confession, he was awaiting sentencing in Phoenix, Arizona for the crime of molesting one of his own children. He had previously been convicted of attempted extortion in a case involving a ransom note that threatened the kidnapping of a young girl. A handwriting expert in Phoenix determined that Thomas' writing was a close match for the writing on the Degnan ransom note.

Chicago police were duly dispatched to Phoenix to interview the suspect, but their mission was quickly preempted when Illinois State's Attorney William Tuohy publicly announced that William Heirens was the party responsible for the girl's death, even though no evidence existed at that time to support that charge and Heirens was steadfastly denying the allegations.

To elicit a confession from young William, who was not yet an adult, his captors subjected him to what can only be described as severe torture. He was beaten repeatedly for the first few days of his incarceration, and deprived of food, water and sleep. Then he was injected with sodium pentathol, a hypnotic 'truth' drug, and moved to solitary confinement. On his fifth day of custody, he was administered a spinal tap—an exceedingly painful surgical procedure for which there was no medical justification. He was given no anesthesia. Just fifteen minutes after the procedure was completed, he was yanked from his bed and taken, quite literally, for a rough ride on cobblestone roads. Then he was administered a lie-detector test. At no time during his ordeal was he allowed access to counsel.

Heirens, nevertheless, remained a remarkably uncooperative patsy. He ultimately took the fall only, as he later explained, because he had reason to fear for his life.

It was claimed that Heirens confessed to the crimes while under the influence of a hypnotic drug. He purportedly spoke of an alter-identity named George whom he blamed for the murders. In all the decades that have passed since the confession was allegedly obtained, however, no transcript of the interview has ever been produced. Prosecutor Tuohy initially claimed that the transcript was not yet ready for release, but he then later denied that an interview had ever been conducted with the aid of drugs. A number of witnesses recalled that Tuohy had personally attended that interview. One man who had attended, a Dr. Grinker, admitted in 1952 that, despite the allusions to an evil alter ego, Heirens never directly implicated himself in any crimes during the interview.

As for the lie-detector test, Tuohy claimed they it was “inconclusive.” The inventors of the particular test that was administered to Heirens, however, published their analysis of the results in a 1953 textbook: “[Heirens’] response on the card test clearly establishes him as an innocent person.”

A renowned handwriting expert by the name of George Schwartz was summoned to attempt to match Heirens’ handwriting to that on the ransom note and on a message that had been scrawled in lipstick at one of the crime scenes. Schwartz concluded that the “individual characteristics in the two writings do not compare in any respect.” Undeterred, the state brought in another expert: Herbert J. Walter, who had aided the state in manufacturing a case against Bruno Richard Hauptmann for the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby. Walter concluded that Heirens was the author of both the note and the lipstick message, contradicting the opinion that he himself had expressed before being brought onto the case. Many experts have subsequently rejected Walter’s conclusions.

At one point in the Heirens investigation, police enlisted the services of Frank San Hamel, a *Chicago Daily News* artist, to ‘enhance’ the writing on the ransom note. San Hamel claimed that he discovered what he dubbed “hidden indentation writing,” and that that purportedly hidden writing conclusively linked Heirens to the note. No one ever bothered to explain what ‘hidden indentation writing’ actually was or how it linked Heirens to the crime.

Fingerprint evidence allegedly irrefutably established Heirens’ guilt, but that evidence was dubious at best. A print supposedly recovered from the ransom note was reported to be a match for Heirens, but the print actually matched on only nine points while the FBI’s fingerprint manual specifically required twelve points for a positive identification. More troubling is that the print seems to have surfaced out of thin air. Chicago police initially announced that no prints were present on the note. Analysts at the FBI lab, however, uncovered two prints, but neither of them had been left by Heirens. It was not until years later that the print linking Heirens to the crime was allegedly found on the back of the note. To this day it remains a mystery exactly when that print was found, and by whom.

The fingerprint that was purportedly left prominently displayed at the Brown home was also announced to be a match for William Heirens, despite the fact that Police Captain Emmett Evans had previously announced that the print did not match Heirens' prints. More troubling was that the print had full left and right margins, which is possible only if the finger has been carefully rolled on the surface, as occurs when someone is being fingerprinted, but generally not when a print is inadvertently left at a crime scene.

No blood evidence was ever produced in the case. Nor was any hair or fiber evidence. And no witnesses, initially at least, could link Heirens to the victims or the crime scenes. George E. Subgrunski, a soldier on furlough, had witnessed a man leaving the Degnan residence. He had described the suspect as a 35-year-old man. He was unable to identify Heirens from photos, but he did manage to do so as a spectator in the courtroom. According to the Center for Wrongful Convictions, Subgrunski "proved to be a publicity-seeking fraud."

The state's case was, needless to say, far too shaky to present in a public trial. Prosecutors Tuohy and Wilbert Crowley met behind closed doors with Heirens' defense attorneys and offered their client a single life prison term in exchange for guilty pleas to all three counts of murder. No details of the deal were released to the press. The defense team did not bother to conduct any semblance of an independent investigation of the state's evidence before agreeing to the deal.

Heirens, however, was still resisting the state's efforts to extract a confession and guilty pleas. But then a most remarkable thing happened: a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* named George Wright drafted a completely bogus confession, which he attributed to anonymous "unimpeachable sources." The *Tribune* ran the fraudulent story on the front page of their July 16 edition, touting it as an actual confession from William Heirens. All of the newspaper's competitors promptly did likewise. Shortly after that, Heirens was compelled to author a confession, *using Wright's fabricated confession as a script*. In other words, he retroactively legitimized what had been an entirely fictional account of the crimes.

A date was then set for Heirens to publicly confess to his alleged crimes and enter his plea. There was a very large turnout for the much-anticipated event; public officials and the press came out in droves to see the show. But the star had not yet been sufficiently coerced to play his part in the charade and he pointedly refused to confess and enter a guilty plea. Both the state's attorneys and Heirens' own defense lawyers were livid. The prosecutors' offer was immediately revoked and a new one proffered: three life terms in exchange for the guilty pleas. A new date was set and September brought Heirens his second chance for a public confession. Mary Jane Blanchard, the daughter of victim Josephine Ross, was there for that second public spectacle. She told the press that she thought Heirens had been framed.

After an excruciating pause, Heirens reluctantly entered his guilty pleas. Audible sighs of relief could be heard from the bench and throughout the courtroom. He was duly sentenced to serve three life sentences. Nearly sixty years later, he is still serving those sentences, and he is still steadfastly proclaiming his innocence. He now has the rather dubious honor of being the longest-serving inmate in the history of the state of Illinois. He has never been given parole consideration, despite the fact that his attorneys told him that he would be afforded such consideration as part of the plea-bargain deal. During his lifetime behind bars, Heirens has distinguished himself by becoming the first inmate in the state's history to graduate college, and he has become an accomplished painter, a skilled tailor, and a talented jailhouse lawyer.

In April 2002, the UK's *Guardian* revealed that a "man who has spent 56 years in jail in what his lawyers describe as 'one of the grossest miscarriages of justice in the history of the US' could finally be freed." The report continued:

A new investigation into the case of the man known as the Lipstick Killer indicates that the evidence against him was fabricated by detectives...His case has been taken up by the Northwestern University Centre on Wrongful Convictions which has a high success rate in having suspect verdicts overturned...The new investigation indicates that neither the ransom note nor the lipstick confession were written by Heirens. A fingerprint found in Brown's apartment is alleged to have been placed there by police.

The investigation referred to in the *Guardian* article was conducted by a team led by Chicago attorney Jed Stone. Stone's team discovered that the entire case against Heirens was a product of outright fraudulence. Among the conclusions reached by the team, based on a thorough examination of the evidence, were all of the following:

- The 'hidden indentation' writing allegedly uncovered by *Chicago Daily News* artist Frank San Hamel was a fraud and a hoax.
- The handwriting on the Degnan ransom note was not Heirens. In fact, several independent experts say it was Richard Thomas's.
- The much-publicized lipstick message on the Brown wall was not in Heirens' writing and was not written by the same person who wrote the Degnan note.
- The purported Heirens fingerprint originally said to have been on the 'face' of the Degnan note later was said to have been on the back, and its existence is not confirmable.

- The so-called ‘bloody fingerprint’ found on a doorjamb in the Brown apartment appears to have been a ‘rolled’ fingerprint like those seen on fingerprint cards in police stations—and unlike those most often found at crime scenes.
- Analysis of the confessions revealed 29 inconsistencies between the confessions and the known facts of the crimes—a signature element in false confessions. Heirens was wrong about basic facts about the crimes, including locations, times, and related events.

And so it goes as, decades later, police, courts, attorneys and the media continue to work in lockstep to manufacture cases against designated patsies.

As for Ressler, he formally began his law enforcement career in 1962, when he served as an agent supervisor for the U.S. Army’s Criminal Investigations Division. He claims that he was first approached by the FBI, by a man who later became the assistant director at Quantico, while he was attending graduate school at Michigan State University. After spending nearly three decades of his life purportedly working to bring violent criminals to justice, one of his first actions after his retirement was to go to work on the Dahmer case—on the side of the defense.

Chapter 19

Conclusions

“It’s hard for me to believe that a human being could have done what I’ve done, but I know that I did it.”

—Jeffrey Dahmer

With the possible exception of school and workplace shootings, nothing better serves to facilitate the promotion of a ‘law-and-order’ agenda than the palpable fear aroused by the sociopathic killer—a fear that propels the population into an every-man-for-himself mentality. Anyone, after all, could be a serial killer, hiding behind a mask of civility: a co-worker, a friend, a neighbor...even a family member.

The Phoenix Program has been referenced a number of times in past chapters, and its relevance to this discussion cannot be overstated. Phoenix was, by design, a psychological warfare operation. Its goal was, quite literally, to scare the hell out of the Vietnamese people—to such an extent that their will would be broken and they would accede to the demands of their would-be oppressors. The techniques employed were barbaric. Victims of the program were not merely assassinated; they were frequently raped, tortured, mutilated, dismembered and left posed in grotesque displays for their fellow villagers and family members to find. The crime scenes of the Phoenix Program were, in other words, indistinguishable from the crime scenes of America’s serial killers.

In *What Uncle Sam Really Wants*, Noam Chomsky described the type of training given to U.S.-backed Salvadoran death squads, which were modeled after the Phoenix Program’s death squads (which in turn were modeled after the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* death squads active during World War II):

...draftees were made to kill dogs and vultures by biting their throats and twisting off their heads, and had to watch as soldiers tortured and killed suspected dissidents—tearing out their fingernails,

cutting off their heads, chopping their bodies to pieces and playing with the dismembered arms for fun.

Chomsky also quotes Jesuit Priest Daniel Santiago, who described the tragic results of such training:

People are not just killed by death squads in El Salvador—they are decapitated and then their heads are placed on pikes and used to dot the landscape. Men are not just disemboweled by the Salvadoran Treasury Police; their severed genitalia are stuffed into their mouths. Salvadoran women are not just raped by the National Guard; their wombs are cut from their bodies and used to cover their faces. It is not enough to kill children; they are dragged over barbed wire until their flesh falls from their bones, while parents are forced to watch.

Chomsky described one particularly macabre scene staged by the U.S.-trained Salvadoran National Guard. A peasant woman returned home to “find her three children, her mother and her sister sitting around a table, each with its own decapitated head placed carefully on the table in front of the body, the hands arranged on top ‘as if each body was stroking its own head.’” Finding it hard to keep the head of the woman’s youngest child in place, the assassins had taken the 18-month-old baby’s decapitated head and “nailed the hands onto it. A large plastic bowl filled with blood was tastefully displayed in the center of the table.”

The goals of psychological warfare are no different here at home than they were in Southeast Asia or Central America: to scare the people, in this case the American people, into willingly surrendering their rights and accepting ever-increasing levels of repression; and to desensitize the people to horrendous levels of interpersonal violence. The ultimate goal, and one that we are rapidly approaching, is the destruction of all social bonds and the obliteration of any remaining sense of community—the complete atomization of society.

Famed ‘conspiracy’ researcher Mae Brussell made a telling observation nearly three decades ago, in 1974: “What we are now experiencing is the importation of the dreaded ‘Operation Phoenix’ program into the United States...Through various created and manipulated acts of violence, the only ‘solution’ to ‘chaos, anarchy, and senseless violent acts’ will be a police state...We can expect the planned terrorization of the U.S. population to escalate rapidly.”

That terrorization has indeed escalated rapidly since the early 1970s. ‘Serial killers’ are now an accepted, and frequently glorified, part of American pop culture. They have spawned a number of successful Hollywood movie franchises and

their biographies crowd the shelves of America's bookstores. Sensational workplace shootings have become so cliché that the media now move effortlessly from one to the next. And the police state, needless to say, has advanced markedly in the last few decades.

Since we began this saga in the state of Texas, and since we have revisited that state repeatedly, it seems only fitting that we should end there as well, especially since the current laws of that state, which are by far the harshest of any in the country, are due directly to the state's use of a 'serial killer' to manipulate public opinion. The man's name was Kenneth McDuff, and his story begins on August 6, 1966, when he and an eighteen-year-old accomplice abducted and murdered three high school kids, one of whom was brutally raped and tortured. The triple murder was committed, strangely enough, just five days after Charles Whitman's rampage in nearby Austin, Texas. In November of that same year, McDuff was convicted and sentenced to die in the state's electric chair.

Over the next six years, McDuff won a few stays of his scheduled execution, and then had his death sentence commuted to a life term in 1972 when the Supreme Court called a halt to all judicial executions.⁴⁰ In 1987, legal action brought against the Texas prison system forced the state's courts to set limits on prison populations, to ease the outrageously overcrowded and grossly inhumane conditions. State authorities responded by seeking a massive infusion of funds to simply build more prisons. Those efforts were stymied by voters. As a result, the state was forced to grant early parole to a substantial number of inmates.

In a ridiculously unlikely scenario, one of those inmates was former "dead man walking" Kenneth McDuff, who walked away a free man on October 11, 1989. State officials apparently failed to notice the literally tens of thousands of nonviolent drug offenders who were clogging up the prison system when they claimed that they had run out of prisoners who could be offered parole.

McDuff returned to Rosebud, Texas, not far from Waco, where it did not take him long to become the most reviled man in the Lone Star State.

Just nine months after his release, he was arrested for pulling a knife and physically threatening a group of young black kids. That offense should have earned him a ticket back to prison for the remainder of his life sentence. Instead, the former death row inmate was released yet again just a few months later. Following his re-release, he repeatedly violated his parole by, among other things, consorting with prostitutes and buying, selling and using drugs. McDuff's parole officer

40 A number of the other killers profiled here were the beneficiaries of that Supreme Court decision as well. In California, those beneficiaries included Sirhan Sirhan, John Lindley Frazier, and Charlie and his girls.

inexplicably chose to let him operate without any meaningful supervision, even though the parolee was obviously someone who needed to be closely monitored.

In October 1991, McDuff, working with an accomplice, committed the first of a series of brutal torture murders of girls in the Waco/Austin area. The first two victims were prostitutes, both of whom were seen with McDuff by witnesses shortly before their disappearances. One of the victims was reportedly in his vehicle when he ran a police roadblock. Nevertheless, police opted not to burden McDuff with any serious questions about the girls' disappearances.

Unhindered by either the police or his parole officer, McDuff killed at least three more girls before he was apprehended in May 1992 following one of the largest manhunts in the state's history. He was brought to trial in February 1993 and once again convicted of capital crimes. The conviction was assured when McDuff opted to take the stand in his own defense, thus allowing his prior convictions and death sentence into evidence. For his efforts, he received a new death sentence (capital punishment had been reinstated in Texas just two years after its use was discontinued). The next year he received another.

Kenneth McDuff's luck had run out. Just after 6:00 PM on November 17, 1998, he became one of the 152 inmates executed during the tenure of Governor George W. Bush. By that time, the condemned man had been credited with permanently changing the Texas criminal justice system.

The public was understandably outraged that a condemned man had been set free to kill again. And they were encouraged to place the blame for that outrage on the well-intentioned prison reforms. In other words, the people of Texas had been sent a very clear message: any attempt to adopt humanitarian reforms in the Texas penal system will result in more Kenneth McDuffs being put back on the streets. That was the scenario that was successfully sold to the voting public. The result was an overhaul of the justice system that proved to be the most sweeping and reactionary in the state's history. To effect what was billed as 'The Texas Solution,' legislators rammed through a flurry of bills dubbed the 'McDuff Laws' that mandated tougher sentencing, exceedingly harsh parole guidelines, and an expenditure of an astounding \$2 billion for the construction of new prisons.

Those new prisons, along with the older ones, were soon bursting at the seams. The state of Texas is now the proud owner of what has been described as the largest prison system in the history of the free world. Texas incarcerates its citizens at double the rate of the rest of the nation, which is quite a startling statistic when one considers that the country as a whole has the second highest incarceration rate of any nation, and in absolute numbers, the United States has the world's largest prison population. Texas also hosts far more executions than any other state—nearly as many, in fact, as all the other states combined.

Such is the legacy of a 'serial killer.'

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The 'profile' of 'serial killers' that has been presented in this book is obviously one that is quite different from the one that has become a part of our collective conscience. Rather than the profile of a lone predator, driven by his own internal demons, we find instead a profile of controlled assassins and controlled patsies, conditioned and programmed by a variety of intelligence fronts, including military entities, psychiatric institutions, and satanic cults.

There is a very real possibility that an underground network of satanic cults has largely replaced the Mafia's "Murder Incorporated" as America's premier murder-for-hire organization. Researcher and author Michael Newton has drawn that conclusion; in *Raising Hell*, he charges that the 'Black Cross,' a faction of the Process-spawned Four-P cult, functions specifically as a "Satanic Murder, Inc."

Consider the case of Thomas Creech, a member of a nationwide biker gang that was heavily involved in drug trafficking and cult rituals. In 1975, Creech admitted to forty-two contract killings committed on behalf of the gang. Many of the murders had been performed, he said, as ritual human sacrifices. According to Creech's account, his forty-two 'hits' only qualified him for eighth place among the gang's contract killers. Consider also the case of Bernard Hunwick of Dade County, Florida. Following his arrest in 1981 for a series of murders, he confessed to police that he was the leader of a "hit squad" that had committed at least 100 additional contract killings.

Are these merely deranged men suffering from delusions of grandeur? Or are they men who have given anyone willing to listen to their stories a peek into a world that few dare to imagine exists in modern-day America? The question is a disturbing one, but one that nonetheless begs for an answer.

Although the serial killer stories told herein vary considerably from the accounts usually told about these men, the vast majority of the information presented herein was derived from mainstream media sources, including newspaper and magazine articles, television documentaries, books released by 'reputable' publishers, and 'true crime' web sites. The primary difference between this book and others in the genre is that the anomalous facts that invariably accompany the stories of serial killers have not been downplayed and explained away, but rather have been emphasized to illustrate that what are almost universally presented as trivial irregularities are, in fact, patterns that weave their way through the stories of America's most feared criminals. While it is relatively easy to ignore or dismiss

such oddities in the cases of individual serial killers, it is much more difficult to do so when those oddities form connecting threads.

The vast majority of serial killer chroniclers are, at best, misguided. Some are undoubtedly peddling deliberate disinformation. Some writers, like some law enforcement officials, seem to have devoted their entire careers to misrepresenting the true nature of serial murder, mass murder, assassination, and other high-profile crimes.

Seeming to fit that profile is author Gerald Posner, who recently penned a grossly disinformational piece on the Boston Strangler case for *Talk* magazine. Posner's article came directly on the heels of a joint press conference held by the relatives of both Albert DeSalvo and his last purported victim, Mary Sullivan. The families were demanding that the investigation be reopened and the long-suppressed police files released. Posner's article reads very much like an effort at damage control. His quick entry into the fray signals that the true nature of the Strangler case will continue to be covered up. Posner's past accomplishments include writing 'exposés' of the JFK assassination (Oswald did it), the Martin Luther King assassination (James Earl Ray did it), and Nazi doctor and Project Paperclip-recruit Joseph Mengele.

The most prolific of serial killer chroniclers is undoubtedly Ann Rule, the former employee of the Seattle Police Department. Rule is best known for her first book, an account of the alleged crimes of Ted Bundy entitled *The Stranger Beside Me*. The veteran crime writer had a unique perspective on the Bundy case, given that she was not writing about some enigmatic figure, but rather someone whom she had "cared for for ten years"...someone she referred to as "my friend, Ted Bundy."

Perhaps it is just a bizarre coincidence that the investigative journalist working on the biggest story of her career happened to be a friend and sometime co-worker of the man who would ultimately be held responsible for the six-year string of killings that she was researching. Even Rule though has acknowledged the long-shot odds of such a coincidence occurring: "Logically, statistically, demographically, the chance that Ted Bundy and I should meet and become fast friends is almost too obscure to contemplate." Equally bizarre is that the two lived strangely parallel lives. Rule acknowledges that, even before the time that she claims they first met, she and Ted had "lived in the same states at the same time—not once but many times."

When they did allegedly meet—in 1971, a few years before the killings began—it was while both were working as counselors at the Seattle Crisis Clinic. Interestingly, a number of cult defectors/survivors have claimed that such services are frequently infiltrated by cult members, so that they may be used as cult recruitment tools. Not surprisingly, those contemplating suicide are particularly

vulnerable to recruitment by cults, given that they have essentially given up hope on all other possible solutions to their problems. What then are we to conclude from the fact that Rule had almost as many connections to the victims as Bundy did?

“[W]hatever supernatural force guides our destinies, it has brought us together in some mind-expanding situations. I must believe this invisible hand will pour more chilled Chablis for us in less treacherous, more tranquil times to come. Love, ted.”

—Ted Bundy, writing to Ann Rule

PART III

AND IN OTHER NEWS...

“If they do their job and investigate what needs to be investigated, the rest of the pieces will fall into place, and nobody is going to like what they find out.”

—Therapist Mary Bienkowski

“They don’t want this pedophile door opened even one crack...It is better to be accused of being a murderer than to have other things come out.”

—Author Stephen Singular

Chapter 20

Boulder

“Evil on this scale is impossible to comprehend. To know who murdered JonBenét Ramsey is to know what world we live in.”

—James R. Gaines, *Time*, January 20, 1997

In death, she looked more like the six-year-old child that she was than she had in many of the photos taken of her when she was alive. Her lifeless body was found lying on a cold basement floor, wrapped in a blanket. A strip of duct tape purportedly covered her mouth. Her right wrist, raised above her head, was loosely bound with a length of cord. The same type cord was wrapped around her neck, with a broken paintbrush handle taken from her mother’s art supplies fashioned into a makeshift garrote.

To some investigators, her bindings looked staged.

She was dressed in a sweatshirt that covered a long-sleeved undershirt. White pajama bottoms covered her white panties, which an autopsy report later revealed were stained with blood. Inspection with a blacklight indicated that there was semen on both of her thighs, but the medial examiner would make no mention of that in his report.

To some investigators, it looked as though she had been ‘re-dressed’ after her death.

She had been sexually abused, severely beaten about the head—causing a massive skull fracture—and then strangled to death. Rigor mortis had fully set in and police on the scene reported the smell of decomposition. She had undigested food in her stomach and small intestine, identified as pieces of pineapple. On the palm of her left hand was drawn a small red heart. Around her neck was a chain bearing a crucifix. On her wrist was a bracelet; engraved on one side was her

name, JonBenét Ramsey, and on the other, the probable date of her death: December 25, 1996.

The previous evening, JonBenét had attended a party at the home of family friends with her parents, John and Patsy,⁴¹ and her brother Burke. The Ramsey family had returned home at 9:30 PM, by which time JonBenét had fallen asleep. She was carried inside and put to bed, allegedly last seen alive at around 10:00 PM. Patsy Ramsey claims that she woke up the next morning sometime after 5:00 AM and headed down the back stairs, which were generally used only by those who were familiar with the house. There she found a ransom note that she quickly read before entering her daughter's room to find that the child was missing.⁴² At 5:52 AM, she placed a frantic 911 call. It was later realized that Burke Ramsey's voice could be heard on the recording of that call, although John and Patsy steadfastly maintain that Burke was not yet up from bed when the call was placed.

Boulder police arrived at the Ramsey home seven minutes later to find Patsy hysterical, and John collected, but pacing. This was the second time in just three days that a 911 call had been placed from the Ramsey home. The first was on the night of December 23, during a party attended by an estimated 100 guests drawn

41 John Ramsey is the son of a WWII pilot who later served as the director of the Michigan Aeronautics Commission, where he was known, certainly not affectionately, as "Czar" Ramsey. John himself served as a Naval officer and pilot in the Philippines in the late 1960s. He later formed a company that he named Access Graphics. That company later became a subsidiary of Lockheed-Martin, one of the nation's largest military/intelligence contractors. After the buyout, John served as the company's president and CEO. His vice-president of operations was Donald Paugh, his father-in-law and a former Union Carbide engineer. Patsy, a former beauty queen, was the oldest of Paugh's three daughters. A *Miss America* pageant judge once described her as "a little automaton." In his book on the Ramsey case, Cyril Wecht described the Paugh family as "insular, like a closed society unto itself. Nedra [Patsy's mother] appeared to exert extraordinary influence over her adult daughters." John Ramsey also exerted considerable influence over one of her adult daughters.

42 That is the version of events that Patsy Ramsey has long held to. By her initial account, however, she discovered the disappearance *before* finding the note.

from the elite of Boulder society. The guest list for that party has never been made public, nor has the reason for the first 911 call.⁴³

The first officers to arrive at the Ramsey home were presented with the purported ransom note: two-and-a-half hand-written pages of bizarre ramblings that were withheld from the press and the public for nine months. The note's authors demanded a ransom of exactly \$118,000 in cash, which happened to be the amount of the Christmas bonus that John had just received. They claimed, rather preposterously, that they represented a "small foreign faction." They warned that if their demands were not met, JonBenét would be decapitated. The Ramseys were instructed to expect a telephone call that very morning between 8:00 and 10:00 AM, but that call, of course, never came.

For reasons that have never been adequately explained, the investigation was compromised from the very beginning. Officers inexplicably failed to secure the crime scene, allowing the family's pastor and a number of friends to freely come and go from the home. No effort was made to prevent contamination of any potential evidence. Detectives did not arrive on the scene until 8:10 AM, over two hours after the first patrol officers arrived. It took another twelve hours for the coroner to arrive (and once there, he reportedly spent just ten minutes examining the body and the crime scene). At around 10:00 AM, detectives allowed John Ramsey to leave the house unescorted for over an hour. He was purportedly on a mission to pick up the mail, although it is unclear why such a trivial errand had such a sense of urgency at a time of family crisis. It is also unclear why it took John so long to complete the errand and why he chose to go alone when several family friends were available to accompany him.

43 One man who is known to have attended is Bill McReynolds, who played Santa Claus for the event. On December 26, 1974, exactly twenty-two years before the murder of JonBenét, Bill's own daughter had purportedly been abducted, along with a friend, from the McReynolds' home not far from Boulder. The girl was released unharmed, after being forced to witness an assault on her friend. There were no arrests made and no charges were ever filed. Not long after that, Bill's wife Janet wrote a screenplay, entitled *Hey Rube*, that concerned the abduction, torture and murder of a young girl whose battered body is discovered lying on a cold basement floor. When Bill McReynolds was extended an invitation to speak at JonBenét's memorial service, he used the opportunity to share memories of not just the slain beauty queen but of a few other kids with whom, bizarrely, he had been close before their untimely deaths. The Ramseys considered McReynolds one of their prime suspects—along with 160+ other people whose names appeared on their self-serving suspect list.

One of the most grievous, and baffling, errors committed by detectives was their failure to separate the Ramseys for questioning. Even though detectives had Patsy alone for over an hour, while John was running his errand, no one purportedly thought to question her. Just as baffling is the fact that there was no initial search of the house, by either the family or police. When a detective on the scene finally suggested, at 1:00 PM, that it might be a good idea to conduct a search, it had been nearly eight hours since the family had first discovered the disappearance, seven hours since police had arrived on the scene, and five hours since detectives had arrived, *and yet no one had thought to search the home*. Are we really to believe that after finding the ‘ransom’ note, the family immediately accepted that their beloved daughter had been taken from the home? What parent would not first conduct a room-by-room search of the house before accepting that eventual-ity? Indeed, what parent would not search the house repeatedly, in the desperate hope that, somehow, something had been overlooked during an earlier search?

Amazingly enough, when it finally occurred to police that it might be a good idea to search the crime scene, they assigned that task to the prime suspect, John Ramsey. Joining John was good friend Fleet White, an oil company executive who had hosted the party the Ramseys attended the previous evening, and who the Ramseys placed a call to immediately after placing the 911 call. Ramsey and White quickly headed to the basement, where they almost immediately found JonBenét’s body, demonstrating in doing so that no effort had previously been made to look for the missing girl (although White later claimed that he had checked the basement earlier and saw nothing out of the ordinary).

John Ramsey promptly picked up his lifeless daughter and removed the tape from her mouth (strangely though, the autopsy report later made no mention of tape residue around JonBenét’s mouth). He then carried her upstairs and laid her on the floor. Patsy Ramsey immediately collapsed on the body of her child. A detective then moved the corpse and covered it with a blanket. In the space of just a few minutes, some of the most crucial evidence in the case had been hopelessly contaminated.

Ann Louise Bardach, writing for *Vanity Fair*, quoted one officer’s recollections of John and Patsy’s reactions to the discovery of the body: “What was interesting was when [John] Ramsey brought the body upstairs he never cried. But when he laid her down, he started to moan, while peering around to see who was looking.” Patsy, he said, “peer[ed] at him through splayed fingers” while making sobbing sounds. The officer described being haunted by the manner in which Patsy kept staring at him. He also noted that he never saw either of the Ramseys attempt to comfort or console the other.

The glaring incongruity of finding both a ransom note *and* the body of the purported kidnapping victim, coupled with what was viewed by many as inappropriate

behavior by the Ramseys, seemed to indicate that the crime was something other than a botched kidnapping. The preponderance of the evidence did not support the idea that an intruder was to blame. No footprints were observed outside of the home, even though snow covered much (but not all) of the ground. There were no signs of forced entry. The ransom note most likely originated from within the house. The pages appeared to have been torn from the Ramseys' own legal pad, and a pen found in a cup in the kitchen was likely the writing instrument. According to some reports, the first page in the legal pad, which was still attached, contained what appeared to be a false start at writing the ransom note.

The unlikely scenario that we are asked to believe is that an intruder entered an occupied home seeking a victim to abduct, but he then inadvertently killed his intended victim, at which time he decided to hide the body in the basement, assuming that it wouldn't be found. He then searched the house for pen and paper before composing both an unfinished draft and a final ransom note, the latter of which rambled on at some length.

The room where the body was found was in an out-of-the-way area of the spacious home's basement. Only a family member would have likely known of its existence. John Ramsey acknowledged that fact in a *CNN* interview: "the room that we found her in is kind of a remote part of the basement." "A casual guest would not know where that room is," Patsy added. "It's, you know, kind of out-of-the-way." Despite that early acknowledgement by the Ramseys themselves, the Ramsey spin team later vociferously denied that the room would have been difficult to locate for someone other than a family member.

Steve Thomas, the lead detective on the case, concluded that Patsy Ramsey wrote the ransom note. He contends that of the 74 suspects whose handwriting samples were reviewed by investigators, Patsy was the only one that could not be excluded as a suspect. He has also accused her of deliberately changing some elements of her writing style after the murder, in order to disguise her authorship of the note.

Several days after the discovery of JonBenét's body, the Ramsey family flew her remains to Atlanta, their former home, for burial. Services were held on New Years Eve, after which JonBenét was laid to rest next to her half-sister Elizabeth, another of John Ramsey's daughters. The following day, John and Patsy made their infamous appearance on *CNN*, even while steadfastly claiming to be too grief-stricken to talk to the police. Patsy was heavily sedated, and had been since the day of the murder. She later claimed that she was unable to remember anything that occurred during the weeks immediately following the discovery of the body. Burke Ramsey was reportedly kept heavily drugged after his sister's death as well.

Allegations of prior abuse of the victim soon began to circulate in the media. Video footage of JonBenét's pageant appearances was aired endlessly. The footage offered no proof of the abuse allegations, but it did clearly demonstrate that the

Ramseys had unconscionably marketed their offspring as some kind of hyper-sexualized woman-child.

There was, however, certainly nothing unusual about that on the kiddie pageant circuit, as author Stephen Singular discovered when he ventured into that milieu. What he discovered is a world that few outside of the pageant circuit are familiar with: a world where extraordinarily young girls have had their hair dyed, their teeth capped, their young faces sculpted by plastic surgeons, their chests bunched-up with tape to form the appearance of cleavage, and their eye color enhanced with contact lenses. Singular also discovered that photographing these pre-pubescent beauty queens in risqué poses is a routine business undertaken by some of the most highly regarded child photographers in the country. JonBenét Ramsey was just one of an estimated 250,000 girls who are a part of this billion-dollar-a-year business that, by all appearances, caters primarily to the pedophilic tendencies of the adults who gravitate around the 3,000 child beauty pageants held every year.

While JonBenét's longtime involvement in the child pageant business raises a number of questions, it does not directly answer the question of whether she had been molested either on the night of her death or before that time. The autopsy report, which was released in a severely redacted form on February 14 and in full on August 13, made mention of chronic genital inflammation, foreign matter in the vagina, and "epithelial erosion." A detective working the case swore in an affidavit that the coroner, John Meyer, told her that someone had definitely had sexual contact with the child. Meyer drew no such conclusions in his report.

Independent experts who have examined the evidence have been far less circumspect. Dr. Robert Kirschner of the University of Chicago's pathology department noted that JonBenét's vaginal opening was twice what is normal for a girl her age. He also stated that the "genital injuries indicate penetration, but probably not by a penis, and are evidence of molestation that night as well as previous molestation." Dr. Cyril Wecht, one of the most respected forensic pathologists in the country, told an interviewer: "This to me is evidence of sexual abuse. I think any forensic gynecologist and forensic pathologist would agree with that...If she had been taken to a hospital emergency room, and doctors had seen the genital evidence, her father would have been arrested."

There was one doctor who had numerous opportunities to observe that evidence. As was widely reported, JonBenét had been taken to her pediatrician no fewer than twenty-seven times in the previous three to four years. The doctor claimed, rather disingenuously, that that was a normal rate of visitation for a child her age. He also claimed that he had never seen, during any of those visits, any evidence of abuse. That claim, however, was contradicted by the forensic evidence, which indicated chronic abuse.

Cellmark Diagnostics in Germantown, Maryland, the CIA-linked forensic lab that was thrust into the national limelight during the OJ Simpson trial, was unable to return any conclusive findings from any of the biological materials it received on the case. A number of other OJ players surfaced in Buffalo as well. Criminologist Henry Lee was hired on as a forensics adviser to District Attorney Alex Hunter.⁴⁴ DNA wunderkinds Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld joined the party as well. Oddly enough, with all the DNA all-stars on board, no DNA evidence has ever been produced in the case.

From the beginning, when a gag order was placed on the officers working the case, there have been concerted efforts made to control the flow of information that the public has received about the murder of JonBenét Ramsey. Largely responsible for shaping public perception of the case has been the law firm retained almost immediately by the Ramseys: Haddon, Morgan, Mueller, George, Mackey & Foreman.⁴⁵ The tentacles of Hal Haddon's firm seemed to reach into every nook and cranny of the Ramsey case.

44 Alex Hunter, the man primarily responsible for prosecuting the JonBenét Ramsey murder case, had been Boulder's District Attorney since 1972. During his tenure, he developed a reputation for extremely lenient enforcement of drug laws, making the city a particularly friendly place for narcotics traffickers. Since 1969, Hunter had been a limited partner in a business enterprise with a lawyer named William Gray, who just happened to be John Ramsey's civil attorney.

45 The powerful firm has, as Cyril Wecht noted, "deep connections to the Democratic power structure that control[s] state politics" in Colorado. Hal Haddon was the manager of Gary Hart's successful U.S. Senate campaigns as well as his unsuccessful presidential bid. Haddon also has close ties to District Attorney Alex Hunter and former Governors Roy Romer and Richard Lamm. A *Los Angeles Times* report from August 2003 describes his firm as having "a long history of handling high profile cases and getting charges either dismissed outright or dramatically reduced. In cases where clients have been found guilty, they have often been able to get sentences drastically cut." The *Times* cites as an example the case of Rockwell International Corporation's Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant, which was raided by federal agents who discovered "widespread and egregious environmental contamination. Radioactive waste was being illegally dumped into rivers, fields and released into the atmosphere." Despite the fact that the evidence against the company was overwhelming, no company officials were ever charged in the case, which was settled with Rockwell paying a nominal fine. In 1990, Haddon represented 'gonzo' journalist Hunter S. Thompson, who was facing sexual assault charges. The charges against Thompson were dropped. Curiously, Thompson has been accused by witnesses in the Franklin case of being a producer of child snuff films. He now pens a column entitled *Hey Rube*.

Patsy Ramsey was represented by Haddon partners Patrick Furman and Patrick Burke. Burke was perhaps best known for having won acquittal for the white supremacist accused of killing Denver radio personality Alan Berg. Throughout the Ramsey investigation, he was frequently seen in the doorway of what was dubbed the 'JonBenét War Room,' often chatting with Peter Hofstrom, an assistant to District Attorney Hunter, and Tripp DeMuth, one Hunter's prosecutors on the case. John Ramsey was represented by partners Bryan Morgan and Lee Foreman. Morgan, who had once been nominated to serve as a justice on the Colorado Supreme Court, was regularly seen holding breakfast meetings with his old friend, Peter Hofstrom. Burke Ramsey was represented by yet another member of the Haddon team.

The Boulder Police Department, led by Chief Tom Koby,⁴⁶ took the unusual step of retaining its own representatives, in the form of a trio of private practice attorneys. One of the three, Robert Miller, had recently teamed with Haddon on a civil suit. Another of the trio, Daniel Hoffman, had previously been defended in a malpractice suit by Haddon partner Lee Foreman.

In addition to the legal firepower, the Ramseys also hired a professional spokesman. Filling that post was Washington spin-meister Patrick Korten, who had served in the Reagan Administration as the consultant for the Office of Personnel Management at the time that striking air traffic controllers were fired, and as the chief spokesman for the outrageously corrupt Ed Meese-run Justice Department. Also on Korten's résumé were stints serving as mouthpieces for Iran/Contra conspirator Oliver North and for the Pharmaceutical Research Manufacturers of America.

Another addition to the Ramsey spin team was premier FBI profiler John Douglas. One of his former colleagues, Gregg McCrary, was also approached to join the team, but he declined the offer—after offering the opinion that the murder looked to him like a "staged domestic homicide." Also on the Ramsey team were two private investigation firms whose gumshoes reportedly interviewed nearly every witness approached by Boulder police. Rounding out the team was a retired homicide investigator named Lou Smit, whose claim to fame was having

46 Before coming to Boulder, Chief Koby had served as a deputy chief, and then as assistant chief, of the Houston Police Department. His chief and mentor in Houston had been Lee P. Brown, who later became the chief of the NYPD and then served in Washington as the federal 'drug czar.' Before relocating to Houston, Brown had served as Police Commissioner for the city of Atlanta, at the very time that the so-called 'child murders' rocked that city (see next chapter).

purportedly solved the murder of Karen Grammar, the sister of actor and accused pedophile Kelsey Grammar.

Smit was brought out of retirement by District Attorney Hunter, ostensibly to assist in gathering evidence *against* the Ramseys. Strangely enough though, he resigned a year-and-a-half later and went to work *for* the Ramseys. When he switched sides, he brought with him a full accounting of all the state's evidence in the case, which, truth be told, the Ramseys had access to all along anyway. Boulder police loudly complained that Hunter repeatedly shared information with the Ramseys, even going so far as to supply the couple, before their being questioned by police, with copies of police reports and of their initial statements to investigators. John and Patsy were, therefore, able to insure that their stories remained consistent with both the known facts and with their prior alibis.

To their credit, it appears that at least some of the officers on Boulder's police force (which had a healthy distrust of Hunter and his sidekick Smit) attempted to honestly investigate the case. Their efforts were impeded, however, by not only the District Attorney's office, but by the Denver Police Department and the FBI. Local officials resisted, unsuccessfully, the involvement of both agencies. In April 1997, Boulder police abruptly stopped sharing information with Hunter's office. Shortly after that, the computer containing the Ramsey case files in the aforementioned 'War Room' was hacked into by persons unknown. That same month, John and Patsy Ramsey submitted to their first formal police interviews, four full months after JonBenét had been laid to rest. The date of the interviews was, appropriately enough, April 30, 1997: *Walpurgisnacht*.

On that very same day, a man named James Michael Thompson, who worked for a private company that specialized in transporting corpses, stole two pages from the morgue book at Boulder Community Hospital. Those two pages had recorded the arrival of JonBenét's body four months earlier. On May 21, Thompson was charged with the theft of the pages. He was also charged with abuse of corpses, those charges arising from his macabre habit of grotesquely posing the corpses in his charge. On June 18, the very same James Michael Thompson attempted to burn down the Ramsey home. Patsy had reportedly expressed a desire that the house be destroyed, and had vowed that she would never return there. Officials predictably announced that Thompson's actions had no connection to the murder of JonBenét.

June also marked the beginning of the crumbling of the local political structure in Boulder, Colorado. City Manager Tim Honey was the first casualty. Before long, a third of the city's council members had left office, the mayor had decided to move on, the head of the Chamber of Commerce had left office, and Police Chief Tom Koby and Police Commander John Eller had both opted to step down. In his book on the case, Stephen Singular states, without elaboration:

“Numerous powerful people had been in the Ramsey’s home and had been exposed to JonBenét.” Many of those powerful people were in the Ramsey home just two days before JonBenét’s death, on the night that the first 911 call was placed. It is very unlikely that any of those people will ever be named, but it is quite possible that some of them were public officials who opted to step away from the limelight.

* * * * *

What really happened to JonBenét Ramsey on that fateful day in 1996? And why did the case become such a *cause celebre*? After all, the killing of a child in this country is certainly not an uncommon occurrence, nor is it normally an event deemed worthy of national media attention. As the *Village Voice* reported in 1997, the United States has, per capita, the highest rate of child homicide in the world. None of the world’s people slaughter their children more frequently, or more cavalierly, than do Americans.⁴⁷ With the notable exceptions of the occasional Polly Klaas or Adam Walsh, few of these murder victims are deemed worthy of anything approaching a full-scale media circus.

What then are we to make of the JonBenét Ramsey case? The family would like you believe that it was nothing more than a badly botched kidnapping plot. That hardly seems likely, however. The kidnapping scenario was most likely conceived after the fact, to cover up the accidental or intentional death of the child. The plan probably called for the body to be disposed of and the disappearance blamed on an unknown abductor. For whatever reason though, the body could not be disposed of. When it became apparent that a search would quickly yield the girl’s remains, John Ramsey made sure that he was the one to make the discovery, thereby compromising the crime scene and nullifying any forensic evidence linking him to the body. None of that, of course, answers the question of *why* JonBenét Ramsey was killed.

One theory holds that Patsy Ramsey killed JonBenét in a fit of rage resulting from a bedwetting incident. While that scenario is not necessarily “absurd,” as the Ramseys have labeled it, it does seem to fall short of adequately explaining the crime. Another theory holds that John Ramsey killed JonBenét accidentally when

47 America’s closest ally, the United Kingdom, seems to have its sights set on catching up. In January 2002, the *Independent* reported that a “record number of children [were] murdered in Britain last year.” The rate of child homicides had risen 40% in just one year. England’s child homicide rate is now “thought to be the highest in Europe.”

his ongoing abuse got out of hand. While that is probably closer to the truth, it still appears to fall short of providing a full explanation. Stephan Singular has put forth a more disturbing theory: he believes that JonBenét was killed because of her involvement in a child pornography and prostitution ring. Singular theorizes that one of the parents was involved, essentially acting as a pimp in selling the young girl to the ring. The cover-up of her death took place, according to Singular, when the guilty party had to conceal that fact from the other parent, who was not involved.

While Singular is on the right track, his analysis still probably falls a little short of the mark. The truth likely is that *both* of the Ramseys were involved in pimping their daughter out to other pedophiles. The massive cover-up that has shrouded the investigation from day one is indicative of the type of systemic corruption that leads to these types of cases being routinely covered up. Such a far-reaching effort certainly could not have been orchestrated by one parent working to fool the other.

Rumors of child pornography have surrounded the case from the earliest days of the investigation. Police records indicate that warrants were sought to search the Ramsey home for pornographic materials. The *San Jose Mercury News* reported that police investigators “had a strong initial suspicion that someone in the family had an interest in child pornography...three days after the girl’s bludgeoned body was discovered in the basement of her family’s upscale home, Boulder, Colo. police seized computers, computer disks, CD-ROMs, and video and still photography equipment, according to the search warrants.” At least 150 videotapes were seized from the home. It was also alleged that John Ramsey had been seen frequenting a seedy Denver porno shop. In the tabloid press, it was reported that the computers at Access Graphics were loaded with child pornography. While the credibility of that story may be in dispute,⁴⁸ it is interesting to note that after the murder, Access Graphics added guards and greatly increased security at its headquarters.

A California woman recently presented to Boulder police—through her therapist—information that she claimed to have about the case. The therapist, Mary Bienkowski, spoke of a pedophile ring operating in the Boulder area. She identified her client of ten years as a past victim of the ring, which she said had direct links to the Ramsey family. She also said that her client had provided police with

48 There is a possibility that the story was dumped in the tabloid press for the express purpose of discrediting it. *Konformist* editor Robert Sterling and others have noted that the tabloid press is frequently used to taint stories that are threatening to break in more respectable avenues of the media.

the names of several people who had witnessed the murder of JonBenét. Bienkowski also claimed that the witness had provided evidence of the ongoing abuse of other children. The unidentified witness was interviewed by agents of the FBI. Shortly after that, she went into hiding, afraid for her life. The Boulder Sheriff's office portrayed the woman as a crank, claiming that she had a history of making false reports. The woman, however, maintained that while she had indeed made previous reports, they were not *false* reports, but rather *uninvestigated* reports. There is no indication that the leads she supplied on the Ramsey case were ever investigated.

Could such a ring have existed in Boulder? And if so, could that have provided the hidden subtext of the JonBenét Ramsey murder? Conclusive evidence is hard to come by, but a few tantalizing bits and pieces have surfaced.

Randy Simons was considered the best, and the most expensive, child photographer in the Boulder area. At least one pageant mother reported to author Singular that Simons had approached her about shooting nudes of her daughter. She declined the offer. How many pageant mothers consented to such offers is unknown. In June 1996, just months before JonBenét's death, Simons took what were described as 'cover-girl' shots of the oft-photographed beauty queen (who on several occasions had been photographed with Daphne White, her best friend and the daughter of Fleet White).

Just after JonBenét's death, Simons abruptly left his wife and daughter in Denver and moved to a remote area of eastern Colorado. No one seemed to know why he had done so. He was said to be extremely distraught over the murder. He reportedly placed several frantic calls to friends, during which he expressed a profound fear for his life. He wrote an article for *Stagelines*, a pageant newsletter, in which he claimed that he was being pursued by "paramilitary types." He also expressed concern to the newsletter's publisher about the possibility of someone releasing "inappropriate" photos of JonBenét.

When the Wonderland raids swept through a number of American cities, one of those arrested was Richard Bruce Thomas, a computer consultant living in Ft. Collins, Colorado, about an hour's drive from the Ramsey home. Thomas was found shot to death in his home on September 5, 1998. His death was ruled, as always, a suicide. When a man named James Partin was arrested on charges of distributing child pornography on the Internet, his Columbus, Ohio home was found to contain a photograph of JonBenét Ramsey. Partin was a prime suspect in the 1983 disappearance of a fourteen-year-old girl from Idaho Springs, Colorado.

Stephan Singular took some of these scraps of evidence that he had collected and presented them to District Attorney Alex Hunter, and then to Detective Sergeant Tom Wickman of the Boulder Police Department, and then to Ellis

Armistead, one of the Ramseys' private investigators. All three took his information but offered nothing in return, and all three chose not to investigate the leads that he provided.

* * * * *

What could prove to be a key piece of evidence in the case has been largely ignored by the media and by various theories of the crime: the undigested food in JonBenét's stomach and small intestine, which indicated that the girl had eaten in fairly close proximity to her death.

According to the Ramseys' version of events, JonBenét had eaten earlier in the evening, while at the White's party, but she had not eaten at home before being put to bed, since she was, according to the Ramseys, already asleep. The existence of the largely undigested food matter has, therefore, never been satisfactorily explained. In fact, it has been almost entirely ignored by most theorists, although some have tried to explain it away with the theory that JonBenét's would-be abductor(s) fed her before killing her. Such theories require belief in the dubious notion that although the mysterious intruder(s) forgot to bring materials to write a ransom note (or an already prepared ransom note), they did remember to pack a snack for their abductee.

A more reasonable explanation for the undigested food is that JonBenét was killed shortly after she was known to have last eaten. She was, to be more specific, killed *before* the Ramsey family returned home from the party they had been attending. Such a scenario would help to explain some of the other facts and persistent rumors that have surrounded the case. For example, it was mentioned previously that JonBenét's body, despite being in the cold confines of the basement of the Ramsey home, had decomposed to the point of emitting a noticeable odor. It is unlikely that decomposition would have advanced to that stage had JonBenét been killed between 10:00 PM (when she was allegedly put to bed) and 5:00 AM (when her disappearance was allegedly discovered).

Some investigators believe that JonBenét's clothing was changed after her death. The Ramseys have acknowledged that she was in fact changed before being put to bed, after the family had returned home from the party. If she was already dead at that time, then she was indeed re-dressed after her murder. It is interesting to note here that in the Ramseys' own telling of the story, the limp figure of JonBenét was carried into the house upon the family's return home.

Some investigators also believe that some elements of the crime scene, particularly the ligatures, were staged. That is also consistent with the child having been killed elsewhere and then deposited in the basement. It is possible that the

ligatures were added after the fact, when it became apparent that it was not going to be possible to dispose of the body. It is also possible that the ligatures were an artifact of the party, necessarily loosened when the body was re-dressed, and then retied.

The claim by the California woman that there were numerous witnesses to the murder is also consistent with JonBenét having been killed at the party. One of those witnesses would have been sibling Burke, who some suspect witnessed or was involved to some degree in the killing. That would explain the Ramsey family's concerted efforts to shield the boy from the media and from inquisitive police (the Ramseys claim that the extraordinary security afforded Burke is intended to protect him from the still-at-large killer).

As a final note on the Ramsey case, John and Patsy have on occasion publicized the fact that a stun-gun was possibly used to incapacitate JonBenét prior to her death. That fact is supposed to bolster the intruder theory, since the Ramseys claim that they have never owned a stun-gun. One of the videotapes seized from their home, however, included instructions on how to use, of all things, a stun-gun.

Chapter 21

Atlanta

"I have never believed Wayne Williams killed not only Yusef—I don't believe Wayne Williams killed anybody."

—Camille Bell, the mother of victim Yusef Bell

"I don't believe he did it any more than I'd go out there and shoot somebody myself."

—Willie May Mathis, the mother
of victim Jefferey Mathis

"Wayne Williams ain't doing no time for killing my child. He ain't doing no time for killing nary a child."

—Eunice Jones, the mother of victim Clifford Jones

As the cases of Marc Dutroux and many others have amply illustrated, there can be a very fine line between organized pedophilia and serial murder. Perhaps nowhere was that point more clearly made than in what was at the time America's murder capitol: Atlanta, Georgia, during the killings commonly referred to as the Atlanta Child Murders.

By this time, it should not come as any great surprise that the Atlanta killings did not follow the patterns suggested by serial killer 'profiles.' First of all, the victims of the 'child' murders were not all children; six of them were in their twenties, and there were many more in that age bracket who should have made the victims' list. "The List," as the official tally of victims was dubbed, was one of the more controversial aspects of the investigation, and one that needs to be addressed in order to put the remainder of this discussion in context.

A number of researchers have charged that The List was subject to constantly shifting parameters, which resulted in a number of victims whose cases appeared

to be connected being excluded from the official victim count. Chet Dettlinger—a former Public Safety Commissioner and assistant to the chief of the Atlanta Police Department, and the co-author of *The List*—maintains that sixty-three “pattern” victims were arbitrarily left off the official tally, more than twice as many as actually did make it. He also argues that twenty-five of those victims were killed *after* the arrest of Wayne Williams, the purported Atlanta child murderer. The county’s chief medical examiner at the time of the killings, Joseph Burton, has said much the same thing: “by no means did the deaths of young black children and young black men stop with the arrest and conviction of Wayne Williams.”

Among the names that were arbitrarily omitted were a number of adult victims. Before March 1981, nearly two years after the killings had begun, adults were not deemed to fit the ‘profile’ and were therefore excluded from The List. After the parameters were changed to allow the first adult victim to be included, five more victims in their twenties were added in rapid succession over the next eight weeks, but none of those killed in the prior twenty months who otherwise fit the pattern were retroactively added. Similarly, many female victims were excluded, even though two of the earliest list victims were young girls. A number of young boys were excluded as well, for reasons that appear to have been entirely arbitrary. There is a considerable amount of uncertainty, therefore, as to how many victims there actually were, and when the killings began and ended. This discussion will be limited to the twenty-nine officially recognized victims, though it is quite apparent that at least as many more were deliberately omitted from The List. As Public Safety Commissioner Dick Hand has acknowledged, “The list that was created by the Task Force, in my own personal opinion, was an artificial list.”

According to the artificial—but government sanctioned—list, the victims of the Atlanta ‘child’ murders ranged in age from seven-year-old LaTonya Wilson to twenty-eight-year-old John Porter. Males and females were both represented, though a large majority were male. All of the victims, significantly, were African-American. There was no consistent pattern to the killings, as medical examiner Burton acknowledged: “there was no signature that said this case and this case and this case are people that have been murdered or killed by the same individual.” The first victim, fourteen-year-old Ed Smith, was shot. All the rest were killed with weapons of opportunity. The most common cause of death was asphyxiation, with strangulation a close second. Two victims had their heads bludgeoned with blunt objects, two others were stabbed to death, another was drowned, and young Aaron Wyche broke his neck after being pushed or dropped from a bridge. One victim’s body was never recovered and several others were too badly decomposed by the time of their discovery to determine the cause of death.

There was no discernable pattern to the cases that were added to the list, beyond the fact that all the victims were young African-Americans who met with violent deaths. As *Los Angeles Times* reporter and *The List* co-author Jeff Prugh put it, "There was no pattern, per se, that I could really see, other than that they were all dead." But while there was no pattern connecting the manner of the abductions and killings, there were a number of troubling connections between the victims, most of whom lived in the same four 'inner city' neighborhoods. Those connections were consistently, and seemingly deliberately, ignored by the police.

The first two victims, young teens Ed Smith and Alfred Evans, were friends who spent a good deal of time together. They disappeared just four days apart, strongly suggesting that the victims were known to the killer(s) and were definitely not randomly selected. That would become all the more apparent as the body count mounted.

More than one witness reported seeing the fourth victim, Yussef Bell, getting into a car with his mother's former husband. The man was considered a suspect in the boy's disappearance for more than a year, but was ultimately cleared of any involvement. He would not be the only close friend or family member to become a prime suspect.

The body of the next victim, Angel Lenair, showed clear signs of sexual abuse, although that evidence was notably downplayed and deemed insignificant by authorities. As the story continued to unfold, however, it became increasingly apparent that sexual abuse of the child victims was indeed of considerable significance.

Like Yussef Bell, Jefferey Mathis was also last seen getting into a car, described as blue by witnesses. According to another witness, Jefferey was again in a blue car, and still very much alive, a couple days later. This was just the first of many bizarre episodes that suggested that at least some of the victims were not killed immediately, but were kept alive for an indeterminate period of time following their abductions. That were other indications as well that at least some of the victims were not killed right away: some of them were found wearing different clothing than what they had been wearing when they disappeared, and some had undigested food in their stomachs that was not consistent with the meals they were known to have eaten before their abductions.

Shortly after Jefferey's disappearance, other boys at his school reported men in a car attempting to lure them away from the school grounds. They described it as a blue car. While that certainly did not amount to a positive identification, it did represent a potential break in the case. The boys reported the incident, and even memorized the car's license plate number to give to police—who nevertheless declined to investigate the lead.

The next victim, Eric Middlebrooks, received a phone call at 10:30 on a Sunday night and, upon hanging up the phone, immediately grabbed his tools and raced out the door, claiming that he suddenly had to repair his bike. He was never seen alive again. The questions of who could have called the boy and what they could have said to him to lead him so eagerly to his death are ones that have never been answered.

The next victim who later became a name on the list added a rather peculiar twist to the case, yet again reminiscent of the notorious Lindbergh abduction. Seven-year-old LaTonya Wilson was allegedly kidnapped from her occupied home, but an eyewitness account of the abduction painted a scenario that could not possibly have occurred. Perhaps significantly, the disappearance occurred on June 22, the summer solstice. A friend of the young girl's family was initially considered a prime suspect in the abduction and murder—a reasonable suspicion considering the bizarre and implausible circumstances of her kidnapping. The targeting of the man by police, however, provoked outrage in Atlanta's black community, as had the police targeting of Camille Bell's former husband.

The death of the next victim, Aaron Wyche, was initially deemed accidental, until it became obvious that the official finding that the boy had 'fallen' was, to say the least, extremely unlikely. Anthony Carter reportedly disappeared while playing hide-and-seek outside his home around 1:00 AM, though one wonders who allows a nine-year-old to play hide-and-seek outside in the middle of the night. Some police investigators apparently pondered that very question, concluding that the story told by the boy's mother seemed rather unlikely. She was subsequently arrested, then released and thereafter tailed and questioned for several months, eventually leading her to move out of the area. Those actions by the police further enraged the citizens of Atlanta.

In mid-July 1980, an activist group formed by the parents of victims finally pressured the police into linking the killings and launching a serious investigation, or at least the appearance of one. The disappearances and murders had begun at least a year earlier and at least eleven lives had already been taken. Police reluctantly announced the formation of a special task force on July 17. Before the end of the month, another victim, Earl Terrell, disappeared. His aunt promptly received a call from an unidentified person who delivered the following cryptic message: "I've got Earl. Don't call the police." Shortly thereafter, she received a second call: "I've got Earl. He's in Alabama. It will cost you \$200 to get him back. I will call back on Friday."

There is no indication that Earl was in fact taken to Alabama. There is also no evidence that anyone is actually stupid enough to kidnap a child and transport him out of the state for the purpose of raising a couple hundred dollars in ransom money. Those bizarre phone calls though served a very important purpose: they

immediately made the case a federal matter. The task force was barely on its feet when the FBI rode into town to take over the investigation, with some 200 FBI agents descending on the city of Atlanta. Suddenly, everyone wanted to be involved in investigating what police had previously considered to be a batch of unrelated violent deaths. The nation's top 'big city' detectives were flown into town and hailed as 'supercops' come to save the day. The FBI sent in 'profilers' in what was billed as the first real test of the 'science' of profiling. The Bureau's self-styled experts predicted, not surprisingly, that a black serial killer was responsible for the murders.

Before the investigation was wrapped up, no less an authority than Vice-President George Bush even came to town, ostensibly to coordinate federal and local efforts and to make sure the investigation stayed on track. Citizens, meanwhile, began organizing themselves into 'bat patrols'—vigilante groups who patrolled the streets of their neighborhoods wielding baseball bats. The police quickly saw fit to break these groups up.

In the ensuing months, community leaders organized search teams, eventually numbering thousands of volunteers. Often working alongside these mostly African-American search teams were groups of unidentified white 'volunteers,' attired in flak jackets and carrying rifles, walkie-talkies, and various other pieces of paramilitary equipment. No explanation has been offered for the presence of these curiously equipped men.

In addition to federalizing the investigation, Earl Terrell's disappearance was significant for another reason: it exposed the dark underbelly of the Atlanta killings. Earl disappeared after leaving a public swimming pool that was directly across from a house that was known to be the hub of a child pornography ring. The owner of the house, John David Wilcoxon, was ultimately convicted for his complicity in the ring. He was never, however, seriously considered as a suspect in Terrell's disappearance, despite a witness placing Earl at Wilcoxon's house on several occasions, and despite the fact that literally thousands of child pornography photos were seized from Wilcoxon's home.

The next victim, Clifford Jones, was found dead alongside a dumpster behind a laundromat in late August 1980. No fewer than three young witnesses reported seeing the laundromat manager, James Brooks, go into the backroom accompanied by a black male youth. One of them even saw the boy beaten, anally raped and strangled to death by Brooks and another man, Calvin Smith. Other witnesses saw Brooks, wearing a hooded ceremonial robe, carry a large object out to the trash where the body was later discovered. Brooks candidly admitted to police that the boy had been in the laundromat around the time of his death, but he steadfastly denied any involvement in the murder. Notably though, he failed two polygraph examinations. The police nevertheless cleared him as a suspect, claiming

that the eyewitness to the killing was “retarded.” They did not bother to explain all the other witness accounts or the failed polygraphs.

At around the time of Jones’ death, the task force finally began to assemble the infamous ‘list.’ Darron Glass was the next name added to it. Shortly after his disappearance, his mother received an emergency breakthrough call from someone claiming to be her son, but when she picked up the line to speak to him, it had gone dead. Around that same time, an explosion at a daycare center in one of Atlanta’s black neighborhoods took the lives of four more kids. Investigators quickly concluded that the explosion was accidental—the result of a boiler malfunction. Many in the neighborhood though, and in other neighborhoods where children were under siege, remained unconvinced.

Charles Stephens was the next victim to disappear. When his remains were discovered shortly thereafter, the crime scene was quickly contaminated by an officer who opted to toss a blanket over the body (the contamination of crime scenes was, alas, a fairly common occurrence throughout the investigation). Shortly after Charles’ disappearance, a drug dealer and police informant told investigators that he had seen the body of a black youth in the backseat of a customer’s car. He also reported that he knew the man to be a pedophile who had on occasion offered him cash to procure young male prostitutes. Needless to say, this lead was not followed up on by police.

Next to disappear was Aaron Jackson, a friend of both earlier victim Aaron Wyche and future victim Patrick Rogers, who disappeared just nine days later. Rogers was the oldest victim to date at fifteen. He was connected to at least a dozen other victims on and off ‘The List.’

Lubie Geter disappeared next. Like Earl Terrell, Geter was connected to child pornographer Wilcoxon, as well as to another adult pedophile who was later connected to William Barrett, one of the last names to be put on the list. Three weeks after Geter’s disappearance, his friend Terry Pue disappeared as well. Pue’s body yielded some of the best forensic evidence of any of the killings: fingerprints. The prints were not left by Wayne Williams, a fact that neither side would mention at trial.

The next victim, Patrick Baltazar, called the task force shortly before his disappearance and expressed fear for his life. His teacher received a call not long after he vanished from a loudly sobbing boy who did not identify himself, though the teacher suspected that the boy was Patrick. The next addition to the list was Curtis Walker. An uncle with whom Walker lived was murdered as well, but he did not make the list. Next was Joseph Bell, who knew several other victims on the list. Shortly after he was reported missing, a co-worker reported receiving a call from the boy during which Joseph begged for help and stated that he was “almost dead.” Days later, Bell’s mother received a call from a woman who

claimed to be holding the boy. The woman called again later and managed to talk to Bell's two siblings. The mother reported both calls to the task force, but never got a call back.

Ten days after Bell's disappearance, his friend Timothy Hill disappeared as well. Hill was later connected to earlier victims Alfred Evans, Jefferey Mathis, Patrick Baltazar, and Anthony Carter. Hill was known to frequent a home owned by a known pedophile named Thomas Terrell. At least two witnesses, one a neighbor of Terrell, placed Hill at the house around the time of his disappearance. Terrell admitted to police that he knew the boy and had previously engaged in sexual acts with him. Although what he admitted to was a crime, he was not arrested nor was he ever seriously considered as a suspect.

Larry Rogers and Eddie Duncan, who was connected to earlier victim Patrick Rogers, were the first adults to make the list. They were followed by Michael McIntosh, who knew both Joseph Bell and final victim Nathaniel Cater. McIntosh had been seen on numerous occasions at Thomas Terrell's house. John Porter disappeared next, though he was not put on the list until much later, as part of an effort to build a dubious fiber evidence case against Williams. Jimmy Payne was next on the list, followed by William Barrett. Barrett was connected to the same unidentified white male pedophile who was connected to earlier victim Lubie Geter. Police records later revealed that Barrett had reported being in fear for his life after receiving threats from someone he described as a "hit man."

The final victim to make the list was Nathaniel Cater, an admitted drug dealer and homosexual prostitute. The discovery of Cater's body on May 24, 1981 provided the first 'evidence' throughout the two-year killing spree that allegedly linked Williams to the crimes: he had been observed on a bridge two days earlier at the time a splash allegedly occurred in the river below. Two days later, Cater's body was discovered downstream from the bridge, which purportedly pointed to Williams' guilt. Some investigators do not believe, however, that Williams ever stopped his car on that bridge or that there was a splash that night. It has been noted that the officer filing the report did not immediately report the splash, nor attempt to verify the source of the alleged splash, nor request equipment to drag the river and recover the alleged object. It is certainly possible that the entire incident was fabricated to tenuously link Wayne Williams to the murders.

Significantly, the medical examiner was initially unable to ascertain the time of Cater's death, but he later accommodated police by placing it in accordance with the bridge story. No fewer than four eyewitnesses, however, came forward to report that they had seen Cater very much alive *the day after* the alleged bridge incident. That crucial exculpatory evidence was never introduced at trial. Williams' attorneys later claimed that they were never informed of the existence

of the witnesses, but that claim is rather dubious considering their overall performance at trial.

Williams was not immediately arrested following the infamous bridge incident, but he was publicly identified as the new prime suspect, thus beginning a two-and-a-half-week press circus at the Williams' family home and a trial by media that found Wayne guilty long before he ever set foot in a courtroom. This occurred despite the fact that there was a noticeable lack of evidence tying Williams to *any* of the murders. The local district attorney was keenly aware of that fact and was therefore not too eager to have Williams arrested. The FBI, however, along with federal and state officials, had no problem with pinning all of the murders on Williams. Local authorities were duly pressured into making the arrest. Completely ignored was the rather obvious fact that the suspect did not bear even a passing resemblance to any of the witness descriptions on file with the task force or to any of the composite sketches that had been created.

Though publicly branded the 'Atlanta Child Murderer,' Wayne Williams was indicted and he faced trial for the murders of two adults: Nathaniel Cater and Jimmy Payne. He was never indicted for the murders of any of the children that were slain. Evidence of their murders was allowed into court, however. Despite the fact that there was never enough evidence to build a case against Williams for the crimes, the trial judge allowed testimony about ten other killings. As outraged Georgia Supreme Court Justice George Smith later noted, Williams assumed an "unenviable position as a defendant who, charged with two murders, was forced to defend himself as to 12 separate killings."

Besides that inflammatory testimony, which would have been disallowed in any legitimate courtroom, the state's case was built almost entirely on highly suspect fiber evidence. That evidence, purportedly the strongest element of the prosecution's presentation, had seemingly been planted to provide the state with some semblance of a case. It was claimed, for example, that fibers from Williams' car were found on one victim who had disappeared *before* Williams had even purchased the car. It was also claimed that Clifford Jones' body yielded fibers linking him to Williams, though all the other available evidence indicated that Jones had in fact been killed at a laundromat by James Brooks.

Another rather curious fact about the trial is that one of the two men whom Williams was formally accused of killing, Jimmy Ray Payne, was not even initially considered a murder victim. The cause of death listed on his original death certificate was 'undetermined.' Recognizing, however, that a homicide prosecution requires an actual homicide victim, the state later had the death certificate altered.

The legitimacy of Williams' defense attorneys was suspect before the trial even began on January 6, 1982. Despite the amazingly high profile of the case and the wholesale vilification of Williams by the local media, no request was made for a

change of venue—an incomprehensible oversight for anyone truly motivated to protect the rights of the accused. Despite the best efforts of the state to railroad Williams with a largely fraudulent circumstantial case, he likely would have been acquitted if his defense team had not made another crucial ‘error’ by sending Wayne to the stand in his own defense. Williams performed well on the stand for the first two days, until his attorneys compounded their ‘error’ by urging their client to be combative. Jurors later described Williams as “his own worst enemy” for the performance that followed.

On February 27, the promising young man who had once been installed as student council president by Andrew Young was found guilty of two counts of first-degree murder. He received two consecutive life sentences, as punishment for crimes that he clearly did not commit. There is reason to believe, however, that Williams *was* involved in the pedophile operations that formed the backdrop for the murders.

By profession, Wayne Williams was a freelance photographer and a self-styled ‘music promoter’ who spent much of his free time trolling for ‘talent’ among Atlanta’s black youth. He was also known to impersonate a police officer, a talent that had once gotten him arrested at the age of eighteen. According to reports that author/investigator Chet Dettlinger received from neighbors, Wayne and his father responded to the alleged bridge incident by performing “a major cleanup job around their house. They carried out boxes and carted them off in the station wagon. They burned negatives and photographic prints in the outdoor grill.” It does not require a great deal of imagination to figure out what sort of photographs it was that Williams had been taking.

Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that Williams was responsible for the deaths of Nathaniel Cater or Jimmy Payne, let alone the other twenty-one victims whose murders were declared solved following his conviction. Even before the trial began, there were clear indications that the state considered all the killings solved. “Emergency Hot Line” posters had been taken down from phone booths, buses and schools; “Reward” signs had also been taken down, and extra police patrols had been withdrawn. The task force had been pared down to just six remaining members, and most of the media circus had left town.

None of the pedophiles connected to the case were ever seriously considered as suspects, and certainly none were ever charged with any of the murders. There is little doubt though that many of the victims were involved in a large and well-protected child prostitution and child pornography ring. Unanswered though are the questions of why, and by whom, they were killed.

Many have theorized that the Ku Klux Klan, as well as the CIA and the FBI, were involved in the killings. FBI documents purportedly reveal that a Klansman named Charles Sanders confessed to involvement in many of the killings as a way

to incite a race war. While inflaming racial tensions may well have been *a* goal of the killings, however, it seems unlikely that that was the primary motivation. Another motive was identified by a witness named Shirley McGill, whose story was made public by Roy Innis, head of the Congress of Racial Equality, which had assisted in an independent investigation into the murders. McGill, a Miami cocktail waitress, claimed that the murders were perpetrated by a cult involved in drug trafficking, child pornography, and Satanism.

The cult, she said, was composed of members in both Georgia and Florida. One of the leaders was her part-time lover, Vietnam veteran Parnell Traham. She claimed that she had witnessed both animal and human sacrifices and she spoke of “business murders” that the cult had committed. Wayne Williams was identified as a member of the cult whom she had seen filming rituals, but not directly participating in the ritual homicides. McGill claimed to be a bookkeeper for the cult’s drug trafficking operations, which involved purchasing used cars in Miami, packing them with drugs, and then delivering them to Atlanta and Houston. She also said that the ring had police protection and that at least one funeral home was complicit in disposing of bodies.

CORE’s Innis delivered this story to the press in April 1981 and he was, not surprisingly, greeted with skepticism and derision. With its witness under attack, CORE commissioned a battery of tests to gauge her veracity. McGill passed two polygraph examinations, repeated her story under hypnosis, and was declared sane by examining psychiatrists. She was also able to lead investigators to remote sites that had clearly been used for the performance of rituals.

A few months before CORE’s attempt to publicize McGill’s story, police had received an anonymous call that led them to an abandoned home in southwest Atlanta. Neighbors that were questioned reported strange comings and goings at odd hours. Investigators reported being sickened by an odor “like decaying flesh,” though no bodies were found. Detectives did find children’s clothing, along with an ax, a hatchet, and two bibles nailed to the wall—both open to passages on human sacrifice. Professor Carl Raschke has written that, in the neighborhoods where the killings occurred, “a number of children have told police about satanic sex abuse in which, they insist, they were compelled to drink both animal and human blood.” Some months after McGill came forward, searchers stumbled upon a ritual site littered with the carcasses of slaughtered animals. Prominent features of the site included a stone altar stained with blood and a twelve-foot-high charred cross.

It is not inconceivable that the killings were performed as human sacrifices. Some reports hold that several of the parents reported to independent investigators that the bodies of their children had crosses carved into their foreheads and

chests. It is also not inconceivable that the ritual killings were recorded as snuff films.

There is another, even darker, scenario that merits brief mention here, even if it is almost entirely speculative. Atlanta is home to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), a prime suspect among conspiracy researchers as the origin of the AIDS virus. The Atlanta child killings began, strangely enough, just as the first cases of AIDS, yet to be identified, began surfacing in a few of America's big cities. There is a possibility that some of the young victims, known to be involved in sexual activities with both adult pedophiles and other children, were deliberately infected with the virus to track the progress of the disease and determine its communicability through sexual contact.

Several of the unindicted pedophile suspects died from the disease in the years following the murders, including James Brooks in 1987, and some of the most suppressed details of the case hint at some type of medical testing of some of the victims. A law enforcement memo that surfaced during the investigation, for example, described the castration of some victims, and a mortician's assistant reported finding the presence of syringe marks in the genitals of many of the victims. Were these children used as human guinea pigs for the most far-reaching biological warfare project ever conceived by man? If so, then they would certainly have had to be eliminated after serving their purpose. After all, it would have been difficult to explain a number of black children dropping dead from an 'emerging' virus thought at the time to be affecting only white gay males.

It could be that the young victims were doomed even had they not met with violent deaths. And it could be that their deaths were just the opening salvo of a 'final solution' that is now quietly killing millions.

"I happen to believe that the numbers [of child prostitutes] are far greater than we can imagine...I don't have a doubt in my mind that were we to adequately police this problem that we would find that it is far more pervasive than any of us ever have imagined."

—Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, commenting on
the prevalence of child exploitation in his city,
NPR News Morning Edition, May 9, 2001

Chapter 22

Role Models

“No habit is more easily acquired than mard-savoring; eat one, delicious, eat another, no two taste alike, but all are subtle and the effect is somewhat that of an olive.”

—Donatien Alphonse Francois, describing
the joys of, quite literally, eating shit

Long before Marc Dutroux, there was Donatien Alphonse Francois.

Francois was born into an atmosphere of power and privilege; his mother was a relative of the ruling administration and his father served as an ambassador. When Donatien was just two years old, he was sent to live with his paternal grandmother and her five daughters in what has been described as a sexually promiscuous atmosphere. The women reportedly lavished attention on the boy, though it is debatable just what sort of attention it was.

After two years there, Donatien was sent to live with his father’s brother, who was ostensibly a man of the cloth. Francois’ uncle was rather notorious for frequently engaging in decadent sex, with numerous male and female partners. He also had a considerable collection of pornographic literature. The young boy spent a considerable amount of time reading through his uncle’s collection. After six years there, he was uprooted once again and sent to live at a religious prep school. At the school, he was subjected to harsh and frequent punishment from his caretakers, including being frequently sodomized. The young man was also taught the importance of confessing his sins as the means to identify and eliminate personal weaknesses.

Following his years at the prep school, Donatien was enrolled in a military academy, after which he entered into military service. Due to his family connections, he entered as a lieutenant and was soon placed in an elite, Special Forces unit. He left the military after eight years holding the rank of captain, and at that time married a woman from a socially prominent family. She would serve as his

accomplice in many of his subsequent crimes, and his new mother-in-law would actively work to free him from various legal entanglements.

His first arrest came some ten days after a violent sexual assault on a woman. He is said to have raped her with a religious icon, and likely to have whipped her as well. For this, he served less than three weeks in jail. Shortly thereafter, he went to live in a secluded, fortified family estate that had at one time served as a jail. Within a year or two of his arrival, he had built a secret room. He also hosted frequent parties that were notable for featuring what were euphemistically dubbed 'orgies.' These parties were attended by various members of the ruling elite and the clergy, including Donatien's aforementioned uncle.

Within a few years of taking up residence in the estate, Francois was once again arrested. Once again he had violently assaulted a young woman, on Easter Sunday, forcing her to strip and then binding her, sexually assaulting her and whipping her with a cat-o-nine-tails. He then left her locked up, but she was able to escape out a window. She was found running from the estate half-naked and covered in her own blood. For that assault, Francois served just four months before being once again released.

Shortly thereafter, Donatien rejoined the military, elevated to the rank of colonel despite his criminal past. It was not long before he once again ran afoul of the law. Francois and a male accomplice reportedly engaged the services of four prostitutes, as well as the services of each other. There was, of course, the requisite whipping involved. Following the encounter, the women became violently ill and grew convinced that they had been poisoned. When police went to arrest Donatien and his accomplice, they found that someone had tipped them off to the impending arrest and the men had fled. By the end of the year, however, Donatien was in custody, and he once again served prison time.

He 'escaped,' however, after less than five months, curiously leaving behind a note claiming full credit for engineering the escape and explicitly clearing his captors of any culpability. Strangely enough, the escape occurred on, of all days, April 30: *Walpurgisnacht*.

In short order, Francois was back at the family estate, with authorities making occasional raids on the compound in an alleged attempt to arrest the escaped convict. His activities, meanwhile, grew increasingly disturbing. Shortly after his return, he began staging what some accounts refer to euphemistically as extended 'orgies.' That hardly seems a fair description of what occurred, however, since some of the 'participants' were young boys and girls being held at the estate, many of whom had been abducted. The victims were abused continuously for several weeks. Assisted by his wife and at least three other adults, Francois inflicted all manner of torture and sexual abuse on the victims. Whipping was a preferred means of torture, along with burning with heated implements. Donatien also had

a fondness for sodomizing his victims, and for forcing them to eat excrement, which he himself indulged in as well.

Despite the gravity of his crimes, legal action was not immediately taken. It was several months before police finally raided the estate, in search of the escaped convict, kidnapper, torturer, rapist, and pedophile. Though the suspect was reportedly hiding in the estate, his pursuers failed to locate him. A little more than a year later, he was still free and was back at the property, accompanied by a number of young women and girls procured for him by a member of the clergy. A few months later, he was finally arrested and imprisoned, but he quickly escaped once again, only to be recaptured a month later. Following his recapture, he remained in prison for thirteen years, during which time he wrote prolifically of his fascination with torture, coprophilia, pedophilia, and various other depravities.

Amazingly enough, just two years after his release he held political office. A decade later, he was confined to a mental institution, where he spent the last twelve years of his life once again writing of rape, torture and murder. After his death at the age of seventy-four, his oldest son burned most of his writings, though some survived.

Donatien's full regal title was Donatien Alphonse Francois, Comte de Sade, but he is better known as the Marquis de Sade. His crimes were committed over two hundred years ago, around the time that America was declaring its independence. Yet even as these words are being written, he is being revived and rehabilitated on America's movie screens. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* provides the following assessment of the Marquis: "de Sade is to some an incarnation of absolute evil who advocates the unleashing of instincts even to the point of crime. Others have looked upon him as a champion of total liberation through the satisfaction of his desires in all forms."

Virtually those same words have been used to eulogize such other notorious figures as Aleister Crowley and Anton LaVey, both of whose later musings echoed the writings of the Marquis.

Perhaps the most cogent analysis of those writings was provided by Alex Steiner, a contributor to the *World Socialist Web Site*. Steiner noted that the "clearest formulation of de Sade's philosophy appears in his *Philosophy in the Bedroom* [which] features a philosophical interlude." Within that interlude lies a "philosophical defense, argued in the language of the Enlightenment, but not of course, in the spirit of the Enlightenment, that presents a justification for incest, rape, murder and cruelty." That interlude is said to have been published separately in 1848, under the title "Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans." It was intended for distribution as a political manifesto. Among other things, the tract contained a "defense of murder as a legitimate civil activity

used to weed out the weaker members of society.” Steiner also noted that writer and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini⁴⁹ saw “in de Sade the antecedents of fascism.” One of the defining characteristics of de Sade’s philosophy was his “view of society as composed of atomistic individuals potentially engaged in a war of all against all,” which is, of course, precisely the direction in which Western society is being driven.

Perhaps the most revealing passage in Steiner’s piece reads as follows: “De Sade’s state of nature is a veritable hell on earth. Perhaps de Sade’s alleged Satanism is an appropriate metaphor of his philosophy.” It could be reasonably argued that Satanism was more than just a metaphor of de Sade’s philosophy; it *was* his philosophy. As Steiner notes, “De Sade is unwilling to allow any restraints on his ability to exploit, mistreat and even destroy other human beings in the pursuit of pleasure.” That same notion is now the mantra of modern Satanists, expressed by Crowley and others as: “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.”

“Sade...only had one occupation in his long life which really absorbed him—that of enumerating to the point of exhaustion the possibilities of destroying human life, of destroying them and of enjoying the thought of their death and suffering.”

—French writer Georges Bataille

* * * * *

More than three centuries before the birth of de Sade, another Frenchman was providing a blueprint for the Marquis to later follow. Born in 1406 in the ‘Black Tower’ of his family’s castle at Champtoce, Gilles de Rais was the eldest son of one of the wealthiest men in all of France, Guy de Rais. Gilles’ mother was Marie d’Craon, the daughter of Jean d’Craon, who was also one of the wealthiest and most politically powerful men in the country.

In 1415, Guy de Rais was reportedly gored to death by a boar while hunting. That same year, Gilles mother died as well, as did her brother, Amaury d’Craon,

49 Strangely enough, Pasolini was killed in an apparent ritual murder in 1975. The slain leftist was discovered just two days after Halloween with his head bludgeoned beyond recognition. UK author Janet Street-Porter noted that “only a few weeks before his death he had written a series of newspaper articles attacking his compatriots, saying they had become obsessed with crime and had abandoned genuine values for those of the bourgeois consumer society.”

who was slain in the legendary battle at Agincourt. As Amaury had been Jean d'Craon's only son, the rapid succession of deaths left young Gilles de Rais as the sole heir to both the de Rais and the d'Craon family fortunes. In 1420, Gilles kidnapped and then married his cousin, Catherine de Thouars, whose family had vast land holdings adjacent to the properties owned by the de Rais and d'Craon families. At just sixteen years of age, Gilles de Rais stood poised to become the wealthiest man in France—by some accounts, possibly the richest man in all of Europe.

Following the death of his parents, Gilles was raised by his grandfather, Jean d'Craon, and was trained as a knight and a soldier. By 1429, he had been named the Marshal of France, making him the highest-ranking military figure in the country—roughly equivalent to the post today of Secretary of Defense. Serving alongside of him was someone who is now regarded as the patron saint of France: Joan of Arc. Joan was said to hear voices in her head, not unlike numerous others whose stories have filled the pages of this book. She also reportedly had 'visions,' which she apparently attributed to divine guidance.

Traveling with a 10,000-man army and accompanied by her general and adviser, Gilles de Rais, Joan was credited with saving France by lifting the siege of Orleans, a crucial battle in the Hundred Years War between France and England. Shortly after that, Gilles was given the honor of personally crowning France's new king, Charles VII. Joan of Arc sat at the new king's side during the coronation. Joan's fortunes turned quickly, however; she was captured by the Duke of Burgundy the next year and accused by the Brits of heresy and sorcery. She was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431.⁵⁰ The next year, de Rais ended his public career and retired, along with his entourage, to a family castle at Machecoul, which was just one of five lavish country estates that Gilles then owned.

The arrival of Machecoul's new residents was accompanied almost immediately by the disappearances of local children. The first child was abducted in 1432 by Gilles de Sille, a cousin of Gilles de Rais. The kidnappings continued, uninterrupted, for nearly a decade. The victims were taken to the de Rais castle where

50 According to a report in *Pravda*, Ukrainian anthropologist Sergey Gorbenko determined that it was some other woman, with her face cloaked, who burned at the stake that day. Joan of Arc—also known as Margarita d'Champdiver, the daughter of King Karl VI and his mistress, Odetta d'Champdiver—lived to the age of 57. Gorbenko based his findings on an examination of a collection of skulls of the French royal family housed at the Notre Dame Cathedral, and on correspondence among royal family members and other historical artifacts. ("Joan of Arc Was Not Executed. She Died at 57," *Pravda*, January 17, 2004)

they were brutally and ritualistically slaughtered by Gilles and his accomplices. As the years went by, the list of those accomplices grew, numbering both men and women. Among his more notorious accomplices were Roger de Briqueville, another cousin, and a woman named Perrine Martin, who was also known as “La Meffraye,” or “The Terror.” Another known accomplice was a man named Etienne Corrillaut, who was also known as Poitou. He was, apparently, initially brought to the castle as a victim, but he was spared for unknown reasons.

The rest of the abductees were not so lucky. At the hands of de Rais and his numerous accomplices, they were subjected to torture, rape and sadistic mutilation. Gilles took great pleasure in watching his victims die, frequently raping them or masturbating on them as they were in their death throes. Gilles was also deeply involved in occultism, necromancy and alchemy. Many of the child victims’ dismembered and disemboweled body parts were reportedly used in rituals that were aimed at “summoning demons.” Some reports hold that the blood of some of the victims was used to write a book of spells and incantations.

De Rais’ fatal mistake was apparently the kidnapping of a priest. The church had been aware for years of the recurrent hushed reports of abducted children, but had chosen to ignore them. It was common knowledge among the townspeople that the missing children had been tortured and killed, but they were powerless to voice their accusations against the unfathomably wealthy and powerful Gilles de Rais. In 1440, the accusations were finally made public by the church. Gilles de Sille and Roger de Briqueville promptly disappeared into one of history’s black holes. On September 14, arrest warrants were issued for de Rais and several of his remaining cohorts.

On October 13, 1440, de Rais was indicted on thirty-four counts of murder, sodomy and heresy. The indictment held that 140 children had been abducted over the course of fourteen years. Many historians have denied that the killings began that early, primarily because acknowledging that to be the case would necessitate a reevaluation of the revered Joan of Arc. There is considerable debate about the number of victims as well. Some accounts claim that the figure of 140 is grossly inflated. Others, however, contend that the actual victim count was somewhere between 200 and 800. The true number is, most likely, forever lost to history. According to one account, the dismembered remains of fifty children were found in the tower at the Machecoul castle, and a similar number were discovered at another of the de Rais estates. An untold number of other victims had apparently been cremated.

De Rais confessed to many of his crimes, but he steadfastly refused to admit to the charge of heresy. Both he and the church apparently felt that heresy was a more serious offense than sadistically murdering scores of what were, after all, ‘peasant’ children. Gilles ultimately did confess to all of his crimes, either due to

the threat of, or the actual application of, torture, depending on which account one chooses to believe. On October 26, he was sent to the gallows and executed.

Gilles de Rais reportedly claimed that he had patterned his life after Caligula, the notoriously depraved Roman emperor. He is said by some to have provided the inspiration for the mythical Bluebeard. He also, needless to say, provided the inspiration for countless others who have followed in his footsteps.

* * * * *

“I’m no psycho. I have a good mind.”

—Howard Unruh, responding to a
query from an arresting officer

Long before ‘spree’ killers became a fixture of American society, terrorizing the nation’s schools and workplaces, there was Howard Unruh. Howard was, like the other young men of his generation, drafted by the United States Army and sent off to war. He was trained to kill, and he apparently performed that task quite well as a machine-gunner. It was later discovered that he had kept a diary of his war experiences. All of his kills were carefully recorded, complete with the date, time and place of each killing. Most importantly, Howard included a detailed description of how each of his victims looked in death. He received a number of commendations for his exemplary service.

After returning from the war, he grew increasingly estranged from his parents, with whom he was living. He eventually became something of a recluse, spending much of his time indulging in a hobby he had acquired in the army: collecting, admiring and practicing with various lethal weapons.

Then one day, Howard Unruh just sort of went off.

Armed with a 9mm handgun and a back-up weapon, he took a brisk stroll through downtown Camden, New Jersey, along the way shooting sixteen people, thirteen of whom died instantly. He proved to be a remarkably efficient assassin, robotically shooting most of his victims twice—once in the head and once in the torso. He walked door to door, from a cobbler shop to a barbershop, then to a pharmacy and finally to a tailor. He killed almost everyone he encountered and reportedly remained expressionless throughout the rampage. His youngest victim was just three years old.

Running low on ammunition, Unruh soon retreated to his house. His entire killing spree had lasted just twelve minutes. No sooner was he back home than a local reporter phoned the house. What followed was what Jay Robert Nash described as “one of the strangest phone conversations in the annals of crime”:

Unruh: Hello.

Phillip Buxton: Is this Howard?

Unruh: Yes, this is Howard. What is the last name of the party you want?

Buxton: Unruh.

Unruh: Who are you and what do you want?

Buxton: I'm a friend, and I want to know what they're doing to you.

Unruh: Well, they haven't done anything to me yet, but I'm doing plenty to them.

Buxton: How many have you killed?

Unruh: I don't know yet—I haven't counted 'em, but it looks like a pretty good score.

Buxton: Why are you killing people, Howard?

Unruh: [pause] I don't know. I can't answer that yet—I am too busy. I'll have to talk to you later.

With his house surrounded by dozens of armed officers, Howard Unruh walked out and calmly gave himself up. He never faced trial for the killings. Instead, he was declared incurably insane and committed to the New Jersey State Mental Hospital for a life term. According to recent reports, he is still there, more than half a century later.

* * * * *

“For the highest spiritual working, one must accordingly choose that victim which contains the greatest and purest force. A male child of perfect innocence and high intelligence is the most satisfactory and suitable victim.”

—Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*

Before JonBenét Ramsey, there was the ‘Eaglet,’ otherwise known as Charles Augustus Lindbergh, Jr. His mother was Anne Morrow Lindbergh, born on the summer solstice to Dwight Morrow, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, onetime partner at J.P. Morgan, and close associate of OSS Director and MK-ULTRA operative “Wild Bill” Donovan. His father, of course, was famed aviator Charles Augustus Lindbergh (not to be confused with Richard Speck’s step-father, Carl August Lindbergh).

Lindbergh’s father, in turn, was a prominent attorney and United States Congressman also named Charles Augustus Lindbergh, and his grandfather had

been a member of the Swedish Parliament before moving the family to the United States in 1860. Charles' mother was Evangeline Land, a daughter of Dr. Charles Land. The Lands—like the Lindberghs, Morrrows, and Donovans—were closely tied to the American intelligence infrastructure. Dr. Edwin Land later was the driving force behind the U-2 spy plane project and the chairman of an intelligence subcommittee. He also founded the Scientific Engineering Institute, which served as one of the major funding conduits for MK-ULTRA projects.

In 1905, Charles and Evangeline's family farmhouse burned down and the couple thereafter lived apart, although they remained married. Charles, Sr. was soon inaugurated as a U.S. Congressman. The junior Charles remained with his mother, and for the rest of his childhood, Evangeline kept him away from others. She was so hated by the local townspeople that on at least one occasion, shots were reportedly fired at her and her son.

Fascinated with both guns and aviation, Charles joined the Army Air Corps in 1924. Three years later, he made his famed trans-Atlantic flight and instantly became an international celebrity. After touring the country and basking in the mass adulation, as well as picking up a Congressional Medal of Honor, Lindbergh stayed at the opulent Guggenheim estate where he passed the time with such notables as John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Herbert Hoover, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., and Dwight Morrow. By December 1927, Morrow had introduced Charles to his daughter Anne. Reportedly engaged after just three dates, the couple was married in May 1929. Just over a year later, on the summer solstice of 1930, yet another Charles Augustus Lindbergh was born.

Around that same time, Charles began working at the Rockefeller Institute in New York alongside Alexis Carrel, a eugenics-minded researcher who openly called for the mass extermination of the unfit. Lindbergh chroniclers Ahlgren and Monier described Carrel as "a strange individual who wore a black hooded robe in the laboratory and insisted that all of his lab assistants do the same." Lindbergh also acquired a plane to use for survey flights, which he christened the *Sirius*, so named for the brightest star in the night sky, located in the constellation *Canis Major*. Also known as the 'Dog Star,' it is believed by some occultists to represent Lucifer, the 'light bearer' or 'enlightened one.'

On March 1, 1932, the Eaglet disappeared from the Lindbergh family home—a rambling, newly built, two-story mansion in Hopewell, New Jersey. According to American popular mythology, the child was kidnapped from the isolated, remote and occupied home. The facts of the case have never supported that notion.

Any kidnapper would have had to know the exact location of the child's second-story room, and would have had to know that the shutters on the window of that particular room were the only ones on the house that did not properly latch.

It would have also helped to know that Charles Lindbergh had ordered that the child not be disturbed before 10:00 PM that evening, and that there would therefore be little risk of discovery by any of the five adults who were moving freely about the house that evening. The kidnapper would have had to enter a well lit home that was owned by a man with a known penchant for firearms, and do so without alarming an extremely high-strung dog that was known to bark at the slightest provocation, but that nevertheless never barked that entire evening.

The kidnapper would further have had to know that the Lindberghs were going to be home that night, since it was not their custom to stay at the house during the week. Other than on weekends, the family could usually be found at “Next Day Hill,” the country estate of the Morrow family in Englewood, New Jersey. Charles Lindbergh had requested an unusual deviation from the normal family routine, just as he had requested that no one enter his son’s room that evening.

Upon discovering that the child was missing, Lucky Lindy immediately declared that there had been a kidnapping, before making any effort to search the house and before the discovery of an alleged ransom note. Anne Lindbergh’s first thought was that Charles had done something with the boy. The child’s nursemaid, Bettie Gow, drew the same conclusion. That was in part due to Charles having staged a fake abduction just two months prior, by hiding the child in a closet for twenty minutes and announcing a kidnapping while the household panicked. This time, however, Charles produced a ransom note, which he claimed he found on the windowsill of the nursery, *after* the room had already been thoroughly searched by Anne, Bettie, and another family servant, Elsie Whatley.

Charles Lindbergh promptly made a series of phone calls. The first was to his friend and attorney, Colonel Henry Breckinridge, a former Assistant Secretary of War. The next was to Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf,⁵¹ another friend and the head of the New Jersey State Police, a law enforcement agency designed and run as a military entity. The third was to Colonel William “Wild Bill” Donovan. All three colonels joined in the investigation. Breckinridge brought along Robert Thayer, a known associate of various organized crime figures. Thayer, who was married to a Standard Oil heiress, was later identified as a CIA agent working under State Department cover. To insure that there were enough intelligence operatives in the mix, Admiral Emory S. Land later became peripherally involved in the investigation as well.

51 Schwarzkopf was a West Point graduate, World War I veteran, and the father of George Bush’s future ‘Desert Storm’ commander. He later played a key role in the CIA sponsored coup that installed the Shah of Iran.

Lindbergh appeared calm, cool and collected to police arriving at the scene, and he immediately took command of the investigation, in conjunction with Colonel Schwarzkopf. The Colonel's State Police badly mishandled the investigation right from the start by failing to secure the crime scene, which compromised every piece of potential evidence in sight. They did though quickly set up a command post in the Lindbergh's garage, bring in extra phone lines, and begin a full-scale media circus that possibly topped even the Ramsey spectacle. Before long, reporters were allowed to join with the police in freely trampling over potential evidence.

The only piece of evidence that does appear to have been gathered was a crudely constructed ladder that allegedly was used to enter the second-story window of the Lindbergh child's room. The room itself yielded no evidence whatsoever. As trooper on the scene exclaimed, after the room had been thoroughly dusted for fingerprints: "I'm damned if I don't think somebody washed everything in that nursery before the printmen got there."

The investigation essentially went nowhere for the next several weeks. The only major development was that Lindbergh enlisted the services of a number of organized crime figures, ostensibly to assist in solving the crime and locating the child. Lindy even attempted to secure the release from prison of the notorious Al 'Scarface' Capone.

On May 12, 1932, the mutilated and decomposed corpse of a child was found less than three miles from the Lindbergh home. The body was 'discovered' in a remote location where there was only one building nearby—a Catholic orphanage directly across the road. The corpse's left leg was missing below the knee, as was the left hand, right arm, and most of the internal organs. A ludicrously inept autopsy was promptly performed on the body. Although it was claimed at the time that the examination was performed by Dr. Charles Mitchell, it was actually the work of funeral home director Walter Swayze, who was entirely unqualified for the task. That fact was kept covered up for some forty-five years. The cause of death, if the 'autopsy' report is to be believed, was from a blow to the head. Though no photographs were taken of the skull during the examination, it was claimed that there was evidence of a fracture and a resultant blood clot, as well as a small round hole in the base of the skull.

Charles Lindbergh himself positively identified the body as that of his missing child. His daughter Reeve later stated: "He would have examined the teeth, he would have examined the hair, he would have checked the clothing, any physical evidence...that would have been where he would find relief would have been in the facts." It is unlikely that Lindbergh did any of that. He reportedly was in-and-out of the morgue in less than 90 seconds. In truth, all he really needed to check was a tape measure; the body that was discovered was thirty-three inches tall,

according to Swayze's autopsy report, whereas the missing Lindbergh child was only twenty-nine inches tall, as listed on the 'Wanted' posters distributed around the country. The boy's own physician, who spent more time with the corpse than Lindbergh, was unable to positively identify the remains.

The body was most likely not that of the Eaglet, and Charles Lindbergh, Sr. must surely have been aware of that even as he claimed the dead child as his own and ordered its immediate destruction. Less than twenty-four hours after being discovered, the body had been cremated and the ashes scattered at sea. Anne Lindbergh would later say that she never saw Charles shed a tear for the slain boy.

As the investigation progressed, a number of people connected to the disappearance met with untimely deaths or otherwise dropped out of sight. The Morrow family maid, Violet Sharpe, allegedly killed herself with cyanide just before a visit from the head of the State Police in June 1932. Schwarzkopf claimed that he found her dead upon his arrival. He had been, by most accounts, relentlessly and unconscionably harassing the woman. A German-born gardener, Henry Liepold, who was at one time considered a suspect and who one handwriting expert thought was the author of the ransom note, allegedly killed himself in October 1933. Oliver Whately, another household servant and potential witness, died of unspecified causes before the case made it to trial. And Bettie Gow's boyfriend, "Red" Johnson, was held by police, without being charged, for eighteen days before he was shipped off to Norway, never to be heard from again. Johnson had worked for a business partner of Dwight Morrow.

On September 19, 1934, German immigrant Bruno Richard Hauptmann was arrested and charged with the kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby. After being held without access to an attorney, deprived of sleep, and unmercifully beaten, all in an effort to extract a bogus confession, Hauptmann was put in a police line-up alongside two burly Irish cops, one of them still in uniform. He was positively identified. Schwarzkopf's New Jersey State Police promptly moved Hauptmann's wife out of their home, assumed the lease, and moved in. By all appearances, they then proceeded to manufacture and plant evidence. A week after Hauptmann's arrest, an officer living in his former home 'discovered' that the ladder found at the Lindbergh home had been partially constructed from a floorboard allegedly missing from the attic of the Hauptmann home.

The trial of Richard Hauptmann was, even relative to the standards established by other trials discussed in this book, a ridiculously transparent sham. Virtually everyone who has studied the case, including those who believe that Hauptmann was guilty, acknowledge that the defense case that was presented was hopelessly inept. Hauptmann's attorney, Edward J. Reilly, who was provided for him by the *New York Daily Mirror*, had only one fifteen-minute private conference with his client throughout the entire trial. He was visibly inebriated during

much of the proceedings. He was also reportedly supplied with a steady stream of attractive young prostitutes throughout the trial.

Even had Reilly been motivated to win the case, it would have been an uphill battle. No deposition of witnesses was allowed and no discovery evidence was turned over by the state. The prosecution's case was kept completely under wraps until it was revealed at trial, making it impossible to plan a defense. A number of the witnesses called by the state gave obviously perjured testimony that was completely at odds with both prior statements to police and prior testimony before a grand jury. One such witness was Charles Lindbergh himself, who was, amazingly enough, allowed to sit at the prosecution table throughout the trial, packing a loaded handgun in a shoulder holster.

Transcripts of the trial reveal a painfully obvious bias displayed by the judge, who distinguished himself by routinely overruling all defense objections and just as routinely sustaining all prosecution objections. He also openly mocked the case presented by the defense in his final summation to the jury. Despite the obviously stacked deck, however, the defense could have introduced enough reasonable doubt to win an acquittal had the identification of the child's body been challenged. It was not, however, and Hauptmann was quickly found guilty and sentenced to die.

Just two weeks after the guilty verdict was rendered, defense attorney Reilly suffered a complete nervous breakdown. He was quickly shuffled off to a Brooklyn mental hospital in a straightjacket. Just a few weeks later, he was back in action as though nothing had happened.

Appeals of the conviction were summarily denied, the final denial coming from the U.S. Supreme Court on December 9, 1935. New Jersey Governor Hoffman, however, was resisting the wholesale fraud being perpetrated. He openly accused both Schwarzkopf's team and the prosecution team of fabricating evidence, particularly the ladder, and he announced his intention to go to the Board of Pardons on Hauptmann's behalf. In the wake of that announcement, the Lindberghs fled the country bound for the United Kingdom. Hauptmann was executed three-and-a-half months later at the state prison in Trenton, New Jersey.

Lindbergh soon wound up in Nazi Germany, where he developed close ties to the Nazi elite, particularly *Luftwaffe* chief Hermann Goering. He also became a mouthpiece for virulently anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi propaganda.

It was mentioned previously that the Lindberghs immigrated to America from Sweden in 1860. It was at that time that Lindy's grandfather opted to change the family name. Had he not done so, one of America's greatest folk heroes, Charles Lindbergh, would likely have had a much different name, although one perhaps no less well known: Charles Mansson.

Epilogue

“I need not look beyond this courtroom to see all the liars, the haters, the killers, the crooks, the paranoid cowards... We are all expendable for a cause. No one knows that better than those who kill for policy, clandestinely or openly, as do the governments of the world which kill in the name of God and country.”

—Richard “The Night Stalker” Ramirez,
addressing the court

Jean-Bedel Bokassa was, like all Western-supported ‘Third World’ dictators, a fascist thug who allowed his country’s rich natural resources to be ruthlessly exploited while his countrymen starved. Under his rule, The Central African Republic, a French satellite, was one of the twenty poorest countries in the world.

Bokassa was reportedly orphaned at the age of six, when his father was murdered and his mother allegedly committed suicide just a week later. At the age of eighteen, he joined the French Colonial Army and served throughout World War II. He remained in the army after the war and later served in the First Indochina War (*aka* Vietnam) and then in Algeria (two of the bloodiest and most brutal colonial occupations in recorded history). In 1961, Jean-Bedel left the French Army holding the rank of captain. A few years later, he was appointed by his cousin, President David Dacko, to head the army of the Central African Republic. Just one year after taking the post, he took control of the country from his cousin. Lt. Col. Bokassa assumed the presidency on January 1, 1966, four months before the reputed commencement of the ‘Age of Satan.’

By December 1977, Bokassa had decided that ‘president’ was not a lofty enough title, so he declared himself Emperor Bokassa I of the re-christened Central African Empire. As the country’s self-appointed dictator, he had a very close relationship with French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. The two leaders were frequently photographed together and Giscard was reported to have several relatives in positions of influence in the Bokassa regime and within the Empire’s business community.

In May 1979, it was reported that Bokassa had personally ordered the massacre of 100 (more, by some reports) schoolchildren. The children had been suffocated, stabbed, and beaten with nail-studded clubs. Some eyewitnesses to the carnage claimed that the emperor himself had not only personally killed nearly forty of the victims, but had cannibalized them as well. The Bokassa regime, of course, denied the reports. The atrocity was confirmed though by Amnesty International, and in August 1979, a five-nation team assembled to investigate the incident determined that Emperor Bokassa was indeed personally responsible. Bokassa responded by ordering the executions of forty witnesses who had offered testimony to the investigating board.

The next month, Bokassa was overthrown in what was described as a ‘coup.’ In truth, it was merely a quick facelift to ward off the popular uprising that was brewing in the wake of the revelations. The ‘coup’ merely put Bokassa’s cousin back in power. French troops were on hand to oversee the transition.

Bokassa fled the country, taking with him hundreds of millions of dollars looted from the national treasury, and ultimately settled in France.⁵² He had, however, left a few things behind. As the *Associated Press* later reported, prosecutors at his trial noted “Bokassa’s old palace was filled with evidence of atrocities, including the frozen body of a schoolteacher hanging on a freezer hook and mounds of human flesh prepared for roasting.” Other evidence of atrocities included, according to author Janet Street-Porter, a Dahmer-esque refrigerator full of butchered human remains and a crocodile pond on the palace grounds that contained the partial remains of some forty additional bodies.

Bokassa’s former cook testified at trial that he had regularly served up dishes prepared from human flesh, and that Bokassa had consumed them “with relish.” The *Associated Press* reported that Bokassa enjoyed serving up his critics and political enemies at state dinners honoring visiting dignitaries and heads of state. It has been claimed that at Bokassa’s coronation as emperor—an ostentatious affair financed by the French government to the tune of tens of millions of dollars—guests unknowingly dined on human flesh.

52 Bokassa’s first stop after fleeing his country was in Libya, where he visited with Muammar al-Qaddafi, with whom he had close ties. Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, also ousted in 1979 from the leadership post he had attained with Western support on February 2, 1971 (*Candlemas* on the occult calendar), likewise fled to Libya amid widespread reports of cannibalism. It is claimed that Amin ate one of his own sons and murdered and dismembered one of his wives. He was also known to publicly praise Adolph Hitler.

After eight years of exile, Bokassa returned to his homeland in 1987, despite the fact that he had been sentenced to death *in absentia*. He was arrested, tried, convicted, and once again sentenced to death, but the sentence was shortly thereafter commuted to a twenty-year prison sentence. In 1993, Bokassa was granted amnesty and he walked away a free man, returning to his home village of Berengo. On November 3, 1996, he died of a heart attack at the age of seventy-five and was given an official state funeral befitting a former president.

How then are we to remember Jean-Bedel Bokassa? As a respected head of state—or as a cannibalistic serial killer?

Or is there any difference?

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Introduction

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*“There’s something happening here
What it is ain’t exactly clear”*

Join me now, if you have the time, as we take a stroll down memory lane to a time nearly four-and-a-half decades ago - a time when America last had uniformed ground troops fighting a sustained and bloody battle to impose, uhmm, 'democracy' on a sovereign nation.



Admiral Morrison

It is the first week of August, 1964, and U.S. warships under the command of U.S. Navy Admiral George Stephen Morrison have allegedly come under attack while patrolling Vietnam's Tonkin Gulf. This event, subsequently dubbed the 'Tonkin Gulf Incident,' will result in the immediate passing by the U.S. Congress of the obviously pre-drafted Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which will, in turn, quickly lead to America's deep immersion into the bloody Vietnam quagmire. Before it is over, well over fifty thousand American bodies - along with literally millions of Southeast Asian bodies - will litter the battlefields of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

For the record, the Tonkin Gulf Incident appears to differ somewhat from other alleged provocations that have driven this country to war. This was not, as we have seen so many times before, a 'false flag' operation (which is to say, an operation that involves Uncle Sam attacking himself and then pointing an accusatory finger at someone else). It was also not, as we have also seen on more than one occasion, an attack that was quite deliberately provoked. No, what the Tonkin Gulf incident actually was, as it turns out, is an 'attack' that never took place at all. The entire incident, as has been all but officially acknowledged, was spun from whole cloth. (It is quite possible, however, that the intent was to provoke a defensive response, which could then be cast as an unprovoked attack on U.S ships. The ships in question were on an intelligence mission and were operating in a decidedly provocative manner. It is quite possible that when Vietnamese forces failed to respond as anticipated, Uncle Sam decided to just pretend as though they had.)

Nevertheless, by early February 1965, the U.S. will - without a declaration of war and with no valid reason to wage one - begin indiscriminately bombing North Vietnam. By March of that same year, the infamous "Operation Rolling Thunder" will have commenced. Over the course of the next three-and-a-half years, millions of tons of bombs, missiles, rockets, incendiary devices and chemical warfare agents will be dumped on the people of Vietnam in what can only be described as one of the worst crimes against humanity ever perpetrated on this planet.

Also in March of 1965, the first uniformed U.S. soldier will officially set foot on Vietnamese soil (although Special Forces units masquerading as 'advisers' and 'trainers' had been there for at least four years, and likely much longer). By April 1965, fully 25,000 uniformed American kids, most still teenagers barely out of high school, will be slogging through the rice paddies of Vietnam. By the end of the year, U.S. troop strength will have surged to 200,000.



Lookout Mountain Ave and Laurel Canyon Blvd, google maps

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the world in those early months of 1965, a new 'scene' is just beginning to take shape in the city of Los Angeles. In a geographically and socially isolated community known as Laurel Canyon - a heavily wooded, rustic, serene, yet vaguely ominous slice of LA nestled in the hills that separate the Los Angeles basin from the San Fernando Valley - musicians, singers and songwriters suddenly begin to gather as though summoned there by some unseen Pied Piper. Within months, the 'hippie/flower child' movement will be given birth there, along with the new style of music that will provide the soundtrack for the tumultuous second half of the 1960s.



An uncanny number of rock music superstars will emerge from Laurel Canyon beginning in the mid-1960s and carrying through the decade of the 1970s. The first to drop an album will be The Byrds, whose biggest star will prove to be David Crosby. The band's debut effort, "Mr. Tambourine Man," will be released on the Summer Solstice of 1965. It will quickly be followed by releases from

- the John Phillips-led Mamas and the Papas (*If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears*, January 1966)
- Love with Arthur Lee (*Love*, May 1966)

- Frank Zappa and The Mothers of Invention (*Freak Out*, June 1966)
- Buffalo Springfield, featuring Stephen Stills and Neil Young (*Buffalo Springfield*, October 1966)
- The Doors (*The Doors* January 1967)

One of the earliest on the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene is Jim Morrison, the enigmatic lead singer of The Doors. Jim will quickly become one of the most iconic, controversial, critically acclaimed, and influential figures to take up residence in Laurel Canyon. Curiously enough though, the self-proclaimed "Lizard King" has another claim to fame as well, albeit one that none of his numerous chroniclers will feel is of much relevance to his career and possible untimely death: he is the son, as it turns out, of the aforementioned Admiral George Stephen Morrison.

And so it is that, even while the father is actively conspiring to fabricate an incident that will be used to massively accelerate an illegal war, the son is positioning himself to become an icon of the 'hippie'/anti-war crowd. Nothing unusual about that, I suppose. It is, you know, a small world and all that. And it is not as if Jim Morrison's story is in any way unique.



Frank Zappa: Pro-war, authoritarian, and what else?

During the early years of its heyday, Laurel Canyon's father figure is the rather eccentric personality known as Frank Zappa. Though he and his various Mothers of Invention line-ups will never attain the commercial success of the band headed by the admiral's son, Frank will be a hugely influential figure among his contemporaries. Ensconced in an abode dubbed the 'Log Cabin' - which sat right in the heart of Laurel Canyon, at the crossroads of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue - Zappa will play host to virtually every musician who passes through the canyon in the mid- to late-1960s. He will also discover and sign numerous acts to his various Laurel Canyon-based record labels. Many of these acts will be rather bizarre and somewhat obscure characters (think Captain Beefheart and Larry "Wild Man" Fischer), but some of them, such as psychedelic rocker cum shock-rocker Alice Cooper, will go on to superstardom.

Zappa, along with certain members of his sizable entourage (the 'Log Cabin' was run as an early commune, with numerous hangers-on occupying various rooms in the main house and the guest house, as well as in the peculiar caves and tunnels lacing the grounds of the home;

far from the quaint homestead the name seems to imply, by the way, the 'Log Cabin' was a cavernous five-level home that featured a 2,000+ square-foot living room with three massive chandeliers and an enormous floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace), will also be instrumental in introducing the look and attitude that will define the 'hippie' counterculture (although the Zappa crew preferred the label 'Freak'). Nevertheless, Zappa (born, curiously enough, on the Winter Solstice of 1940) never really made a secret of the fact that he had nothing but contempt for the 'hippie' culture that he helped create and that he surrounded himself with.



The Zappa 'Log Cabin'

Given that Zappa was, by numerous accounts, a pro-war, rigidly authoritarian control-freak, it is perhaps not surprising that he would not feel a kinship with the youth movement that he helped nurture. And it is probably safe to say that Frank's dad also had little regard for the youth culture of the 1960s, given that Francis Zappa was, in case you were wondering, a chemical warfare specialist assigned to - where else? - the Edgewood Arsenal. Edgewood is, of course, the longtime home of America's chemical warfare program, as well as a facility frequently cited as being deeply enmeshed in MK-ULTRA operations. Curiously enough, Frank Zappa literally grew up at the Edgewood Arsenal, having lived the first seven years of his life in military housing on the grounds of the facility. The family later moved to Lancaster, California, near Edwards Air Force Base, where Francis Zappa continued to busy himself with doing classified work for the military/intelligence complex. His son, meanwhile, prepped himself to become an icon of the peace & love crowd. Again, nothing unusual about that, I suppose.

Zappa's manager, by the way, is a shadowy character by the name of Herb Cohen, who had come out to L.A. from the Bronx with his brother Mutt just before the music and club scene began heating up. Cohen, a former U.S. Marine, had spent a few years traveling the world before his arrival on the Laurel Canyon scene. Those travels, curiously, had taken him to the Congo in 1961, at the very time that leftist Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was being tortured and killed by our very own CIA. Not to worry though; according to one of Zappa's biographers, Cohen wasn't in the Congo on some kind of nefarious intelligence mission. No,

he was there, believe it or not, to supply arms to Lumumba "in defiance of the CIA." Because, you know, that is the kind of thing that globetrotting ex-Marines did in those days (as we'll see soon enough when we take a look at another Laurel Canyon luminary).



Making up the other half of Laurel Canyon's First Family is Frank's wife, Gail Zappa, known formerly as Adelaide Sloatman. Gail hails from a long line of career Naval officers, including her father, who spent his life working on classified nuclear weapons research for the U.S. Navy. Gail herself had once worked as a secretary for the Office of Naval Research and Development (she also once told an interviewer that she had "heard voices all [her] life"). Many years before their nearly simultaneous arrival in Laurel Canyon, Gail had attended a Naval kindergarten with "Mr. Mojo Risin" himself, Jim Morrison (it is claimed that, as children, Gail once hit Jim over the head with a hammer). The very same Jim Morrison had later attended the same Alexandria, Virginia high school as two other future Laurel Canyon luminaries - John Phillips and Cass Elliott.

"Papa" John Phillips, more so than probably any of the other illustrious residents of Laurel Canyon, will play a major role in spreading the emerging youth 'counterculture' across America. His contribution will be twofold: first, he will co-organize (along with Manson associate Terry Melcher) the famed Monterrey Pop Festival, which, through unprecedented media exposure, will give mainstream America its first real look at the music and fashions of the nascent 'hippie' movement. Second, Phillips will pen an insipid song known as "San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair)," which will quickly rise to the top of the charts. Along with the Monterrey Pop Festival, the song will be instrumental in luring the disenfranchised (a preponderance of whom are underage runaways) to San Francisco to create the Haight-Asbury phenomenon and the famed 1967 "Summer of Love."



Joni Mitchell plays a song in Cass Elliot's Laurel Canyon backyard while David Crosby and Eric Clapton listen, 1968.

Before arriving in Laurel Canyon and opening the doors of his home to the soon-to-be famous, the already famous, and the infamous (such as the aforementioned Charlie Manson, whose 'Family' also spent time at the Log Cabin and at the Laurel Canyon home of "Mama" Cass Elliot, which, in case you didn't know, sat right across the street from the Laurel Canyon home of Abigail Folger and Voytek Frykowski, but let's not get ahead of ourselves here), John Edmund Andrew Phillips was, shockingly enough, yet another child of the military/intelligence complex. The son of U.S. Marine Corp Captain Claude Andrew Phillips and a mother who claimed to have psychic and telekinetic powers, John attended a series of elite military prep schools in the Washington, D.C. area, culminating in an appointment to the prestigious U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis



After leaving Annapolis, John married Susie Adams, a direct descendant of 'Founding Father' John Adams. Susie's father, James Adams, Jr., had been involved in what Susie described as "cloak-and-dagger stuff with the Air Force in Vienna," or what we like to call covert intelligence operations. Susie herself would later find employment at the Pentagon, alongside John Phillip's older sister, Rosie, who dutifully reported to work at the complex for nearly thirty years. John's mother, 'Dene' Phillips, also worked for most of her life for the federal government in some unspecified capacity. And John's older brother, Tommy, was a battle-

scarred former U.S. Marine who found work as a cop on the Alexandria police force, albeit one with a disciplinary record for exhibiting a violent streak when dealing with people of color.

John Phillips, of course - though surrounded throughout his life by military/intelligence personnel - did not involve himself in such matters. Or so we are to believe. Before succeeding in his musical career, however, John did seem to find himself, quite innocently of course, in some rather unusual places. One such place was Havana, Cuba, where Phillips arrived at the very height of the Cuban Revolution. For the record, Phillips has claimed that he went to Havana as nothing more than a concerned private citizen, with the intention of - you're going to love this one - "fighting for Castro." Because, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of folks in those days traveled abroad to thwart CIA operations before taking up residence in Laurel Canyon and joining the 'hippie' generation. During the two weeks or so that the Cuban Missile Crisis played out, a few years after Castro took power, Phillips found himself cooling his heels in Jacksonville, Florida - alongside, coincidentally I'm sure, the Mayport Naval Station.



Anyway, let's move on to yet another of Laurel Canyon's earliest and brightest stars, Mr. Stephen Stills. Stills will have the distinction of being a founding member of two of Laurel Canyon's most acclaimed and beloved bands: Buffalo Springfield, and, needless to say, Crosby, Stills & Nash. In addition, Stills will pen perhaps the first, and certainly one of the most enduring anthems of the 60s generation, "For What It's Worth," the opening lines of which appear at the top of this post (Stills' follow-up single will be entitled "Bluebird," which, coincidentally or not, happens to be the original codename assigned to the MK-ULTRA program).

Before his arrival in Laurel Canyon, Stephen Stills was (*yawn*) the product of yet another career military family. Raised partly in Texas, young Stephen spent large swaths of his childhood in El Salvador, Costa Rica, the Panama Canal Zone, and various other parts of Central America - alongside his father, who was, we can be fairly certain, helping to spread 'democracy' to the unwashed masses in that endearingly American way. As with the rest of our cast of characters, Stills was educated primarily at schools on military bases and at elite military academies. Among his contemporaries in Laurel Canyon, he was widely viewed as having an abrasive, authoritarian personality. Nothing unusual about any of that, of course, as we have already seen with the rest of our cast of characters.

There is, however, an even more curious aspect to the Stephen Stills story: Stephen will later tell anyone who will sit and listen that he had served time for Uncle Sam in the jungles of Vietnam. These tales will be universally dismissed by chroniclers of the era as nothing more

than drug-induced delusions. Such a thing couldn't possibly be true, it will be claimed, since Stills arrived on the Laurel Canyon scene at the very time that the first uniformed troops began shipping out and he remained in the public eye thereafter. And it will of course be quite true that Stephen Stills could not have served with uniformed ground troops in Vietnam, but what will be ignored is the undeniable fact that the U.S. had thousands of 'advisers' - which is to say, CIA/Special Forces operatives - operating in the country for a good many years before the arrival of the first official ground troops. What will also be ignored is that, given his background, his age, and the timeline of events, Stephen Stills not only could indeed have seen action in Vietnam, he would seem to have been a prime candidate for such an assignment. After which, of course, he could rather quickly become - stop me if you've heard this one before - an icon of the peace generation.

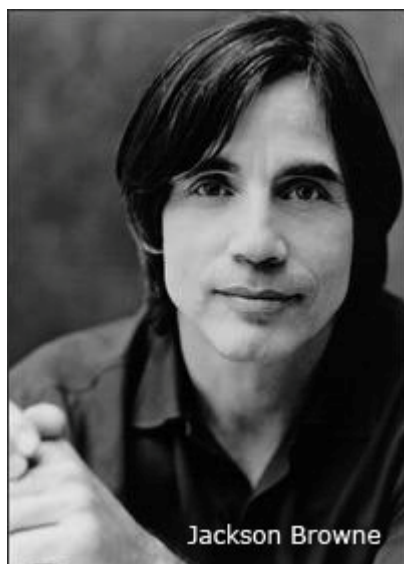


Another of those icons, and one of Laurel Canyon's most flamboyant residents, is a young man by the name of David Crosby, founding member of the seminal Laurel Canyon band the Byrds, as well as, of course, Crosby, Stills & Nash. Crosby is, not surprisingly, the son of an Annapolis graduate and WWII military intelligence officer, Major Floyd Delafield Crosby. Like others in this story, Floyd Crosby spent much of his post-service time traveling the world. Those travels landed him in places like Haiti, where he paid a visit in 1927, when the country just happened to be, coincidentally of course, under military occupation by the U.S. Marines. One of the Marines doing that occupying was a guy that we met earlier by the name of Captain Claude Andrew Phillips.

But David Crosby is much more than just the son of Major Floyd Delafield Crosby. David Van Cortlandt Crosby, as it turns out, is a scion of the closely intertwined Van Cortlandt, Van Schuyler and Van Rensselaer families. And while you're probably thinking, "the Van Who families?," I can assure you that if you plug those names in over at Wikipedia, you can spend a pretty fair amount of time reading up on the power wielded by this clan for the last, oh, two-and-a-quarter centuries or so. Suffice it to say that the Crosby family tree includes a truly dizzying array of US senators and congressmen, state senators and assemblymen, governors, mayors, judges, Supreme Court justices, Revolutionary and Civil War generals, signers of the Declaration of Independence, and members of the Continental Congress. It also includes, I should hasten to add - for those of you with a taste for such things - more than a few high-ranking Masons. Stephen Van Rensselaer III, for example, reportedly served as Grand Master of Masons for New York. And if all that isn't impressive enough, according to the New England Genealogical Society, David Van Cortlandt Crosby is also a direct descendant of 'Founding Fathers' and Federalist Papers' authors Alexander Hamilton and John Jay.

If there is, as many believe, a network of elite families that has shaped national and world events for a very long time, then it is probably safe to say that David Crosby is a bloodline member of that clan (which may explain, come to think of it, why his semen seems to be in such demand in certain circles - because, if we're being honest here, it certainly can't be due to his looks or talent.) If America had royalty, then David Crosby would probably be a Duke, or

a Prince, or something similar (I'm not really sure how that shit works). But other than that, he is just a normal, run-of-the-mill kind of guy who just happened to shine as one of Laurel Canyon's brightest stars. And who, I guess I should add, has a real fondness for guns, especially handguns, which he has maintained a sizable collection of for his entire life. According to those closest to him, it is a rare occasion when Mr. Crosby is not packing heat (John Phillips also owned and sometimes carried handguns). And according to Crosby himself, he has, on at least one occasion, discharged a firearm in anger at another human being. All of which made him, of course, an obvious choice for the Flower Children to rally around.



Another shining star on the Laurel Canyon scene, just a few years later, will be singer-songwriter Jackson Browne, who is - are you getting as bored with this as I am? - the product of a career military family. Browne's father was assigned to post-war 'reconstruction' work in Germany, which very likely means that he was in the employ of the OSS, precursor to the CIA. As readers of my "Understanding the F-Word" may recall, U.S. involvement in post-war reconstruction in Germany largely consisted of maintaining as much of the Nazi infrastructure as possible while shielding war criminals from capture and prosecution. Against that backdrop, Jackson Browne was born in a military hospital in Heidelberg, Germany. Some two decades later, he emerged as ... oh, never mind.

Let's talk instead about three other Laurel Canyon vocalists who will rise to dizzying heights of fame and fortune: Gerry Beckley, Dan Peek and Dewey Bunnell. Individually, these three names are probably unknown to virtually all readers; but collectively, as the band America, the three will score huge hits in the early '70s with such songs as "Ventura Highway," "A Horse With No Name," and the Wizard of Oz-themed "The Tin Man." I guess I probably don't need to add here that all three of these lads were products of the military/intelligence community. Beckley's dad was the commander of the now-defunct West Ruislip USAF base near London, England, a facility deeply immersed in intelligence operations. Bunnell's and Peek's fathers were both career Air Force officers serving under Beckley's dad at West Ruislip, which is where the three boys first met.

We could also, I suppose, discuss Mike Nesmith of the Monkees and Cory Wells of Three Dog Night (two more hugely successful Laurel Canyon bands), who both arrived in LA not long after serving time with the U.S. Air Force. Nesmith also inherited a family fortune estimated at \$25 million. Gram Parsons, who would briefly replace David Crosby in The Byrds before fronting The Flying Burrito Brothers, was the son of Major Cecil Ingram "Coon Dog" Connor II, a decorated military officer and bomber pilot who reportedly flew over 50

combat missions. Parsons was also an heir, on his mother's side, to the formidable Snively family fortune. Said to be the wealthiest family in the exclusive enclave of Winter Haven, Florida, the Snively family was the proud owner of Snively Groves, Inc., which reportedly owned as much as 1/3 of all the citrus groves in the state of Florida.

And so it goes as one scrolls through the roster of Laurel Canyon superstars. What one finds, far more often than not, are the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence complex and the sons and daughters of extreme wealth and privilege - and oftentimes, you'll find both rolled into one convenient package. Every once in a while, you will also stumble across a former child actor, like the aforementioned Brandon DeWilde, or Monkee Mickey Dolenz, or eccentric prodigy Van Dyke Parks. You might also encounter some former mental patients, such as James Taylor, who spent time in two different mental institutions in Massachusetts before hitting the Laurel Canyon scene, or Larry "Wild Man" Fischer, who was institutionalized repeatedly during his teen years, once for attacking his mother with a knife (an act that was gleefully mocked by Zappa on the cover of Fischer's first album). Finally, you might find the offspring of an organized crime figure, like Warren Zevon, the son of William "Stumpy" Zevon, a lieutenant for infamous LA crimelord Mickey Cohen.

All these folks gathered nearly simultaneously along the narrow, winding roads of Laurel Canyon. They came from across the country - although the Washington, DC area was noticeably over-represented - as well as from Canada and England. They came even though, at the time, there was no music industry in Los Angeles. They came even though, at the time, there was no live music scene to speak of. They came even though, in retrospect, there was no discernable reason for them to do so.

It would, of course, make sense these days for an aspiring musician to venture out to Los Angeles. But in those days, the centers of the music universe were Nashville, Memphis and New York. It wasn't the industry that drew the Laurel Canyon crowd, you see, but rather the Laurel Canyon crowd that transformed Los Angeles into the epicenter of the music industry. To what then do we attribute this unprecedented gathering of future musical superstars in the hills above Los Angeles? What was it that inspired them all to head out west? Perhaps Neil Young said it best when he told an interviewer that he couldn't really say why he headed out to LA circa 1966; he and others "were just going like Lemmings."

“He was great, he was unreal—really, really good.”

“He had this kind of music that nobody else was doing. I thought he really had something crazy, something great. He was like a living poet.”



Joni Mitchell in her Laurel Canyon home, 1968

photo: Baron Wolman

Today's first trivia question: both of the above statements were made, on separate occasions, by a famous Laurel Canyon musician of the 1960s era. Both quotes were offered up in praise of another Laurel Canyon musician. Award yourself five points for correctly identifying the person who made the remarks, and five for identifying who the statements refer to. [The answers are at the end of this post.]

In the first chapter of this saga, we met a sampling of some of the most successful and influential rock music superstars who emerged from Laurel Canyon during its glory days. But these were, alas, more than just musicians and singers and songwriters who had come together in the canyon; they were destined to become the spokesmen and de facto leaders of a generation of disaffected youth (as Carl Gottlieb noted in David Crosby's co-written autobiography, "the unprecedented mass appeal of the new rock 'n' roll gave the singers a voice in public affairs.") That, of course, makes it all the more curious that these icons were, to an overwhelming degree, the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence complex and the scions of families that have wielded vast wealth and power in this country for a very long time.

When I recently presented to a friend a truncated summary of the information contained in the first installment of this series, said friend opted to play the devil's advocate by suggesting that there was nothing necessarily nefarious in the fact that so many of these icons of a past generation hailed from military/intelligence families. Perhaps, he suggested, they had embarked on their chosen careers as a form of rebellion against the values of their parents. And that, I suppose, might be true in a couple of cases. But what are we to conclude from the fact that such an astonishing number of these folks (along with their girlfriends, wives, managers, etc.) hail from a similar background? Are we to believe that the only kids from that era who had musical talent were the sons and daughters of Navy Admirals, chemical warfare engineers and Air Force intelligence officers? Or are they just the only ones who were signed to lucrative contracts and relentlessly promoted by their labels and the media?

If these artists were rebelling against, rather than subtly promoting, the values of their parents, then why didn't they ever speak out against the folks they were allegedly rebelling against? Why did Jim Morrison never denounce, or even mention, his father's key role in escalating one of America's bloodiest illegal wars? And why did Frank Zappa never pen a song exploring the horrors of chemical warfare (though he did pen a charming little ditty entitled "The Ritual Dance of the Child-Killer")? And which Mamas and Papas song was it that laid waste to the values and actions of John Phillip's parents and in-laws? And in which interview, exactly, did David Crosby and Stephen Stills disown the family values that they were raised with?

In the coming weeks, we will take a much closer look at these folks, as well as at many of their contemporaries, as we endeavor to determine how and why the youth 'counterculture' of the 1960s was given birth. According to virtually all the accounts that I have read, this was essentially a spontaneous, organic response to the war in Southeast Asia and to the prevailing social conditions of the time. 'Conspiracy theorists,' of course, have frequently opined that what began as a legitimate movement was at some point co-opted and undermined by intelligence operations such as CoIntelPro. Entire books, for example, have been written examining how presumably virtuous musical artists were subjected to FBI harassment and/or whacked by the CIA.

Here we will, as you have no doubt already ascertained, take a decidedly different approach. The question that we will be tackling is a more deeply troubling one: "what if the musicians themselves (and various other leaders and founders of the 'movement') were every bit as much a part of the intelligence community as the people who were supposedly harassing them?" What if, in other words, the entire youth culture of the 1960s was created not as a grass-roots challenge to the status quo, but as a cynical exercise in discrediting and marginalizing the budding anti-war movement and creating a fake opposition that could be easily controlled and led astray? And what if the harassment these folks were subjected to was largely a stage-managed show designed to give the leaders of the counterculture some much-needed 'street cred'? What if, in reality, they were pretty much all playing on the same team?

I should probably mention here that, contrary to popular opinion, the 'hippie'/'flower child' movement was not synonymous with the anti-war movement. As time passed, there was, to be sure, a fair amount of overlap between the two 'movements.' And the mass media outlets, as is their wont, did their very best to portray the flower-power generation as the torch-bearers of the anti-war movement - because, after all, a ragtag band of unwashed, drug-fueled long-hairs sporting flowers and peace symbols was far easier to marginalize than, say, a bunch of respected college professors and their concerned students. The reality, however, is that the anti-war movement was already well underway before the first aspiring 'hippie' arrived in Laurel Canyon. The first Vietnam War 'teach-in' was held on the campus of the University of Michigan in March of 1965. The first organized walk on Washington occurred just a few weeks later. Needless to say, there were no 'hippies' in attendance at either event. That 'problem' would soon be rectified. And the anti-war crowd - those who were serious about ending the bloodshed in Vietnam, anyway - would be none too appreciative.

As Barry Miles has written in his coffee-table book, *Hippie*, there were some hippies involved in anti-war protests, "particularly after the police riot in Chicago in 1968 when so many people got injured, but on the whole the movement activists looked on hippies with disdain." Peter Coyote, narrating the documentary "Hippies" on The History Channel, added that "Some on the left even theorized that the hippies were the end result of a plot by the CIA to

neutralize the anti-war movement with LSD, turning potential protestors into self-absorbed naval-gazers." An exasperated Abbie Hoffman once described the scene as he remembered it thusly: "There were all these activists, you know, Berkeley radicals, White Panthers ... all trying to stop the war and change things for the better. Then we got flooded with all these 'flower children' who were into drugs and sex. Where the hell did the hippies come from?!"



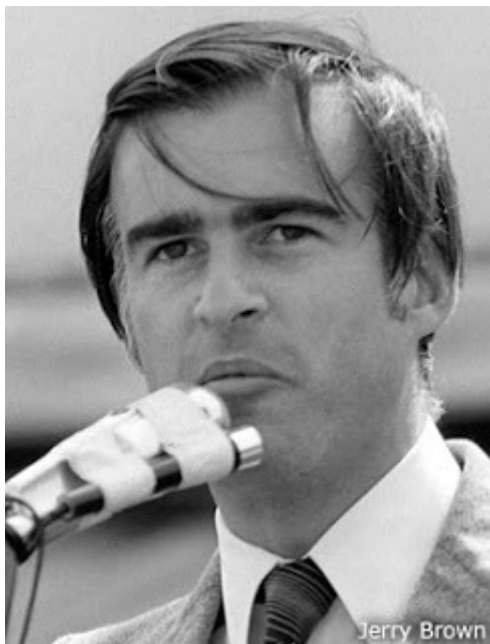
As it turns out, they came, initially at least, from a rather private, isolated, largely self-contained neighborhood in Los Angeles known as Laurel Canyon (in contrast to the other canyons slicing through the Hollywood Hills, Laurel Canyon has its own market, the semi-famous Laurel Canyon Country Store; its own deli and cleaners; its own elementary school, the Wonderland School; its own boutique shops and salons; and, in more recent years, its own celebrity reprogramming rehab facility named, as you may have guessed, the Wonderland Center. During its heyday, the canyon even had its own management company, Lookout Management, to handle the talent. At one time, it even had its own newspaper.)



Wonderland School in Laurel Canyon

One other thing that I should add here, before getting too far along with this series, is that this has not been an easy line of research for me to conduct, primarily because I have been, for as long as I can remember, a huge fan of 1960s music and culture. Though I was born in 1960

and therefore didn't come of age, so to speak, until the 1970s, I have always felt as though I was ripped off by being denied the opportunity to experience firsthand the era that I was so obviously meant to inhabit. During my high school and college years, while my peers were mostly into faceless corporate rock (think Journey, Foreigner, Kansas, Boston, etc.) and, perhaps worse yet, the twin horrors of New Wave and Disco music, I was faithfully spinning my Hendrix, Joplin and Doors albums (which I still have, or rather my eldest daughter still has, in the original vinyl versions) while my color organ (remember those?) competed with my black light and strobe light. I grew my hair long until well past the age when it should have been sheared off. I may have even strung beads across the doorway to my room, but it is possible that I am confusing my life with that of Greg Brady, who, as we all remember, once converted his dad's home office into a groovy bachelor pad.



Anyway ... as I have probably mentioned previously on more than one occasion, one of the most difficult aspects of this journey that I have been on for the last decade or so has been watching so many of my former idols and mentors fall by the wayside as it became increasingly clear to me that people who I once thought were the good guys were, in reality, something entirely different than what they appear to be. The first to fall, naturally enough, were the establishment figures - the politicians who I once, quite foolishly, looked up to as people who were fighting the good fight, within the confines of the system, to bring about real change. Though it now pains me to admit this, there was a time when I admired the likes of (egads!) George McGovern and Jimmy Carter, as well as (oops, excuse me for a moment; I seem to have just thrown up in my mouth a little bit) California pols Tom Hayden and Jerry Brown. I even had high hopes, oh-so-many-years-ago, for (am I really admitting this in print?) aspiring First Man Bill Clinton.

Since I mentioned Jerry "Governor Moonbeam" Brown, by the way, I must now digress just a bit - and we all know how I hate it when that happens. But as luck would have it, Jerry Brown was, curiously enough, a longtime resident of a little place called Laurel Canyon. As readers of *Programmed to Kill* may recall, Brown lived on Wonderland Avenue, not too many doors down from 8763 Wonderland Avenue, the site of the infamous "Four on the Floor" murders, regarded by grizzled LA homicide detectives as the most bloody and brutal multiple murder in the city's very bloody history (if you get a chance, by the way, check out "Wonderland" with Val Kilmer the next time it shows up on your cable listings; it is, by Hollywood standards, a reasonably accurate retelling of the crime, and a pretty decent film as well).

As it turns out, you see, the most bloody mass murder in LA's history took place in one of the city's most serene, pastoral and exclusive neighborhoods. And strangely enough, the case usually cited as the runner-up for the title of bloodiest crime scene - the murders of Stephen Parent, Sharon Tate, Jay Sebring, Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger at 10050 Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon, just a couple miles to the west of Laurel Canyon - had deep ties to the Laurel Canyon scene as well.



As previously mentioned, victims Folger and Frykowski lived in Laurel Canyon, at 2774 Woodstock Road, in a rented home right across the road from a favored gathering spot for Laurel Canyon royalty. Many of the regular visitors to Cass Elliot's home, including a number of shady drug dealers, were also regular visitors to the Folger/Frykowski home (Frykowski's son, by the way, was stabbed to death on June 6, 1999, thirty years after his father met the same fate.) Victim Jay Sebring's acclaimed hair salon sat right at the mouth of Laurel Canyon, just below the Sunset Strip, and it was Sebring, alas, who was credited with sculpting Jim Morrison's famous mane. One of the investors in his Sebring International business venture was a Laurel Canyon luminary who I may have mentioned previously, Mr. John Phillips.



Sharon Tate

Sharon Tate was also well known in Laurel Canyon, where she was a frequent visitor to the homes of friends like John Phillips, Cass Elliott, and Abby Folger. And when she wasn't in Laurel Canyon, many of the canyon regulars, both famous and infamous, made themselves at home in her place on Cielo Drive. Canyonite Van Dyke Parks, for example, dropped by for a visit on the very day of the murders. And Denny Doherty, the other "Papa" in The Mamas and the Papas, has claimed that he and John Phillips were invited to the Cielo Drive home on the night of the murders, but, as luck would have it, they never made it over. (Similarly, Chuck Negron of Three Dog Night, a regular visitor to the Wonderland death house, had set up a drug buy on the night of that mass murder, but he fell asleep and never made it over.)

Along with the victims, the alleged killers also lived in and/or were very much a part of the Laurel Canyon scene. Bobby "Cupid" Beausoleil, for example, lived in a Laurel Canyon apartment during the early months of 1969. Charles "Tex" Watson, who allegedly led the death squad responsible for the carnage at Cielo Drive, lived for a time in a home on - guess where? - Wonderland Avenue. During that time, curiously enough, Watson co-owned and worked in a wig shop in Beverly Hills, Crown Wig Creations, Ltd., that was located near the mouth of Benedict Canyon. Meanwhile, one of Jay Sebring's primary claims-to-fame was his expertise in crafting men's hairpieces, which he did in his shop near the mouth of Laurel Canyon. A typical day then in the late 1960s would find Watson crafting hairpieces for an upscale Hollywood clientele near Benedict Canyon, and then returning home to Laurel Canyon, while Sebring crafted hairpieces for an upscale Hollywood clientele near Laurel Canyon, and then returned home to Benedict Canyon. And then one crazy day, as we all know, one of them became a killer and the other his victim. But there's nothing odd about that, I suppose, so let's move on.



9820 Easton Drive

Oh, wait a minute ... we can't quite move on just yet, as I forgot to mention that Sebring's Benedict Canyon home, at 9820 Easton Drive, was a rather infamous Hollywood death house that had once belonged to Jean Harlow and Paul Bern. The mismatched pair were wed on July 2, 1932, when Harlow, already a huge star of the silver screen, was just twenty-one years old. Just two months later, on September 5, Bern caught a bullet to the head in his wife's bedroom. He was found sprawled naked in a pool of his own blood, his corpse drenched with his wife's perfume. Upon discovering the body, Bern's butler promptly contacted MGM's head of security, Whitey Hendry, who in turn contacted Louis B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg. All three men descended upon the Benedict Canyon home to, you know, tidy up a bit. A couple hours later, they decided to contact the LAPD. This scene would be repeated years later when Sebring's friends would rush to the home to clean up before officers investigating the Tate murders arrived.



Harlow/Bern

Bern's death was, needless to say, written off as a suicide. His newlywed wife, strangely enough, was never called as a witness at the inquest. Bern's other wife - which is to say, his common-law wife, Dorothy Millette - reportedly boarded a Sacramento riverboat on

September 6, 1932, the day after Paul's death. She was next seen floating belly-up in the Sacramento River. Her death, as would be expected, was also ruled a suicide. Less than five years later, Harlow herself dropped dead at the ripe old age of 26. At the time, authorities opted not to divulge the cause of death, though it was later claimed that bad kidneys had done her in. During her brief stay on this planet, Harlow had cycled through three turbulent marriages and yet still found time to serve as Godmother to Bugsy Siegel's daughter, Millicent.

Though Bern's was the most famous body to be hauled out of the Easton Drive house in a coroner's bag, it certainly wasn't the only one. Another man had reportedly committed suicide there as well, in some unspecified fashion. Yet another unfortunate soul drowned in the home's pool. And a maid was once found swinging from the end of a rope. Her death, needless to say, was ruled a suicide as well. That's a lot of blood for one home to absorb, but the house's morbid history, though a turn-off to many prospective residents, was reportedly exactly what attracted Jay Sebring to the property. His murder would further darken the black cloud hanging over the home.

As Laurel Canyon chronicler Michael Walker has noted, LA's two most notorious mass murders, one in August of 1969 and the other in July of 1981 (both involving five victims, though at Wonderland one of the five miraculously survived), provided rather morbid bookends for Laurel Canyon's glory years. Walker though, like others who have chronicled that time and place, treats these brutal crimes as though they were unfortunate aberrations. The reality, however, is that the nine bodies recovered from Cielo Drive and Wonderland Avenue constitute just the tip of a very large, and very bloody, iceberg. To partially illustrate that point, here is today's second trivia question: what do Diane Linkletter (daughter of famed entertainer Art Linkletter), legendary comedian Lenny Bruce, screen idol Sal Mineo, starlet Inger Stevens, and silent film star Ramon Novarro, all have in common?



If you answered that all were found dead in their homes, either in or at the mouth of Laurel Canyon, in the decade between 1966 and 1976, then award yourself five points. If you added that all five were, in all likelihood, murdered in their Laurel Canyon homes, then add five bonus points.

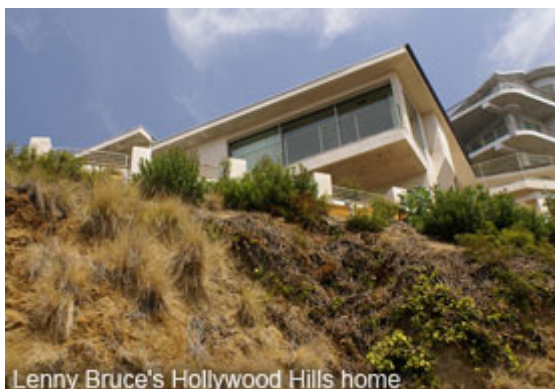


Diane Linkletter Only two of them, of course, are officially listed as murder victims (Mineo, who was stabbed to death outside his home at 8563 Holloway Drive on February 12, 1976, and Novarro, who was killed near the Country Store in a decidedly ritualistic fashion on the eve of Halloween, 1968). Inger Steven's death in her home at 8000 Woodrow Wilson Drive, on April 30, 1970 (Walpurgisnacht on the occult calendar), was officially a suicide, though why she opted to propel herself through a decorative glass screen as part of that suicide remains a mystery. Perhaps she just wanted to leave behind a gruesome crime scene, and simple overdoses can be so, you know, bloodless and boring.



Diane Linkletter, as we all know, sailed out the window of her Shoreham Towers apartment because, in her LSD-addled state, she thought she could fly, or some such thing. We know this because Art himself told us that it was so, and because the story was retold throughout the 1970s as a cautionary tale about the dangers of drugs. What we weren't told, however, is that Diane (born, curiously enough, on Halloween day, 1948) wasn't alone when she plunged six stories to her death on the morning of October 4, 1969. Au contraire, she was with a gent by the name of Edward Durston, who, in a completely unexpected turn of events, accompanied actress Carol Wayne to Mexico some 15 years later. Carol, alas, perhaps weighed down by her enormous breasts, managed to drown in barely a foot of water, while Mr. Durston promptly disappeared. As would be expected, he was never questioned by authorities about Wayne's curious death. After all, it is quite common for the same guy to be the sole witness to two separate 'accidental' deaths.

Art also neglected to mention, by the way, that just weeks before Diane's curious death, another member of the Linkletter clan, Art's son-in-law, John Zwyer, caught a bullet to the head in the backyard of his Hollywood Hills home. But that, of course, was an unconnected, uhmm, suicide, so don't go thinking otherwise.



Lenny Bruce's Hollywood Hills home

I'm not even going to discuss here the circumstances of Bruce's death from acute morphine poisoning on August 3, 1966, because, to be perfectly honest, I don't know too many people who don't already assume that Lenny was whacked. I'll just note here that his funeral was well-attended by the Laurel Canyon rock icons, and control over his unreleased material fell into the hands of a guy by the name of Frank Zappa. And another rather unsavory character named Phil Spector, whose crack team of studio musicians, dubbed The Wrecking Crew, were the actual musicians playing on many

studio recordings by such bands as The Monkees, The Byrds, The Beach Boys, and The Mamas and the Papas.

[Go to part 3](#)

(As for the trivia question, the person being praised, of course, was our old friend Chuck Manson. And the guy singing his praises was Mr. Neil Young.)

“I mean, fuck, he auditioned for Neil [Young] for fuck’s sake.” Graham Nash, explaining to author Michael Walker how close Charlie Manson was to the Laurel Canyon scene.

During the ten-year period during which Bruce, Novarro, Mineo, Linkletter, Stevens, Tate, Sebring, Frykowski and Folger all turned up dead, a whole lot of other people connected to Laurel Canyon did as well, often under very questionable circumstances.

The list includes, but is certainly not limited to, all of the following names:

- Marina Elizabeth Habe, whose body was carved up and tossed into the heavy brush along Mulholland Drive, just west of Bowmont Drive, on December 30, 1968. Habe, just seventeen at the time of her death, was the daughter of Hans Habe, who emigrated to the U.S. from fascist Austria circa 1940. Shortly thereafter, he married a General Foods heiress and began studying psychological warfare at the Military Intelligence Training Center. After completing his training, he put his psychological warfare skills to use by creating 18 newspapers in occupied Germany – under the direction, no doubt, of the OSS. below: view into the San Fernando Valley from Mulholland Drive in Laurel Canyon. In the foreground is the undergrowth where the body of Marina Habe was found.



- Christine Hinton, who was killed in a head-on collision on September 30, 1969. At the time, Hinton was a girlfriend of David Crosby and the founder and head of The Byrd’s fan club. She was also the daughter of a career Army officer stationed at the notorious Presidio military base in San Francisco. Another of Crosby’s girlfriends from that same era was Shelley Roecker, who grew up on the Hamilton Air Force Base in Marin County.
- Jane Doe #59, found dumped into the heavy undergrowth of Laurel Canyon in November 1969, within sight of where Habe had been dumped less than a year earlier. The teenage girl, who was never identified, had been stabbed 157 times in the chest and throat.



- Alan "Blind Owl" Wilson, singer, songwriter and guitarist for the Laurel Canyon blues-rock band, Canned Heat, was found dead in his Topanga Canyon home on September 3, 1970. His death was written off as a suicide/OD. Wilson had moved to Topanga Canyon after the band's Laurel Canyon home – on Lookout Mountain Avenue, next door to Joni Mitchell and Graham Nash's home – burned to the ground. "Blind Owl" was just twenty-seven years old at the time of his death. A little more than a decade later, Wilson's former bandmate, Bob "The Bear" Hite, who had once acknowledged in an interview that he had partied in the canyons with various members of the Manson Family, died of a heart attack at the ripe old age of 36.
- Jimi Hendrix, who reportedly briefly occupied the sprawling mansion just north of the Log Cabin after he moved to LA in 1968, died in London under seriously questionable circumstances on September 18, 1970. Though he rarely spoke of it, Jimi had served a stint in the U.S. Army with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell. His official records indicate that he was forced into the service by the courts and then released after just one year when he purportedly proved to be a poor soldier. One wonders though why he was assigned to such an elite division if he was indeed such a failure. One also wonders why he wasn't subjected to disciplinary measures rather than being handed a free pass out of his ostensibly court-ordered service. In any event, Jimi himself once told reporters that he was given a medical discharge after breaking an ankle during a parachute jump. And one biographer has claimed that Jimi faked being gay to earn an early release. The truth, alas, remains rather elusive. At the time of Jimi's death, the first person called by his girlfriend – Monika Danneman, who was the last to see Hendrix alive – was Eric Burden of the Animals. Two years earlier, Burden had relocated to LA and taken over ringmaster duties from Frank Zappa after Zappa had vacated the Log Cabin and moved into a less high-profile Laurel Canyon home. Within a year of Jimi's death, an underage prostitute named Devon Wilson who had been with Jimi the day before his death, plunged from an eighth-floor window of New York's Chelsea Hotel. On March 5, 1973, a shadowy character named Michael Jeffery, who had managed both Hendrix and Burden, was killed in a mid-air plane collision. Jeffery was known to openly boast of having organized crime connections and of working for the CIA. After Jimi's death, it was discovered that Jeffery had been funneling most of Hendrix's gross earnings into offshore accounts in the Bahamas linked to international drug trafficking. Years later, on April 5, 1996, Danneman, the daughter of a wealthy German industrialist, was found dead near her home in a fume-filled Mercedes.



- Pamela Courson & Jim Morrison Jim Morrison, who for a time lived in a home on Rothdell Trail, behind the Laurel Canyon Country Store, may or may not have died in Paris on July 3, 1971. The events of that day remain shrouded in mystery and rumor, and the details of the story, such as they are, have changed over the years. What is known is that, on that very same day, Admiral George Stephen Morrison delivered the keynote speech at a decommissioning ceremony for the aircraft carrier USS Bon Homme Richard, from where, seven years earlier, he had helped choreograph the Tonkin Gulf Incident. A few years after Jim's death, his common-law wife, Pamela Courson, dropped dead as well, officially of a heroin overdose. Like Hendrix, Morrison had been an avid student of the occult, with a particular fondness for the work of Aleister Crowley. According to super-groupie Pamela DesBarres, he had also "read all he could about incest and sadism." Also like Hendrix, Morrison was just twenty-seven at the time of his (possible) death.
- Brandon DeWilde, a good friend of David Crosby and Gram Parsons, was killed in a freak accident in Colorado on July 6, 1972, when his van plowed under a flatbed truck. In the 1950s, DeWilde had been an in-demand child actor since the age of eight. He had appeared on screen with some of the biggest names in Hollywood, including Alan Ladd, Lee Marvin, Paul Newman, John Wayne, Kirk Douglas and Henry Fonda. Around 1965, DeWilde fell in with Hollywood's 'Young Turks,' through whom he met and befriended Crosby, Parsons, and various other members of the Laurel Canyon Club. DeWilde was just thirty at the time of his death.
- Christine Frka, a former governess for Moon Unit Zappa and the Zappa family's former housekeeper at the Log Cabin, died on November 5, 1972 of an alleged drug overdose, though friends suspected foul play. As "Miss Christine," Frka had been a member of the Zappa-created GTOs, a musical act, of sorts, composed entirely of very young groupies. She was also the inspiration for the song, "Christine's Tune: Devil in Disguise" by Gram Parson's Flying Burrito Brothers. Frka was probably in her early twenties when she died, possibly even younger.
- Danny Whitten, a guitarist/vocalist/songwriter with Neil Young's sometime band, Crazy Horse, died of an overdose on November 18, 1972. According to rock 'n' roll legend, Whitten had been fired by Young earlier that day during rehearsals in San Francisco. Young and Jack Nietzsche, Phil Spector's former top assistant, had given

Whitten \$50 and put him on a plane back to LA. Within hours, he was dead. Whitten was just twenty-nine.

- Bruce Berry, a roadie for Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, died of a heroin overdose in June 1973. Berry had just flown out to Maui to deliver a shipment of cocaine to Stephen Stills, and was promptly sent back to LA by Crosby and Nash. Berry was a brother of Jan Berry, of Jan and Dean. (Dean Torrence, the “Dean” of Jan and Dean, had played a part in the fake kidnapping of Frank Sinatra, Jr., just after the JFK assassination. The staged event was a particularly lame effort to divert attention away from the questions that were cropping up, after the initial shock had passed, about the events in Dealey Plaza.)
- Clarence White, a guitarist who had played with The Byrds, was run over by a drunk driver and killed on July 14, 1973. White had grown up near Lancaster, not far from where Frank Zappa spent his teen years. At least one member of White’s immediate family was employed at Edwards Air Force Base. The driver who killed young Clarence, just twenty-nine years old at the time of his death, was given a one-year suspended sentence and served no time.
- Gram Parsons, formerly with the International Submarine Band, The Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers, allegedly overdosed on a speedball at the Joshua Tree Inn on September 19, 1973. Just two months before his death, Parson’s Topanga Canyon home had burnt to the ground. After his death, his body was stolen from LAX by the Burrito’s road manager, Phil Kaufman, and then taken back out to Joshua Tree and ritually burned on the autumnal equinox (Kaufman had been a prison buddy of Charlie Manson’s at Terminal Island; when Phil was released from Terminal Island in March of 1968, he quickly reunited with his old pal, who had been released a year earlier.) By the time of Gram’s death, his family had already experienced its share of questionable deaths. Just before Christmas, 1958, Parson’s father had sent Gram, along with his mother and sister, off to stay with family in Florida. The next day, just after the winter solstice, “Coon Dog” caught a bullet to the head. His death was recorded as a suicide and it was claimed that he had sent his family away to spare them as much pain as possible. It seems just as likely, however, that “Coon Dog” knew his days were numbered and wanted to get his family out of the line of fire. The next year, 1959, Gram’s mother married again, to Robert Ellis Parsons, who adopted Gram and his sister Avis. Six years later, in June of 1965, Gram’s mother died the day after a sudden illness landed her in the hospital. According to witnesses, she died “almost immediately” after a visit from her husband, Robert Parsons. Many of those close to the situation believed that Parsons had a hand in her death (very shortly thereafter, Robert Parsons married his stepdaughter’s teenage babysitter). Following his mother’s death, Parsons briefly attended Harvard University, and then launched his music career with the formation of the International Submarine Band, which quickly found its way to – where else? – Laurel Canyon. Gram’s death in 1973 at the age of 26 left his younger sister Avis as the sole surviving member of the family. She was killed in 1993, reportedly in a boating accident, at the age of 43.
- “Mama” Cass Elliot, the “Earth Mother” of Laurel Canyon whose circle of friends included musicians, Mansonites, young Hollywood stars, the wealthy son of a State Department official, singer/songwriters, assorted drug dealers, and some particularly

unsavory characters the LAPD once described as “some kind of hit squad,” died in the London home of Harry Nilsson on July 29, 1974 (Nilsson had been a frequent drinking buddy of John Lennon in Laurel Canyon and on the Sunset Strip). At thirty-two, Cass had lived a long and productive life, by Laurel Canyon standards. Four years later, in the very same room of the very same London flat, still owned by Harry Nilsson, Keith Moon of The Who also died at thirty-two (on September 7, 1978). Though initial press reports held that Cass had choked to death on a ham sandwich, the official cause of death was listed as heart failure. Her actual cause of death could likely be filed under “knowing where too many of the bodies were buried.” Moon reportedly died from a massive overdose of a drug used to treat alcohol withdrawal. Like Cass, Moon had at one time been a resident of Laurel Canyon.

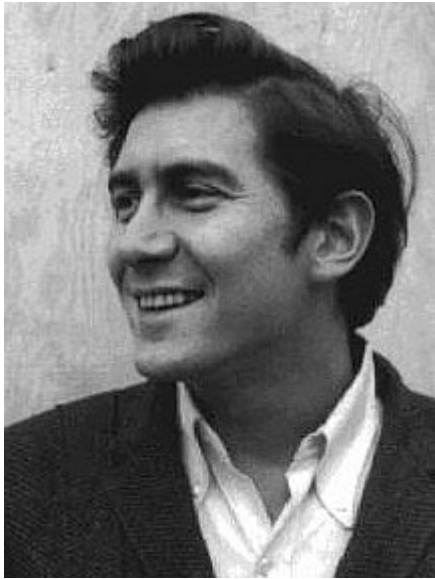
- Amy Gossage, Graham Nash’s girlfriend at the time, was murdered in her San Francisco home on February 13, 1975. Just twenty years old at the time, she had been stabbed nearly fifty times and was bludgeoned beyond recognition. Amy’s father, a famed advertising/PR executive, had died of leukemia in 1969. Not long after, her half-sister had been killed in a car crash. In May of 1974, her mother, the daughter of a wealthy banking family, died as well, reportedly of cirrhosis of the liver. That left just Amy, age 19, and her brother Eben, age 20, both of whom reportedly had serious drug dependencies. Amy’s brutal murder, cleverly enough, was pinned on Eben. Police had conveniently found bloodstained clothes, along with a hammer and scissors, sitting on the porch of Eben’s apartment, looking very much as though it had been planted. A friend of Eben’s would later remark, perhaps quite tellingly, “If Eben did kill her, I’m convinced he doesn’t know he did it.”
- Tim Buckley, a singer/songwriter signed to Frank Zappa’s record label and managed by Herb Cohen, died of a reported overdose on June 29, 1975. Buckley had once appeared on an episode of The Monkees, and, like Monkee Peter Tork (and so many others in this story), he hailed from Washington, DC. Buckley was just twenty-eight at the time of his death. His son, Jeff Buckley, also an accomplished musician, managed to remain on this planet two years longer than his dad did; he was thirty when he died in a bizarre drowning incident on May 29, 1997.
- Phyllis Major Browne, wife of singer/songwriter Jackson Browne, reportedly overdosed on barbiturates on March 25, 1976. Her death was – you all should know the words to this song by now – ruled a suicide. She was just thirty years old.

There are a few other curious deaths we could add here as well, though they were only indirectly related to the Laurel Canyon scene. Nevertheless, they deserve an honorable mention, especially the Bobby Fuller and Phil Ochs entries; the former because it is a rather extraordinary example of the exemplary work done by the LAPD, and the latter because it just may contain a key to understanding the Laurel Canyon phenomenon:

- Bobby Fuller, singer/songwriter/guitarist for the Bobby Fuller Four, was found dead in his car near Grauman’s Chinese Theater on July 18, 1966, after being lured away from his home by a mysterious 2:00-3:00 AM phone call of unknown origin. Fuller is best known for penning the hit song “I Fought the Law,” which had just hit the charts when he supposedly committed suicide at the age of twenty-three. There were multiple cuts and bruises on his face, chest and shoulders, dried blood around his mouth, and a hairline fracture to his right hand. He had been thoroughly doused with gasoline, including in his mouth and throat. The inside of the car was doused as well, and an open book of matches lay on the seat. It was perfectly obvious that Fuller’s killer (or killers) had planned to torch the car, destroying all evidence, but likely got scared away. The LAPD, nevertheless, ruled Fuller’s death a suicide – despite the coroner’s

conclusion that the gas had been poured after Bobby's death. Police later decided that it wasn't a suicide after all, but rather an accident. They didn't bother to explain how Fuller had accidentally doused himself with gasoline after accidentally killing himself. At the time of his death, one of Fuller's closest confidants was a prostitute named Melody who worked at PJ's nightclub, where Bobby frequently played. The club was co-owned by Eddie Nash, who would, many years later, orchestrate the Wonderland massacre. A few years after Bobby's death, his brother and bass player, Randy Fuller, teamed up with drummer Dewey Martin, formerly of Buffalo Springfield.

- Gary Hinman, a musician, music teacher, and part-time chemist, was brutally murdered in his Topanga Canyon home on July 27, 1969. Convicted of his murder was Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil, who had played rhythm guitar in a local band known as the Grass Roots. To avoid confusion with the more famous band already using that name, the Laurel Canyon band changed its name to Love. Beausoleil would claim that the band's new name was inspired by his own nickname, Cupid.
- Janis Joplin, vocalist extraordinaire, was found dead of a heroin overdose on October 4, 1970 at the Landmark Hotel, about a mile east of the mouth of Laurel Canyon, where she occasionally visited. Indications were that she had taken or been given a "hot shot," many times stronger than standard street heroin. Joplin's father, by the way, was a petroleum engineer for Texaco. And though it might normally seem an odd coupling, it somehow seems perfectly natural, in the context of this story, that Janis once dated that great crusader in the war on all things immoral, William Bennett. Like Morrison and Hendrix, Joplin died at the age of twenty-seven.
- Duane Allman and Berry Oakley, lead guitarist and bass player for the Allman Brothers, were killed in freakishly similar motorcycle crashes on October 29, 1971 and November 11, 1972. Allman was the son of Willis Allman, a US Army Sergeant who had been murdered by another soldier near Norfolk, Virginia (home of the world's largest naval installation) on December 26, 1949. In 1967, Duane and his younger brother, Gregg, then billing themselves as The Allman Joys, ventured out to Los Angeles. While there, Gregg auditioned for and was almost signed by the Laurel Canyon band Poco, which featured Buffalo Springfield alumni Richie Furay and Jim Messina, as well as future Eagle Randy Meisner. Duane was killed when a truck turned in front of his motorcycle at an intersection and inexplicably stopped. Just over a year later, Oakley had a similar run-in with a bus, just three blocks from where Allman had been killed. Following the crash, Berry had dusted himself off and declined medical attention, insisting that he was okay. Three hours later, he was rushed to the hospital, where he died. Both Oakley and Allman were just twenty-four years old.



- Phil Ochs, folk singer/songwriter and political activist, was found hanged in his sister's home in Far Rockaway, New York on April 9, 1976. Throughout his life, Ochs was one of the most overtly political of the 1960s rock and folk music stars. A regular attendee at anti-war, civil rights, and labor rallies, Ochs appeared to be, at all times, an unwavering political leftist (he named his first band The Singing Socialists). That all changed, however, and rather dramatically, in the months before his death. Born in El Paso, Texas on December 19, 1940, Phil and his family moved frequently during the first few years of his life. His father, Dr. Jacob Ochs, had been drafted by the US Army and assigned to various military hospitals in New York, New Mexico and Texas. In 1943, Dr. Ochs was shipped overseas, returning two years later with a medical discharge. Upon his return, he was immediately institutionalized and didn't return to his family for another two years. During that time, he was subjected to every 'treatment' imaginable, including electroshock 'therapy.' When he finally returned to his family, in 1947, he was but a shell of his former self, described by Phil's sister as "almost like a phantom." Beginning in the fall of 1956, Phil Ochs began attending Staunton Military Academy, the very same institution that future 'serial killer'/cult leader Gary Heidnik would attend just one year after Ochs graduated. During Phil's two years there, a friend and fellow band member was found swinging from the end of a rope (I probably don't need to add here that the death was ruled a suicide). Following graduation, Phil enrolled at Ohio State University, but not before, oddly enough, having a little plastic surgery done to alter his appearance (doing such things, needless to say, was rather uncommon in 1958). In early 1962, just months before his scheduled graduation, Ochs dropped out of college to pursue a career in music. By 1966, he had released three albums. In 1967, under the management of his brother, Michael Ochs, Phil moved out to Los Angeles. Michael had begun working the previous year as an assistant to Barry James, who maintained a party house at 8504 Ridpath in Laurel Canyon. In the early 1970s, with his career beginning to fade, Phil Ochs began to travel internationally, usually accompanied by vast quantities of booze and pills. Those travels included a visit to Chile, not long before the US-sponsored coup that toppled Salvador Allende. In early summer of 1975, Phil Ochs' public persona abruptly changed. Using the name John Butler Train, Ochs proclaimed himself to be a CIA operative and presented himself as a belligerent, right-wing thug. He told an interviewer that, "on the first day of summer 1975, Phil Ochs was murdered in the Chelsea Hotel by John Train ... For the good of societies, public and secret, he needed to be gotten rid of." That symbolic assassination, on the summer solstice, took place at the same hotel that Devon Wilson

had flown out of a few years earlier. One of Ochs' biographers would later write that Phil/John "actually believed he was a member of the CIA." Also in those final months of his life, Ochs began compiling curious lists, with entries that clearly were references to US biological warfare research: "shellfish toxin, Fort Dietrich, cobra venom, Chantilly Race Track, hollow silver dollars, New York Cornell Hospital ..."

Many years before Ochs' metamorphosis, in an interesting bit of foreshadowing, psychological warfare operative George Estabrooks explained how US intelligence agencies could create the perfect spy: "We start with an excellent subject ... we need a man or woman who is highly intelligent and physically tough. Then we start to develop a case of multiple personality through hypnotism. In his normal waking state, which we will call Personality A, or PA, this individual will become a rabid communist. He will join the party, follow the party line and make himself as objectionable as possible to the authorities. Note that he will be acting in good faith. He is a communist, or rather his PA is a communist and will behave as such. Then we develop Personality B (PB), the secondary personality, the unconscious personality, if you wish, although this is somewhat of a contradiction in terms. This personality is rabidly American and anti-communist. It has all the information possessed by PA, the normal personality, whereas PA does not have this advantage ... My super spy plays his role as a communist in his waking state, aggressively, consistently, fearlessly. But his PB is a loyal American, and PB has all the memories of PA. As a loyal American, he will not hesitate to divulge those memories." Estabrooks never explained what would happen if the programming were to go haywire and Personality B were to become the conscious personality, but my guess is that such a person would be considered a severe liability and would be treated accordingly. They might even be find themselves swinging from the end of a rope. Phil Ochs was thirty-five at the time of his death.

And with that, I think we can move on now from the Laurel Canyon Death List. The list is not yet complete, mind you, since we have only covered the years 1966-1976. Rest assured then that we will continue to add names as we follow the various threads of this story. Some of those names will be quite familiar, while others will be significantly less so. One of the names from that era that has been all but forgotten is Judee Lynn Sill, who was once favorably compared to such other Laurel Canyon singer/songwriters as Joni Mitchell, Judi Collins and Carole King. By the time of her death on November 23, 1979, however, she had been all but forgotten, and not a single obituary was published to note her passing.

Judee was born in Studio City, California, not far from the northern entrance to Laurel Canyon, on October 7, 1944. Her father, Milford "Bud" Sill, was reportedly a cameraman for Paramount Studios with numerous Hollywood connections. When Judee was quite young, however, Bud moved the family to Oakland and opened a bar known as "Bud's Bar." He also operated a side business as an importer of rare animals, which required him to spend a considerable amount of time traveling in Central and South America. Such a business, it should be noted, would provide an ideal cover for covert intelligence work. In any event, Bud Sill was dead by 1952, when Judee was just seven or eight years old. Depending on who is telling the story, Bud died either from pneumonia or a heart attack.

Following Bud's death, the family relocated back to Southern California and Judee's older brother Dennis, still in his teens, took over the family importing business. That didn't last long though as Dennis soon turned up dead down in Central America, either from a liver infection or a car accident. The animal importing business, I guess, is a rather dangerous one.

Judee's mother, Oneta, met and married Ken Muse, an Academy Award winning animator for

Hanna-Barbera who was described by Judee as an abusive, violent alcoholic. At fifteen, Judee fled her violent home life and lived with an older man with whom she pulled off a series of armed robberies in the San Fernando Valley. Those activities landed her in reform school, which did little to curb her appetite for drugs, crime and alcohol. She spent the next few years with a serious heroin addiction, which she financed by dealing drugs and turning tricks in some of LA's seedier neighborhoods.

By 1963, Judee had cleaned herself up enough to enroll in junior college. In the early winter of 1965, however, Judee's mom, her last surviving family member, died either of cancer or of complications arising from her chronic alcoholism (take your pick; the details of this story will likely remain forever elusive). Barely an adult, Judee was left all alone in the world, and thus began another downward spiral into drugs and crime, which culminated in her being arrested and possibly serving time on forgery and drug charges.

In the late 1960s, with her addictions apparently temporarily curbed, Sill joined the Laurel Canyon scene, where she attempted to forge a career as a singer/songwriter. Her first big break came when she sold the song "Lady O" to The Turtles (yet another Laurel Canyon band to hit it big in the mid-1960s; best known for the hit single "Happy Together," The Turtles were led by lead vocalist/songwriter Howard Kaylan, who happened to be, small world that it is, a cousin of Frank Zappa's manager and business partner, Herb Cohen). The band released the song, which featured Judee's guitar work, in 1969. The next year, Sill became the first artist signed to David Geffen's fledgling Asylum record label. The year after that, her self-titled debut album became Asylum's first official release. The first single from the album, "Jesus Was a Crossmaker," was produced by Graham Nash, whom she opened for on tour following the album's release.

Though critically well-received, the album's sales were disappointing, in part because the record was overshadowed by the debut albums of Jackson Browne and The Eagles, both released by Asylum shortly after the release of Judee's album. Sill's second album, 1973's "Heart Food," was even more of a commercial disappointment. Nevertheless, in 1974 she began work on a third album in Monkee Mike Nesmith's recording studio. Prior to completion, however, she abandoned the project and promptly disappeared without a trace. What became of her between that time and her death some five years later remains largely a mystery. It is assumed that she once again descended into a life of drugs and prostitution, but no one seems to know for sure.

It is alleged that she was seriously injured when her car was rear-ended by actor Danny Kaye, causing her to suffer from chronic back pain thereafter, thus contributing to her drug addictions. According to a friend of hers, she lived in a home that featured an enormous photo of Bela Lugosi above the fireplace, a large ebony cross above her bed, and racks of candles. She is said to have read extensively from Rosicrucian manuscripts and from the writings of Aleister Crowley, to have possessed a complete collection of the work of Helena Blavatsky, and to have been a gifted tarot card reader.

What is known for sure is that, on the day after Thanksgiving, 1979, Judee Sill, the last surviving member of her family, was found dead in a North Hollywood apartment. The cause of death was listed as "acute cocaine and codeine intoxication." It was claimed that a suicide note was found, but friends insisted that the supposed note was either a portion of a diary entry or an unfinished song. One of her friends would later note that, at some point in her life,

Judee began to realize that “there was a part of her that wasn’t under her conscious control.”
I’m guessing that Phil Ochs, and quite a few other characters in this story, could relate to that.



The bridge of the USS Bon Homme Richard, January 1964. Just months later, the guy on the right would guide his ship into the Tonkin Gulf, and the young man on the left would begin a remarkable transformation into a brooding rock god. The Bon Homme Richard, by the way, was launched on April 29, 1944, under the sponsorship of Catherine McCain, the grandmother of a certain presidential contender.

Until around 1913, Laurel Canyon remained an undeveloped (and unincorporated) slice of LA - a pristine wilderness area rich in native flora and fauna. That all began to change when Charles Spencer Mann and his partners began buying up land along what would become Laurel Canyon Boulevard, as well as up Lookout Mountain. A narrow road leading up to the crest of Lookout Mountain was carved out, and upon that crest was constructed a lavish 70-room inn with sweeping views of the city below and the Pacific Ocean beyond. The Lookout Inn featured a large ballroom, riding stables, tennis courts and a golf course, among other amenities. But the inn, alas, would only stand for a decade; in 1923, it burned down, as tends to happen rather frequently in Laurel Canyon.



In 1913, Mann began operating what was billed as the nation's first trackless trolley, to ferry tourists and prospective buyers from Sunset Boulevard up to what would become the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue. Around that same time, he built a massive tavern/roadhouse on that very same corner. Dubbed the Laurel Tavern, the structure boasted a 2,000+ square-foot formal dining room, guest rooms, and a bowling alley on the basement level. The Laurel Tavern, of course, would later be acquired by Tom Mix, after which it would be affectionately known as the Log Cabin.

Shortly after the Log Cabin was built, a department store mogul (or a wealthy furniture manufacturer; there is more than one version of the story, or perhaps the man owned more than one business) built an imposing, castle-like mansion across the road, at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and what would become Willow Glen Road. The home featured

rather creepy towers and parapets, and the foundation is said to have been riddled with secret passageways, tunnels, and hidden chambers. Similarly, the grounds of the estate were (and still are) laced with trails leading to grottoes, elaborate stone structures, and hidden caves and tunnels.



Log Cabin walk

Across Laurel Canyon Boulevard, the grounds of the Laurel Tavern/Log Cabin were also laced with odd caves and tunnels. As Michael Walker notes in *Laurel Canyon*, "Running up the hillside, behind the house, was a collection of man-made caves built out of stucco, with electric wiring and light bulbs inside." According to various accounts, one secret tunnel running under what is now Laurel Canyon Boulevard connected the Log Cabin (or its guesthouse) to the Houdini estate. This claim is frequently denounced as an urban legend, but given that both properties are known to possess unusual, uhmm, geological features, it's not hard to believe that the tunnel system on one property was connected at one time to the tunnel system on the other. The Tavern itself, as Gail Zappa would later describe it, was "huge and vault-like and cavernous."



Lookout Mountain Inn

With these two rather unusual structures anchoring an otherwise undeveloped canyon, and the Lookout Inn sitting atop uninhabited Lookout Mountain, Mann set about marketing the

canyon as a vacation and leisure destination. The land that he carved up into subdivisions with names like "Bungalow Land" and "Wonderland Park" was presented as the ideal location to build vacation homes. But the new inn and roadhouse, and the new parcels of land for sale, definitely weren't for everyone. The roadhouse was essentially a country club, or what Jack Boulware of Mojo Magazine described as "a masculine retreat for wealthy men." And Bungalow Land was openly advertised as "a high class restricted park for desirable people only."

"Desirable people," of course, tended to be wealthy people without a great deal of skin pigmentation.

As the website of the current Laurel Canyon Association notes, "restrictive covenants were attached to the new parcel deeds. These were thinly veiled attempts to limit ownership to white males of a certain class. While there are many references to the bigotry of the developers in our area, it would appear that some residents were also prone to bias and lawlessness. This article was published in a local paper in 1925:

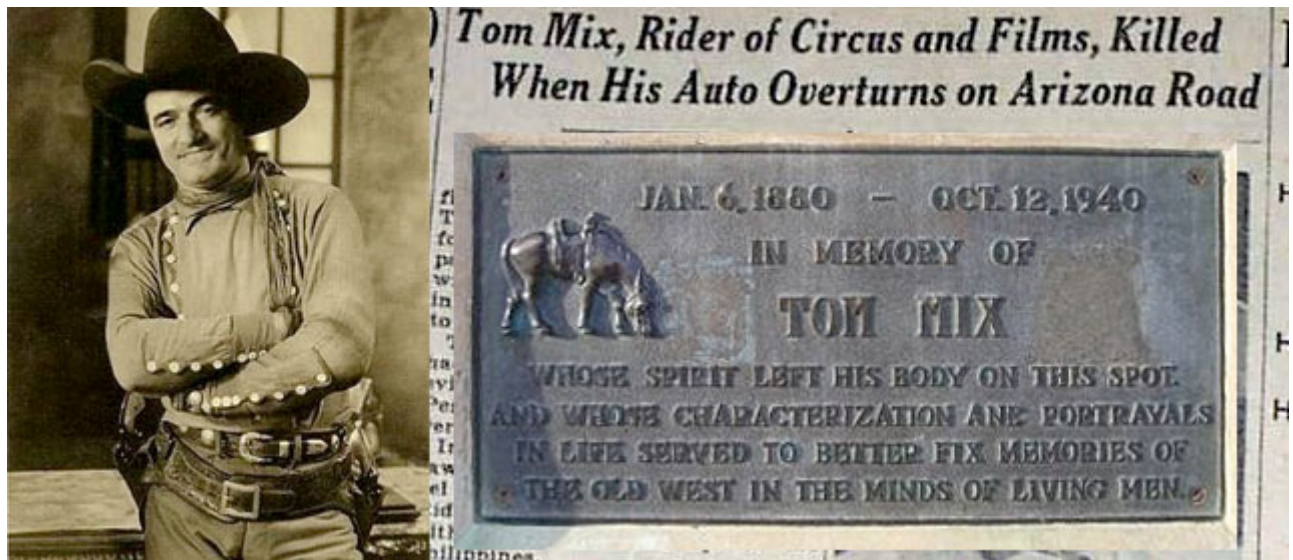
Frank Sanceri, the man who was flogged by self-styled 'white knights' on Lookout Mountain in Hollywood several months ago, was found not guilty by a jury in Superior Judge Shea's courtroom of having unlawfully attacked Astrea Jolley, aged 11.

"Wealthier residents were also attracted to Laurel Canyon. With the creation of the Hollywood film industry in 1910, the canyon attracted a host of 'photoplayers,' including Wally Reid, Tom Mix, Clara Bow, Richard Dix, Norman Kerry, Ramon Navarro, Harry Houdini and Bessie Love."

The author of this little slice of Laurel Canyon history would clearly like us to believe that the "wealthier residents" were a group quite separate from the violent hooligans roaming the canyon. The history of such groups in Los Angeles, however, clearly suggests otherwise. Paul Young, for example, has written in L.A. Exposed of Los Angeles' early "vigilance committees, which stepped in to take care of outlaws on their own, often with the complete absolution of the mayor himself. Judge Lynch, for example, formed the Los Angeles Rangers in 1854 with some of the city's top judges, lawyers, and businessmen including tycoon Phineas Banning of the Banning Railroad. And there was the Los Angeles Home Guard, another bloodthirsty paramilitary organization, made up of notable citizens, and the much-feared El Monte Rangers, a group of Texas wranglers that specialized in killing Mexicans. As one would expect, there was no regard for the victim's rights in such kangaroo courts. Victims were often dragged from their homes, jail cells, even churches, and beaten, horse-whipped, tortured, mutilated, or castrated before being strung up on the nearest tree."

And that, dear readers, is how we do things out here on the 'Left' Coast.

Before moving on, I need to mention here that, of the eight celebrity residents of Laurel Canyon listed by the Association, fully half died under questionable circumstances, and three of the four did so on days with occult significance. While Bessie Love, Norman Kerry, Richard Dix and Clara Bow all lived long and healthy lives, Ramon Navarro, as we have already seen, was ritually murdered in his home on Laurel Canyon Boulevard on the eve of Halloween, 1968. Nearly a half-century earlier, on January 18, 1923, matinee idol Wallace Reid was found dead in a padded cell at the mental institution to which he had been confined. Just thirty-one years old, Reid's death was attributed to morphine addiction, though it was never explained how he would have fed that habit while confined to a cell in a mental hospital.



Tom Mix died on a lonely stretch of Arizona highway in the proverbial single-car crash on October 12, 1940 (the birthday of notorious occultist Aleister Crowley), when he quite unexpectedly encountered some temporary construction barricades that had been set up alongside a reportedly washed-out bridge. Although he wasn't speeding (by most accounts), Mix was nevertheless allegedly unable to stop in time and veered off the road, while a crew of what were described as "workmen" reportedly looked on. It wasn't the impact that killed Mix though, but rather a severe blow to the back of the head and neck, purportedly delivered during the crash by an aluminum case he had been carrying in the back seat of his car. There is now a roadside marker at the spot where Mix died. If you should happen to stop by to have a look, you might as well pay a visit to the Florence Military Reservation as well, since it's just a stone's throw away.

Harry Houdini died on Halloween day, 1926, purportedly of an attack of appendicitis precipitated by a blow to the stomach. The problem with that story, however, is that medical science now recognizes it to be an impossibility. According to a recent book about the famed illusionist (*The Secret Life of Houdini*, by William Kalush and Larry Sloman), Houdini was likely murdered by poisoning. Questions have been raised, the book notes, by the curious lack of an autopsy, an "experimental serum" that Houdini was apparently given in the hospital, and indications that his wife, Bess, may have been poisoned as well (though she survived). On March 23, 2007, an exhumation of Houdini's remains was formally requested by his surviving family members. It is unclear at this time when, or even if, that will happen.

Houdini's death, on October 31, 1926, came exactly eight years after the first death to occur in what would become known as the "Houdini house." In 1918, not long after the home was built, a lover's quarrel arose on one of the home's balconies during a Halloween/birthday party. The gay lover of the original owner's son reportedly ended up splattered on the ground below. According to legend, the businessman managed to get his son off, but only after paying off everyone he could find to pay off, including the trial judge. The aftermath of the party proved to be financially devastating for the family, and the home was apparently put up for sale.

Not long after that, as fate would have it, Harry Houdini was looking for a place to stay in the Hollywood area, as he had decided to break into the motion picture business. He found the

perfect home in Laurel Canyon - the home that would, forever after, carry his name. By most accounts, he lived there from about 1919 through the early 1920s, during a brief movie career in which he starred in a handful of Hollywood films. A key scene in one of those films, "The Grim Game," was reportedly shot at the top of Lookout Mountain, near where the Lookout Inn then stood.



Houdini House

On October 31, 1959, precisely thirty-three years after Houdini's death, and forty-one years after the unnamed party guest's death, the distinctive mansion on the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Willow Glen Road burned to the ground in a fire of mysterious origin (the ruins of the estate remain today, undisturbed for nearly fifty years). On October 31, 1981, exactly twenty-two years after the fire across the road, the legendary Log Cabin on the other side of Laurel Canyon Boulevard also burned to the ground, in yet another fire of mysterious origin (some reports speculated that it was a drug lab explosion). And twenty-five years after that, on October 31, 2006, *The Secret Life of Houdini* was published, challenging the conventional wisdom on Houdini's death.



Far more compelling than the revelations about Houdini's death, however, was something else about the illusionist that the book revealed for the first time: Harry Houdini was a spook working for both the U.S. Secret Service and Scotland Yard. And his traveling escape act, as it turns out, was pretty much a cover for intelligence activities. Just as, as I think I wrote in a previous newsletter, John Wilkes Booth used his career as a traveling stage performer as a cover for intelligence operations. And just as - sorry to have to break it to you - many of your favorite movie and television actors and musical artists continue in that tradition today.

The book, of course, doesn't make such reckless allegations about any performers other than Houdini. I added all of that. What the book does do, however, is compellingly document that Houdini was, in fact, an intelligence asset who used his magic act as a cover. Not only did the authors obtain corroborating documentation from Scotland Yard, they also received an endorsement of their claim from no less an authority than John McLaughlin, former Acting Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (who knew it was that easy? - maybe I should give John a call and run some of my theories by him).

It appears then that, of the eight celebrity residents of Laurel Canyon listed on the Laurel Canyon Association website, at least two (Novarro and Houdini), and possibly as many as four, were murdered. That seemed like a rather high homicide rate to me, so I looked up a recent study on the Internet and found that, on average, a white person in this country has about a 1-in-345 chance of being murdered. Non-white persons, of course, have a far greater chance of being murdered, but nowhere near the 1-in-4 to 1-in-2 odds that a white celebrity living in Laurel Canyon faces.

Statistically speaking, if you were a famous actor in the 1920s, you would have been better off playing a round of Russian Roulette than living in Laurel Canyon.

Anyway ... two ambitious projects in the 1940s brought significant changes to Laurel Canyon. First, Laurel Canyon Boulevard was extended into the San Fernando Valley, providing access to the canyon from both the north and the south. The widened boulevard was now a winding thoroughfare, providing direct access to the Westside from the Valley. Traffic, needless to say, increased considerably, which probably worked out well for the planners of the other project, because it meant that the increased traffic brought about by that other project probably wasn't noticed at all. And that's good, you see, because the other project was a secret one, so if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell anyone else.



Lookout Mountain Laboratory

What would become known as Lookout Mountain Laboratory was originally envisioned as an air defense center. Built in 1941 and nestled in two-and-a-half secluded acres off what is now Wonderland Park Avenue, the installation was hidden from view and surrounded by an electrified fence. By 1947, the facility featured a fully operational movie studio. In fact, it is claimed that it was perhaps the world's only completely self-contained movie studio. With 100,000 square feet of floor space, the covert studio included sound stages, screening rooms, film processing labs, editing facilities, an animation department, and seventeen climate-controlled film vaults. It also had underground parking, a helicopter pad and a bomb shelter.

Over its lifetime, the studio produced some 19,000 classified motion pictures - more than all the Hollywood studios combined (which I guess makes Laurel Canyon the real 'motion picture capital of the world'). Officially, the facility was run by the U.S. Air Force and did nothing more nefarious than process AEC footage of atomic and nuclear bomb tests. The studio, however, was clearly equipped to do far more than just process film. There are indications that Lookout Mountain Laboratory had an advanced research and development department that was on the cutting edge of new film technologies. Such technological advances as 3-D effects were apparently first developed at the Laurel Canyon site. And Hollywood luminaries like John Ford, Jimmy Stewart, Howard Hawks, Ronald Reagan, Bing Crosby, Walt Disney and Marilyn Monroe were given clearance to work at the facility on undisclosed projects. There is no indication that any of them ever spoke of their work at the clandestine studio.

The facility retained as many as 250 producers, directors, technicians, editors, animators, etc., both civilian and military, all with top security clearances - and all reporting to work in a secluded corner of Laurel Canyon. Accounts vary as to when the facility ceased operations. Some claim it was in 1969, while others say the installation remained in operation longer. In any event, by all accounts the secret bunker had been up and running for more than twenty years before Laurel Canyon's rebellious teen years, and it remained operational for the most turbulent of those years.

The existence of the facility remained unknown to the general public until the early 1990s, though it had long been rumored that the CIA operated a secret movie studio somewhere in or near Hollywood. Filmmaker Peter Kuran was the first to learn of its existence, through classified documents he obtained while researching his 1995 documentary, "Trinity and Beyond." And yet even today, some 15 years after its public disclosure, one would have trouble finding even a single mention of this secret military/intelligence facility anywhere in the 'conspiracy' literature.

I think we can all agree though that there is nothing the least bit suspicious about any of that, so let's move on.

In the 1950s, as Barney Hoskyns has written in *Hotel California*, Laurel Canyon was home to all "the hippest young actors," including, according to Hoskyns, Marlon Brando, James Dean, James Coburn and Dennis Hopper. In addition to Hopper and Dean, yet another of the young stars of "Rebel Without a Cause" found a home in the canyon as well: Natalie Wood. In fact, Natalie lived in the very home that Cass Elliot would later turn into a Laurel Canyon party house. A fourth young star of the film, Sal Mineo, lived at the mouth of the canyon, and the fifth member of the "Rebel Without a Cause" posse, Nick Adams, lived just a mile or so away (as the crow flies) in neighboring Coldwater Canyon.

With the exception of Hopper, all of their lives were tragically cut short, proving once again that Laurel Canyon can be a very dangerous place to live.



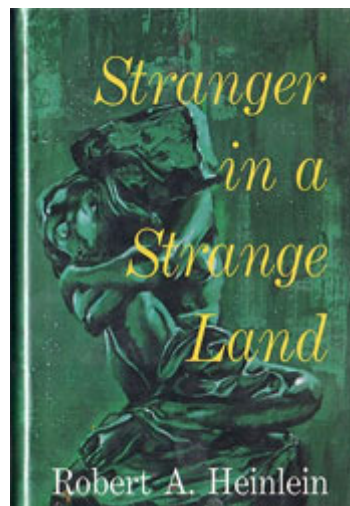
First there was that great American icon, James Dean, who ostensibly died in a near head-on collision on September 30, 1955, at the tender age of twenty-four. Next to fall was Nick Adams, who had known Dean before either were stars, when both were working the mean streets of Hollywood as young male prostitutes. Adams died on February 6, 1968, at the age of thirty-six, in his home at 2126 El Roble Lane in Coldwater Canyon. His official cause of death was listed as suicide, of course, but as actor Forrest Tucker has noted, "All of Hollywood knows Nick Adams was knocked off." Nick's relatives reportedly received numerous hang-up calls on the day of his death, and his tape recorder, journals and various other papers and personal effects were conspicuously missing from his home. His lifeless body, sitting upright in a chair, was discovered by his attorney, Ervin "Tip" Roeder. On June 10, 1981, Roeder and his wife, actress Jenny Maxwell (best known for being spanked by Elvis in "Blue Hawaii"), were gunned down outside their Beverly Hills condo.

Next in line was Sal Mineo, whose murder on February 12, 1976 we have already covered. Last to fall was Natalie Wood, who died on November 29, 1981 in a drowning incident that has never been adequately explained. Before being found floating in the waters off Catalina Island, Wood had been aboard a private yacht in the company of actors Robert Wagner and

Christopher Walken. She was forty-three when she was laid to rest.

The list of famous former residents of the canyon also includes the names of W.C. Fields, Mary Astor, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, Errol Flynn, Orson Welles, and Robert Mitchum, who was infamously arrested on marijuana charges in 1948 at 8334 Ridpath Drive, the same street that would later be home to rockers Roger McGuinn, Don Henley and Glen Frey, as well as to Paul Rothchild, producer of both The Doors and Love. Mitchum's arrest, by the way, appears to have been a thoroughly staged affair that cemented his 'Hollywood bad boy' image and gave his career quite a boost, but I guess that's not really relevant here.

Another famous resident of Laurel Canyon, apparently in the 1940s, was science-fiction writer Robert Heinlein, who reportedly resided at 8775 Lookout Mountain Avenue. Like so many other characters in this story, Heinlein was a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and he had served as a naval officer. After that, he embarked on a successful writing career. And despite the fact that he was, by any objective measure, a rabid right-winger, his work was warmly embraced by the Flower Power generation.



Heinlein's best-known work is the novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*, which many in the Laurel Canyon scene found to be hugely influential. Ed Sanders has written, in *The Family*, that the book "helped provide a theoretical basis for Manson's family." Charlie frequently used *Strange Land* terminology when addressing his flock and he named his first Family-born son Valentine Michael Manson, in honor of the book's lead character.

David Crosby was a big Heinlein fan as well. In his autobiography, he references Heinlein on more than one occasion, and proclaims that, "In a society where people can go armed, it makes everybody a little more polite, as Robert A. Heinlein says in his books." Frank Zappa was also a member of the Robert Heinlein fan club. Barry Miles notes in his biography of the rock icon that his home contained "a copy of Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince* and other essential sixties reading, including Robert Heinlein's sci-fi classic, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, from which Zappa borrowed the word 'disincorporate' for [the song] 'Absolutely Free.'"

And that, fearless readers, more or less brings us to the Laurel Canyon era that we are primarily concerned with, the wild and wooly 1960s, which we will take a closer look at in the next chapter of this saga.

So what, if anything, have we learned today? We have learned that murder and random acts of violence have been a part of the culture of the canyon since the earliest days of its development. We have also learned that spooks posing as entertainers have likewise been a

part of the canyon scene since the earliest days. And, finally, we have learned that spooks who didn't even bother to pose as entertainers were streaming into the canyon to report to work at Lookout Mountain Laboratory for at least twenty years before the first rock star set foot there.

One final note is in order here: we are supposed to believe that all of these musical icons just sort of spontaneously came together in Laurel Canyon (one finds the words "serendipitous" sprinkled freely throughout the literature). But how many peculiar coincidences do we have to overlook in order to believe that this was just a chance gathering?

Let's suppose, hypothetically speaking, that you are the young man in the photo at the top of this post, and you have recently arrived in Laurel Canyon and now find yourself fronting a band that is on the verge of taking the country by storm. Just a mile or so down Laurel Canyon Boulevard from you lives another guy who also recently arrived in Laurel Canyon, and who also happens to front a band on the verge of stardom. He happens to be married to a girl that you attended kindergarten with, and her dad, like yours, was involved in atomic weapons research and testing (Admiral George Morrison for a time did classified work at White Sands). Her husband's dad, meanwhile, is involved in another type of WMD research: chemical warfare.

This other guy's business partner/manager is a spooky ex-Marine who just happens to have a cousin who, bizarrely enough, also fronts a rock band on the verge of superstardom. And this third rock-star-on-the-rise also happens to live in Laurel Canyon, just a mile or two from your house. Just down a couple of other streets, also within walking distance of your home, live two other kids who - wouldn't you know it? - also happen to front a new rock band. These two kids happened to attend the same Alexandria, Virginia high school that you attended, and one of them also attended Annapolis, just like your dad did, and just like your kindergarten friend's dad did.

Though almost all of you hail from (or spent a substantial portion of your childhood in) the Washington, D.C. area, you now find yourselves on the opposite side of the country, in an isolated canyon high above the city of Los Angeles, where you are all clustered around a secret military installation. Given his background in research on atomic weapons, your father is probably familiar to some extent with the existence and operations of Lookout Mountain Laboratory, as is the father of your kindergarten friend, and probably the fathers of a few other Laurel Canyon figures as well.

My question here, I guess, is this: what do you suppose the odds are that all of that just came together purely by chance?

“This is how I remember my life. Other folks may not have the same memories, even though we might have shared some of the same experiences.”



So begins David Crosby's autobiography, *Long Time Gone* (co-written by Carl Gottlieb). As it turns out, quite a few other folks seem to remember some people in Crosby's life who are all but ignored in the lengthy book. The names are casually dropped only once, and not by Crosby but rather in a quote from manager Jim Dickson in which he describes the scene at the Sunset Strip clubs when The Byrds played: "We had them all. We had Jack Nicholson dancing, we had Peter Fonda dancing with Odetta, we had Vito and his Freakers."

Following that brief mention by Dickson, Gottlieb briefly explains to readers that, "Vito and his Freakers were an acid-drenched extended family of brain-damaged cohabitants." And that, in an incredibly self-indulgent 489-page tome, is the only mention you will find of "Vito and his Freakers" – despite the fact that, by just about all other accounts, the group dismissed as "brain-damaged cohabitants" played a key role in the early success of Crosby's band. And the early success of Arthur Lee's band. And the early success of Frank Zappa's band. And the early success of Jim Morrison's band. But especially in the early success of David Crosby's band.

As Barry Miles noted in his biography of Frank Zappa, "The Byrds were closely associated with Vito and the Freaks: Vito Paulekas, his wife Zsou and Karl Franzoni, the leaders of a group of about 35 dancers whose antics enlivened the Byrds early gigs." In *Waiting for the Sun*, Barney Hoskyns writes that the early success of The Byrds and other bands was due in no small part to "the roving troupe of self-styled 'freaks' led by ancient beatnik Vito Paulekas and his trusty, lusty sidekick Carl Franzoni." Alban "Snoopy" Pfisterer, former drummer and keyboardist for the band Love, went further still, claiming that Vito actually "got the Byrds together, as I remember – they did a lot of rehearsing at his pad."



Szou Paulekas (from Mondo Hollywood)

And according to various other accounts, The Byrds did indeed utilize Vito's 'pad' as a rehearsal studio, as did Arthur Lee's band. More importantly, the Freaks drew the crowds into the clubs to see the fledgling bands perform. But as important as their contribution was to helping launch the careers of the Laurel Canyon bands, "Vito and his Freakers" were notable for something else as well; according to Barry Miles, writing in his book *Hippie*, "The first hippies in Hollywood, perhaps the first hippies anywhere, were Vito, his wife Zsou, Captain Fuck and their group of about thirty-five dancers. Calling themselves Freaks, they lived a semi-communal life and engaged in sex orgies and free-form dancing whenever they could."

Some of those who were on the scene at the time agree with Miles' assessment that Vito and his troupe were indeed the very first hippies. Arthur Lee, for example, boasted that they "started the whole hippie thing: Vito, Karl, Szou, Beatle Bob, Bryan and me." One of David Crosby's fellow Byrds, Chris Hillman, also credited the strange group with being at the forefront of the hippie movement: "Carl and all those guys were way ahead of everyone on hippiedom fashion." Ray Manzarek of The Doors remembered them as well: "There were these guys named Carl and Vito who had a dance troupe of gypsy freaks. They were let in for free, because they were these quintessential hippies, which was great for tourists."

If these folks really were the very first hippies, the first riders of that 'counter-cultural' wave, then we should probably try to get to know them. As it turns out, however, that is not such an easy thing to do. Most accounts – and there aren't all that many – offer little more than a few first names, with no consensus agreement on how those first names are even spelled ("Karl" and "Carl" appear interchangeably, as do "Szou" and "Zsou," and "Godot" and "Godo"). But for you, dear readers – because I apparently have way too much time on my hands – I have gone the extra mile and sifted through the detritus to dig up at least some of the sordid details.

By all accounts the troupe was led by one Vito Paulekas, whose full name is said to have been Vitautus Alphonsus Paulekas. Born the son of a Lithuanian sausage-maker circa 1912, Vito hailed from Lowell, Massachusetts. From a young age, he developed a habit of running afoul of the law. According to Miles, he spent a year-and-a-half in a reformatory as a teenager and "was busted several times after that." In 1938, he was convicted of armed robbery and handed a 25-year sentence following a botched attempt at holding up a movie theater. By 1942, however, just four years later, he had been released into the custody, so to speak, of the US Merchant Marine (a branch of the US Navy during wartime), ostensibly to escort ships running lend-lease missions.



Following his release from the service, circa 1946, Vito arrived in Los Angeles. What he did for the next fifteen years or so is anyone's guess; there is virtually no mention of those years in any of the accounts I have stumbled across. What is known is that by the early 1960s, Vito was ensconced in an unassuming building at the corner of Laurel Avenue and Beverly Boulevard, just below the mouth of Laurel Canyon (and very near Jay Sebring's hair salon). At street level was his young wife Szou's clothing boutique, which has been credited by some of those making the scene in those days with being the very first to introduce 'hippie' fashions. Upstairs was the living quarters for Vito, Szou and their young son, Godot. Downstairs was what was known as the "Vito Clay" studio, where, according to Miles and various others, Paulekas "made a living of sorts by giving clay modeling lessons to Beverly Hills matrons who found the atmosphere in his studio exciting."



According to most accounts, it wasn't really the Mayan-tomb decor of the studio that many of the matrons found so exciting, but rather Vito's reportedly insatiable sexual appetite and John Holmesian physique. In any event, Vito's students also apparently included such Hollywood luminaries as Jonathon Winters, Mickey Rooney and Steve Allen. Nevertheless, though Paulekas claimed to be a serious artist (a painter, poet, dancer and photographer, in addition to a sculptor), there is scant evidence that I have seen that supports such claims (I am not, however, the most objective of art critics, as I am, as best I can determine, apparently not cultured enough to 'get' the majority of what passes for art).



As for his erstwhile sidekick, Carl Orestes Franzoni, he has claimed in interviews that his "mother was a countess" and his father "was a stone carver from Rutland, Vermont. The family was brought from Italy, from the quarries in the northern part of Italy, to cut the stone for the monuments of the United States." That would make his father, I'm guessing here, someone of some importance in the Mason community, if Carl is to be believed. By Franzoni's own account, he grew up as something of a young hoodlum in Cincinnati, Ohio, and later went into business with some shady Sicilian characters selling mail-order breast and penis pumps out of an address on LA's fabled Melrose Avenue. As Franzoni remembered it, his business "partner's name was Scallacci, Joe Scallacci – the same name as the famous murderer Scallacci. Probably from the same family." Probably so.

Franzoni, born circa 1934, hooked up with the older Paulekas sometime around 1963 and soon after became his constant sidekick. As previously mentioned, the group also included Vito's wife Szou, an ex-cheerleader who had hooked up with Paulekas when she was just sixteen and he was already in his fifties. Also in the troupe was a young Rory Flynn (Errol Flynn's statuesque daughter), a bizarre character named Ricky Applebaum who had half a moustache on one side of his face and half a beard on the other, most of the young girls who would later become part of Frank Zappa's GTO project, and a lot of other oddball characters who donned ridiculous pseudonyms like Linda Bopp, Butchie, Beatle Bob, Emerald, and Karen Yum Yum.

Also flitting about the periphery of the dance troupe were a young Gail Sloatman (the future Mrs. Zappa, for those who have already forgotten) and a curious character on the LA music scene by the name of Kim Fowley. The two were, for a time, closely allied, and even cut a record together as "Bunny and the Bear" that Fowley produced ("America's Sweethearts"). In 1966, Fowley produced a record for Vito as well, billed as "Vito and the Hands." The 7" single, "Where It's At," which featured the musicianship of some of Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention, came no closer to entering the charts than did Fowley and Sloatman's effort.

Sloatman, by the way, soon found work as an assistant and booking agent for Elmer Valentine, who we will meet shortly.



Fowley, as with so many other characters in this story, has a rather interesting history. He was born in 1939, the son of actor Douglas Fowley, a WWII Navy veteran and attendee of St. Francis Xavier Military Academy. According to the younger Fowley's account, he was initially abandoned to a foster home but later taken back and raised by his father. He grew up in upscale Malibu, California, where he shared his childhood home with "a bunch of actors and guys from the Navy." At the age of six-and-a-half, Fowley had an unusual experience that he later shared with author Michael Walker: dressed up in a sailor suit by his dad and his Navy buddies, he was taken "to a photographer named William, who took a picture of me in the sailor suit. His studio was next door to the Canyon [Country] Store." Right after that, he was driven down Laurel Canyon Boulevard to the near-mythical Schwabs Drugstore, where "everybody cheered and two chorus girls grabbed my six-year-old cock and balls and stuck a candy cigarette in my mouth."

Nice story, Mr. Fowley. Thanks for sharing.

It's probably safe to assume that childhood experiences such as that helped to prepare Fowley for his later employment as a young male street hustler, a profession that he practiced on the seedy streets of the city of angels (by Fowley's own account, I should probably add here, just as it was James Dean himself who claimed to have worked those same streets with Nick Adams). Following that, Fowley spent some time serving with the Army National Guard, after which he devoted his life to working in the LA music industry as a musician, writer and producer – as well as, according to some accounts, a master manipulator.

Around 1957, Fowley played in a band known as the Sleepwalkers, alongside future Beach Boy Bruce Johnston. At times, a diminutive young guitarist named Phil Spector – who had moved out to LA with his mother not too many years earlier, following the suicide of his father when Phil was just nine – sat in with the group. During the 1960s, Fowley was best known for producing such ridiculous yet beloved novelty songs as the Hollywood Argyles' "Alley Oop" and the Rivington's "Papa Oom-Mow-Mow," though he also did more respectable work, such as collaborating on some Byrds' tracks and having some of his original songs covered by both the Beach Boys and the Flying Burrito Brothers.

In 1975, Fowley had perhaps his greatest success when he created the Runaways, further lowering the bar that Frank Zappa had already set rather low some years earlier when he had created and recorded the GTOs. The Runaways featured underage versions of Joan Jett and

Lita Ford, whom Fowley tastefully attired in leather and lingerie. As he would later boast, “Everyone loved the idea of 16-year-old girls playing guitars and singing about fucking.” Especially, I would imagine, their mothers and fathers. Some of the young girls in the band, including Cherie Curry, would later accuse Fowley of requiring them to perform sexual services for he and his associates as a prerequisite for membership in the group.



Prior to assembling the Runaways, one of Fowley’s proudest accomplishments had been producing the 1969 album “I’m Back and I’m Proud” by rockabilly pioneer Gene Vincent, featuring backing vocals by Canyonite Linda Ronstadt. Just two years later, Vincent – a Navy veteran raised in that penultimate Navy town, Norfolk, Virginia – permanently checked out of the Hotel California on October 12, 1971 (there’s that date again), due reportedly to a ruptured stomach ulcer. Not long before his death, Vincent had been on tour in the UK, but he had hastily returned to the US due to pressure from, among others, promoter Don Arden. Known none-too-affectionately as the “Al Capone of Pop,” Arden had a penchant for guns and violence and he was known to openly boast of his affiliation with powerful organized crime figures. In addition to being a business partner of the equally nefarious Michael Jeffery, Arden was also the father of Sharon Osbourne and the former manager of her husband’s band, Black Sabbath ... but here I have surely digressed, so let’s try to bring this back around to where we left off.



One other accomplishment of Fowley's bears mentioning here: he received a guest vocalist credit on the Mothers of Invention album "Freak Out," as did both Vito Paulekas and his sidekick, Carl Franzoni, to whom the song "Hungry Freaks, Daddy" was dedicated (some sources claim that Bobby Beausoleil also provided guest vocals on Zappa's debut album, though his name does not appear in the album's credits).

By at least as early as 1962, not long before Carl Franzoni joined the group, the Freak troupe was already hitting the clubs a couple nights each week to refine their unique style of dance (perhaps best described as an epileptic seizure set to music) and show off their distinctively unappealing, though soon to be quite popular, fashion sense. In those early days, they danced to local black R&B bands and to a band out of Fresno known as the Gauchos, in dives far removed from the fabled Sunset Strip – because, Franzoni has said, "There were no white bands [in LA] yet," and "There were no clubs on Sunset Boulevard."

That, of course, was all about to quickly change. As if by magic, new clubs began to spring up along the legendary Sunset Strip beginning around 1964, and old clubs considered to be long past their prime miraculously reemerged. In January 1964, a young Chicago vice cop named Elmer Valentine opened the doors to the now world-famous Whisky-A-Go-Go nightclub. Just over a year later, in spring of 1965, he opened a second soon-to-be-wildly-popular club, The Trip. Not long before that, near the end of 1964, the legendary Ciro's nightclub began undergoing extensive renovations. Opened in 1940 by Billy Wilkerson, an associate of Bugsy Siegel, the upscale club had flourished for the first twenty years of its existence, with a clientele that regularly included Hollywood royalty and organized crime figures. By the early 1960s though the Strip was dead, and the once prestigious club had gone to seed.

Ciro's reopened in early 1965, just before The Trip opened its doors and just in time, as it turns out, to host the very first club appearance by the musical act that was about to become the first Laurel Canyon band to commit a song to vinyl: The Byrds. By 1967, Gazzaris had opened up on the Strip as well, and in the early 1970s Valentine would open yet another club that endures to this day, The Roxy. Smaller clubs like the London Fog, where The Doors got their first booking as the house band in early 1966, opened their doors to the public in the mid 1960s as well.

The timing of the opening of Valentine's first two clubs, and the reopening of Ciro's, could not have been any more fortuitous. The paint was barely dry on the walls of the new clubs

when bands like Love and The Doors and The Byrds and Buffalo Springfield and the Turtles and the Mothers and the Lovin' Spoonful came knocking. The problem, however, was that the new clubs were not yet well known, Ciro's had been long left for dead, and nobody had the slightest idea who any of these newfangled bands were. What was needed then was a way to create a buzz around the clubs that would draw people in and kick-start the Strip back to life, as well as, of course, launch the careers of the new bands.

The bands themselves could not be expected to fill the new clubs, since, besides being unknown, they also – and yeah, I know that you don't really want to hear this and I will undoubtedly be deluged with letters of complaint, but I'm going to say it anyway – weren't very good, at least not in their live incarnations. To be sure, they sounded great on vinyl, but that was largely due to the fact that the band members themselves didn't actually play on their records (at least not in the early days), and the rich vocal harmonies that were a trademark of the 'Laurel Canyon sound' were created in the studio with a good deal of multi-tracking and overdubs. On stage, it was another matter entirely.

Enter then the wildly flamboyant and colorful Freak squad, who were one key component of the strategy that was devised to lure patrons into the clubs (the other component of the strategy, hinted at in one of the quotes near the top of this post, will be covered in installment #7). Vito and Carl's dancers were a fixture on the Sunset Strip scene from the very moment that the new clubs opened their doors to the public, and they were, by all accounts, treated like royalty by the club owners. As John Hartmann, proprietor of the Kaleidoscope Club, acknowledged, he “would let Vito and his dancers into the Kaleidoscope free every week because they attracted people. They were really hippies, and so we had to have them. They got in free pretty much everywhere they went. They blessed your joint. They validated you. If they're the essence of hippiedom and you're trying to be a hippie nightclub, you need hippies.”

As the aforementioned Kim Fowley put it, with characteristic bluntness, “A band didn't have to be good, as long as the dancers were there.” Indeed, the band was largely irrelevant, other than to provide some semblance of a soundtrack for the real show, which was taking place on the dance floor. Gail Zappa candidly admitted that, even at her husband's shows, the real attraction was not on the stage: “The customers came to see the freaks dance. Nobody ever talks about that, but that was the case.” Frank added that, “As soon as they arrived they would make things happen, because they were dancing in a way nobody had seen before, screaming and yelling out on the floor and doing all kinds of weird things. They were dressed in a way that nobody could believe, and they gave life to everything that was going on.”

For reasons that clearly had more to do with boosting attendance at the clubs than with any actual talents displayed by the group, Vito and Carl seem to have become minor media darlings over the course of the 1960s and into the 1970s. The two can be seen, separately and together, in a string of cheap exploitation films, including *Mondo Bizarro* from 1966, *Something's Happening* (aka *The Hippie Revolt*) from 1967, the notorious *Mondo Hollywood*, also released in 1967, and *You Are What You Eat*, with David Crosby, Frank Zappa and Tiny Tim, which hit theaters in 1968. In 1972, Vito made his acting debut in a non-documentary film, *The White Horse Gang*.

Paulekas reportedly also popped up on Groucho Marx's *You Bet Your Life*, and Franzoni made an appearance on a 1968 Dick Clark TV special. The golden child, Godot Paulekas, was featured in a photo in *Life* magazine circa 1966, and the whole troupe showed up for an appearance on the *Tonight Show*. According to Barry Miles, Vito also "appeared regularly on the Joe Pyne Show and in between the bare-breasted girls in the late fifties and early sixties men's magazines."

Joe Pyne, for those of you too young to remember (myself included), is the guy that we have to thank for paving the way for the likes of Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Michael Savage, Don Imus, Morton Downey, Jr., Jerry Springer and Wally George. For Mr. Pyne, you see, was the guy who pioneered the confrontational interview style favored by so many gasbags today. The decorated Marine Corps veteran debuted as a talk-radio host in 1950 and quickly became known for insulting and demeaning anyone who dared to disagree with him, guests and listeners alike. In 1957, he moved his show to LA, and by 1965, he was nationally syndicated both on the radio and on television. His favored targets, as you may have guessed, included hippies, feminists, gays, and anti-war activists, and his interviews frequently ended with his guest either walking off or being thrown off the stage. Nearing the peak of his popularity, Pyne died on March 23, 1970 at the age of forty-five, reportedly of lung cancer. His ideological offspring, however, live on.

“Vito was in his fifties, but he had four-way sex with goddesses ... He held these clay-sculpting classes on Laurel Avenue, teaching rich Beverly Hills dowagers how to sculpt. And that was the Byrds’ rehearsal room. Then Jim Dickson had the idea to put them on at Ciro’s, on the basis that all the freaks would show up and the Byrds would be their Beatles.” —Kim

Fowley



Recruits for Vito and Carl’s dance troupe weren’t likely hard to come by, given that, according to Miles, Vito operated “the first crash pad in LA, an open house to countless runaways where everyone was welcome for a night, particularly young women.” By the mid 1960s, the group had expanded into a second communal location in addition to the basement studio at 303 Laurel Avenue: the ubiquitous Log Cabin. According to Jack Boulware, writing in Mojo magazine, architect Robert Byrd and his son built a new guesthouse (aka ‘the treehouse’) on the property in the early 1960s, and “The following year, a communal family of weirdos moved into the cabin and treehouse, centered around two underground hipsters named Vito Paulekas and Carl Franzoni, organizers of freeform dance troupes at clubs along the Sunset Strip.” By 1967, the dancers were splitting “their rent with staff from the hippie publication The Oracle. Retired journalist John Bilby recalls at least 36 people living and partying at the Log Cabin and treehouse, including the band Fraternity of Man. ‘Tim Leary was definitely there, George Harrison and Ravi Shankar were there,’ Bilby says.”

For those who may not necessarily be ‘in the know’ about such things, the Fraternity of Man were best known for the novelty song, “Don’t Bogart Me,” Tim Leary was best known for being a painfully obvious CIA asset, and The Oracle was a San Francisco-based publication with intelligence ties that specialized in pitching psychedelic occultism to impressionable youth.



According to Barry Miles, “Franzoni’s commune ended in May 1968,” as that was when The Oracle moved out and our old friend Frank Zappa moved in. The lead Mother “had visited Karl at the log cabin on a previous trip and realized it was perfect for his needs.” And it was an easy move for Frank, since he was already living in the canyon at the home of Pamela Zarubica (aka Suzy Creamcheese) at 8404 Kirkwood Drive, where Zappa had met his new wife, Gail, and where Gail’s old kindergarten pal, James Douglas Morrison, was known to occasionally pass the time. Ms. Zarubica/Creamcheese was yet another member of Vito’s dance troupe.

As multiple sources remember it, Miles is mistaken in his contention that Franzoni’s commune came to an end; Frank Zappa took over as ringmaster, to be sure, but Franzoni and all his cohorts stayed on. Carl had a room in the basement, where he was known to bowl, usually naked and intoxicated, in the middle of the night. The doomed Christine Frka had a room down there as well, as did other future GTOs. Various other members of the dance troupe occupied other nooks and crannies in both the main house and the guesthouse/treehouse. Indeed, as Miles noted correctly, the Freak dancers became so closely associated with the Mothers of Invention that “they got dubbed as ‘the Mothers Auxiliary’ and Karl Franzoni, in particular, was included in a lot of group photographs.”



And that, my friends, is the story of Vito’s Freakers – or at least a sanitized version. Because there is, as it turns out, a very dark underbelly to this story. And much of it is centered around that angelic hippie child that the readers of Life magazine met in 1966, and who we now must sadly add to the Laurel Canyon Death List. For young Godot Paulekas, you see, never made it past the age of three (by most accounts). The specifics of the tragedy are all but impossible to determine, unfortunately, as there is little agreement in the various accounts of the event. Left unclear is exactly how the

child died, when the tragedy occurred, and what age the boy was.

According to Barry Miles, “Vito and Szou’s three-year-old son Godo had fallen through a trapdoor on the roof of the building and died.” Michael Walker tells of a “two or three” year old Godot “fall[ing] to his death from a scaffold at the studio.” An article in the San Francisco Weekly had it as “a 5-year-old boy” who died when he “fell through a skylight.” Super-groupie and former Freak dancer Pamela DesBarres agreed with the skylight scenario, but not the age: “Vito’s exquisite little puppet child, Godot, fell through a skylight during a wacky photo session on the roof and died at age three-and-a-half.” Alban Pfisterer of the band Love recalled a much darker scenario: “[Vito] got married, had a baby, gave it acid, and it fell off the roof and died.”



When Robert Carl Cohen recently digitally remastered his notorious Mondo Hollywood for DVD release, he added postscripts for all the famous and infamous people who were featured in his film. For “Godo” Paulekas, he inserted the following caption: “Died age 2 – victim of medical malpractice.” Thus we now have a further muddying of the waters. Since Cohen’s claim though is so clearly at odds with every other account of the incident, and since he was quite close to Vito and thus inclined to cast his friend in the best possible light, we can probably safely disregard Cohen’s belated postscript.

The details of the incident that can be ascertained are, to put it mildly, rather disturbing. We know, for example, that a musician and writer named Raphael told writer Michael Walker that, before the child’s death, he had been present one evening at Vito’s place when Godot was brought out: “They passed that little boy around, naked, in a circle with their mouths. That was their thing about ‘introducing him to sensuality.’” We also know that Vito and Szou had a rather odd reaction to the death of their first-born son and only child, as recounted by Ms. DesBarres: “I was beside myself with sorrow, but Vito and Szou insisted on continuing our plans for the evening. We went out dancing, and when people asked where little Godot was, Vito said, ‘He died today.’ It was weird, really weird.”



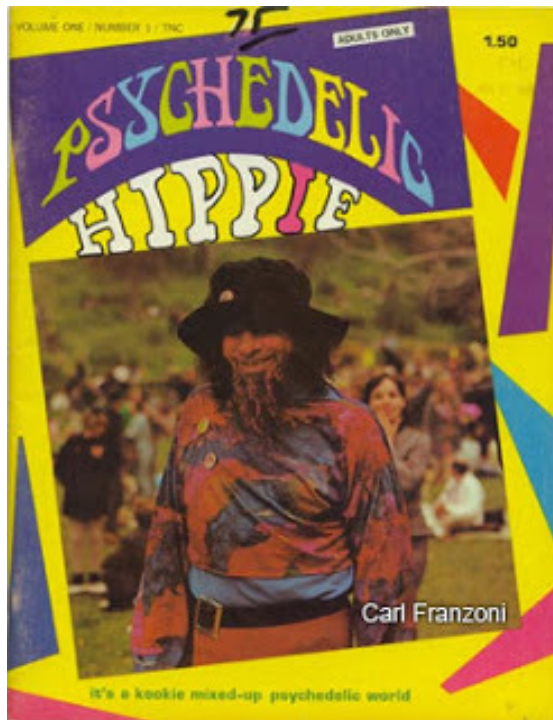
That it was, but perhaps even weirder is the full text of the quote from the San Francisco Weekly that I earlier presented you with an edited version of: “[Kenneth Anger’s] first candidate to play Lucifer, a 5-year-old boy whose hippie parents had been fixtures on the Los Angeles counterculture scene, fell through a skylight to his death. By 1967, Anger had relocated to San Francisco and was searching for a new Lucifer.” As many readers may be aware, he soon found his new Lucifer in the form of Mansonite and former Grass Roots guitarist Bobby “Cupid” Beausoleil.

And so it was that the soon-to-be convicted murderer replaced the cherubic hippie child as the face of Lucifer. But what was it, one wonders, that drew Anger’s twisted eye to the young boy? And how close a relationship did Anger have with Paulekas and Franzoni? And most importantly, how did Godot Paulekas really die? We will likely never know for sure, but let’s just quickly review some of the factors that might come into play when searching for a solution to this mystery:

- The young boy was reportedly subjected to pedophilic treatment by his parents and others.
- The boy’s parents displayed a truly chilling indifference to the child’s death.
- Kenneth Anger had expressed an interest in filming the boy.
- Pamela DesBarres contends that the toddler died during a “wacky photo session.”
- Alban Pfisterer has claimed that the child was drugged.
- Bobby Beausoleil has said that some of Anger’s film projects were for private collectors: “every once in a while he’d do a little thing that wouldn’t be for distribution.”
- Finally, according to biographer Bill Landis, Kenneth Anger was at one time investigated by the police on suspicion that he had been producing snuff flicks. •

You all will have to draw your own conclusions on this one. As a responsible journalist, I obviously cannot indulge in any reckless speculation here, and I think we can all agree that I have not tried to lead you in any specific direction, but have merely laid the facts out on the table for your review. Moving on then ...

Pamela DesBarres shed further light on the dark edges of the Freak troupe with this description of a scene that Vito had staged one evening in his studio: “two tenderly young girls were tonguing each other ... everyone was silently observing the scene as if it were part of their necessary training by the headmaster, Vito ... One of the girls on the four-poster was only twelve years old, and a few months later Vito was deported to Tahiti for this very situation, and many more just like it.”



It was actually Haiti that Vito appears to have fled to, and then to Jamaica (which at the time had no extradition treaty with the United States), accompanied by his wife Szou and their new baby daughter Groovee Nipple (or possibly Gruvi Nipple; does anyone really care which is the proper spelling?) According to Miles, this occurred in December of 1968, though other accounts vary. Carl Franzoni, meanwhile, became embroiled in some unspecified legal troubles of his own and went into hiding, resurfacing in Canada by some reports. At around that same time, Frank Zappa moved on to yet another location in Laurel Canyon, a high-security home on Woodrow Wilson Drive.

Also at around that same time, according to author Ed Sanders, the Manson Family came calling at the Log Cabin: “One former Manson family associate claims that a group of four to six family members lived on Laurel Canyon Boulevard in the log cabin house once owned by cowboy-actor Tom Mix. They lived there for a few weeks, in late 1968, in a cave-like hollow in back of the residence.” According to Franzoni, Manson also came calling at the Vito Clay studio on Laurel Avenue: “Applebaum took over Vito’s place when Vito vacated at Beverly and Laurel. So he inherited all the people that came after that ... he was the beginning of the Manson clan. Manson came there because he had heard about Vito but Vito was gone.”

It does not appear as though Vito was actually deported, by the way, but rather that he fled the country in a very Mike Ruppertian fashion to avoid likely prosecution. In any event, it makes perfect sense, in retrospect, that Charlie Manson and his Family came calling just as Vito fled the scene, and that a Mansonite replaced the Freak child as the embodiment of Lucifer. For the truth, you see, is that, in many significant ways, Charles Manson was little more than a younger version of Vito Paulekas. Consider, if you will, all of the following Mansonesque qualities that Vito (and to some extent, Carl) seemed to share:

- Vito appears to have spent a good portion of his younger years in prisons and reform schools, as did, as we all know, Charles Milles Manson.
- Vito considered himself to be a gifted artist and poet, as did our old friend Charlie Manson.
- Vito, according to Miles, “was something of a guru,” as was, quite obviously, Chuck Manson.

- Vito surrounded himself with a flock of very young (often underage) women, as did Manson.
- Vito was considerably older than his followers, and so too was Charlie.
- When Vito addressed his flock, they listened with rapt attention as though they were being delivered the word of God, as was true with Charlie as well.
- Carl Franzoni was known to wear a black cape and refer to himself as “Captain Fuck,” while Manson was also partial to black capes and declared himself to be “the God of Fuck.”
- Vito is said to have had a virtually insatiable libido, as did, of course, Chuck Manson.
- Vito’s flock adopted nicknames to aid in the depersonalization process, as did Charlie’s.
- Vito’s troupe included a Beverly Hills hairstylist named Sheldon Jaman, while Charlie’s included a Beverly Hills hairpiece stylist named Charles Watson.
- Vito believed in introducing children to sexuality at a very young age, while in the Manson Family, as Sanders has noted, “Infant sexuality was encouraged.” Vito apparently liked to stage live sex shows for his followers, usually involving underage participants, which was also a specialty of Charles Milles Manson.
- Finally, Vito encouraged his followers to drug themselves while he himself largely abstained, thus enabling him to at all times maintain control, while Manson limited his own drug intake for the very same reason.



Franzoni and Manson were not, by the way, the only folks on the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene who developed a fondness for black capes in the latter half of the 1960s. As Michael Walker noted in *Laurel Canyon*, during that same period of time David Crosby had “taken to wearing an Oscar Wilde/Frank Lloyd Wright-ish cape wherever he went.”

In unrelated news, Ed Sanders notes in *The Family* that, “Around March 10, 1968, a convoy of seven Process automobiles containing thirty people and fourteen Alsatian dogs journeyed toward Los Angeles.” Vincent Bugliosi added, in his best-selling *Helter Skelter*, that in “1968 and 1969, The Process launched a major recruiting drive in the United States. They were in Los Angeles in May and June of 1968 and for at least several months in the fall of 1969.” The Processions, it should be noted, were instantly recognizable on the streets of LA due to the fact that they had a curious habit of donning black capes wherever they went.

In other news, it appears as though Frank Zappa also displayed some of the same less-than-admirable qualities shared by Manson and Paulekas. As DesBarres observed, “Vito was just like Frank, he never got high either. They were both ringmasters who always wanted to be in control.” And as Barry Miles noted in his Zappa biography, Frank’s daughter Moon “recalls men with straggling beards, body odour and bad posture who crouched naked near her playthings ...” Also, the “Zappa children watched porn with their parents and were encouraged in their own sexuality as soon as they reached puberty. When they became teenagers, Gail insisted they shower with their overnight guests in order to conserve water.” Because, you know, apparently the Zappas were having a hard time paying their water bill.

By the early 1970s, Vito Paulekas had resurfaced up north in Cotati, California, with Carl Franzoni once again at his side. The two were, by all accounts, treated like rock stars in the funky little town, and they are to this day proudly and prominently featured on the city’s official website. By some accounts, Vito even served as mayor of the town, with Franzoni assisting as his Director of Parks and Recreation. Paulekas also taught classes at Sonoma State College, presumably in the art department. Szou eventually split from Vito and went to work for an attorney, leaving the hippie life (and hopefully the “Z” in her name) behind. Franzoni, meanwhile, turned up now and then on that early version of America’s Got Talent known as The Gong Show (apparently as one of the ‘Worm Dancers’).



Vito, friend and Carl in Cotati, California

The Gong Show, of course, was the brainchild of Chuck Barris, who famously claimed that during the days when he appeared to be working as a mild-mannered game show producer, he was actually on the payroll of the CIA, and that while he was ostensibly serving as a chaperone to the couples who had won trips on The Dating Game, what he was really doing was carrying out assassinations. Kind of like, I guess you could say, that Harry Houdini guy. One reader, by the way, insists that “Chucky Baby” was at one time a resident of – guess where? – Laurel Canyon (though I have not been able to confirm that).

Anyway, during those same 1970s, “The cabin and treehouse scene,” according to Jack Boulware, “grew creepy.” Actually, it had always been pretty creepy, it likely just became a little more openly creepy. Eric Burden of the Animals moved in after Zappa vacated and the property continued to be communally occupied. In fact, it appears to have remained something of a commune throughout the 1970s, quite possibly right up until the time that it

burned to the ground on October 31, 1981. Who paid the rent is anybody's guess – as is why such a prestigious property seems to have been made available for dirt cheap to pretty much any “communal family of weirdos” who wanted to move in.

Vito Paulekas and Carl Franzoni appear to have remained in northern California throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Franzoni was still milling about the area as recently as 2002. In February of this year, the aging Freak, now reportedly 74, rode along on a tour of 1960s hotspots offered by a local tour company and delighted the crowd by reenacting his distinctive dance style in front of Vito's former studio. The tour operator billed Franzoni as “the King of the Freaks,” a title formerly held by his mentor, Vito Paulekas. The original king, alas, had died in October of 1992. His memorial service was held, appropriately enough, on October 31, 1992.

*“As all halfway-decent managers in the rock era have done, [Jim] Dickson worked on seducing the in-crowd and creating a buzz around [The Byrds] ... The timing was perfect ... LA’s baby-boomers were mobile, getting around, looking for action. And now they were joined by the hip elite of Hollywood itself, from Sal Mineo and Peter Fonda to junkie comic Lenny Bruce.” —Barney Hoskyns, *Waiting for the Sun**



Jack Nicholson

As important as the Freaks were to building an audience for the new Laurel Canyon bands, there was another group that played a key role as well: Hollywood’s so-called “Young Turks.” Like the Freaks, the Turks became an immediate and constant presence on the newly emerging Sunset Strip scene. And as with the Freaks, their presence on the Strip was heavily promoted by the media. Locals and tourists alike knew where to go to gawk at the Freaks and, as an added bonus, quite possibly rub shoulders with the likes of Peter Fonda, Jack Nicholson, Bruce Dern, Dennis Hopper and Warren Beatty, along with their female counterparts like Jane Fonda, Nancy Sinatra and Sharon Tate.

Many of these young and glamorous Hollywood stars forged very close bonds with the Laurel Canyon musicians. Some of them, including Peter Fonda, found homes in the canyon so that they could live, work and party among the rock stars (and, in their free time, pass around John Phillips’ wife to just about every swinging dick in the canyon, including Jack Nicholson, Dennis Hopper, Warren Beatty, Roman Polanski, and Gene Clark of The Byrds). Some of them never left; Jack Nicholson to this day lives in a spacious estate just off the portion of Mulholland Drive that lies between Laurel Canyon and Coldwater Canyon. Not far west of Nicholson’s property (which now includes the neighboring estate formerly owned by Marlon Brando) sits the longtime home of Warren Beatty.



Occult imagery from the film *The Trip*.

From the symbiotic relationship between Laurel Canyon actors and Laurel Canyon musicians arose a series of feature films that are now considered counter-cultural classics. One such film was 1967's *The Trip*, an unintentionally hilarious attempt to create a cinematic facsimile of an LSD trip. Written by, of all people, Jack Nicholson, the movie starred fellow Turks Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and Bruce Dern. Seated in the director's chair was Roger Corman, who, throughout his career, worked side-by-side with David Crosby's dad on no less than twenty-three feature films. Recruited to supply the soundtrack for the film was Gram Parson's International Submarine Band (Parson's music, however, was ultimately not used, though the band does make a brief on-screen appearance). The house where most of the film was shot, at the top of Kirkwood Drive in Laurel Canyon, was the home of Love's Arthur Lee.

Another 'psychedelic' cult film of the late 1960s with deep roots in Laurel Canyon was the Monkees' 1968 big-screen offering, *Head*. Also scripted by Nicholson (with assistance from Bob Rafelson), the movie included cameo appearances by canyon dwellers Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson and Frank Zappa. The music – performed, of course, by The Monkees – was a mix of songs written by the band and contributions from Canyon songwriters like Carol King and Harry Nilsson. And shockingly, some of that music is actually pretty good. Even more shockingly, the movie overall is arguably the most watchable of the 1960s cult films. It is certainly a vast improvement over, for example, 1968's wretched *Psych Out* (starring Nicholson and Dern).

I do realize, by the way, that some of you out there in readerland cringe every time that I mention The Monkees as though they were a 'real' band. The reality though is that they were every bit as 'real' as most of their contemporaries. And while the made-for-TV Beatles replicants were looked down upon by music critics and fans alike, they were fully accepted as members of the musical fraternity by the other Laurel Canyon bands. The homes of both Mickey Dolenz and Peter Tork were popular canyon hangouts in the late '60s for a number of 'real' musicians. Also regularly dropping by Dolenz' party house were Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson.

The difference in perception between their peers and the public was attributable to the fact that the other bands knew something that the fans did not: the very same studio musicians who appeared without credit on The Monkees' albums also appeared without credit on their albums. And then, of course, there was the fact that so many of Laurel Canyon's 'real' musicians had taken a stab at being a part of The Monkees, including Steven Stills, Love's

Bryan MacLean, and Three Dog Night's Danny Hutton – all of whom answered the Monkees' casting call and were rejected.

There were undoubtedly other future stars who auditioned for the show as well, though most would probably prefer not to discuss such things. Despite persistent rumors, however, there was one local musician who we can safely conclude did not read for a part: Charles Manson. Given that the show was cast in 1965 and began its brief television run in 1966, while Charlie was still imprisoned at Terminal Island awaiting his release in March of 1967, there doesn't appear to be any way that Manson could have been considered for a part on the show. And that's kind of a shame when you think about it, because if he had been, we might today remember Charlie Manson not as one of America's most notorious criminals, but rather as the guy who made Marcia Brady swoon.

And, let's be honest here, would that really have been any worse than seeing her go ga-ga over the likes of Davy Jones? I mean, I could have understood if she had gotten weak in the knees over, you know, a real man like David Cassidy or Bobby Sherman. Now, I hope we can all agree that those guys were cool ... right? Is everyone with me on this? Anyone? ... Anyone? ...

You know, I'm thinking back right now as I sit here, and I can actually picture in my mind the covers of a couple of Bobby Sherman albums that I had in my personal coll ... err, that we had lying around the house for some reason, I'm not really sure why, and ... come to think of it, I think there might have even been a Bobby Sherman poster or two pulled from the pages of Tiger Beat magazine, and, uhmm, I suppose I can see how that might seem a little bit, uhmm, what's the word I'm looking for? ... 'gay' or whatever to a modern, twenty-first-century-man-about-town, but I'm sure that, if you checked into it, you would find that there were a lot of young boys back 'in the day' who just really dug Bobby Sherman and those great songs like "Julie (Do You Love Me)" and "Easy Come, Easy Go" and ... uhmm ... maybe this is a good time to get back to where we left off.

Returning then to the counter-cultural films of the 1960s, the most critically acclaimed of the lot, and the one with the deepest roots in Laurel Canyon, was *Easy Rider*. Directed (sort of) by Dennis Hopper, from a script co-written by he and Peter Fonda, the film starred Fonda and Hopper along with Jack Nicholson (the only one in the movie who did anything resembling actual acting). Hopper's walrus-mustachioed character in the film was based on David Crosby, who was regularly seen racing his motorcycle up and down the winding streets of Laurel Canyon (that motorcycle, by the way, had been a gift from Crosby's good buddy, Peter Fonda). Fonda's absurd 'Captain America' character was inspired either by John Phillips' riding partner, Gram Parsons, or by Crosby's former bandmate in The Byrds, Roger McGuinn (depending upon who is telling the story.) That very same Roger McGuinn scored the original music for the film. His contributions were joined on the soundtrack by offerings from fellow Canyonite musicians The Byrds, Steppenwolf, Fraternity of Man and Jimi Hendrix. And the movie's hippie commune was reportedly created and filmed in the canyons, near Mulholland Drive.

Since *Easy Rider* had such deep roots in the Laurel Canyon scene, we need to briefly focus our attention here on one other individual who worked on the film: art director Jeremy Kay, aka Jerry Kay. Before *Easy Rider*, Kay had worked on such cinematic abominations as *Angels from Hell*, *Hells Angels on Wheels* (with Jack Nicholson), and *Scorpio Rising* (Kenneth Anger's occult-tinged homage to gay bikers). In the mid-1970s, Kay would write, direct and produce a charming little film entitled *Satan's Children*. Of far more interest here

than his film credits though is his membership in the 1960s in a group known as the Solar Lodge of the Ordo Templi Orientis (or OTO), which found itself in the news, and not in a good way, just after *Easy Rider* opened on theater screens across America.

Two weeks after *Easy Rider* premiered on July 14, 1969, police acting on a phone tip raided the Solar Lodge's compound near Blythe, California and found a six-year-old boy locked outdoors in a 6'x6' wooden crate in the sweltering desert heat. The young boy, whose father was a Los Angeles County probation officer (as was Michelle Phillip's father, by the way), had been chained to a steel plate for nearly two months in temperatures reaching as high as 117° F. According to an FBI report, the box also contained a can "partially filled with human waste and swarming with flies ... The stench was nauseating." Before being put in the box, the child had been burned with matches and beaten with bamboo poles by cult members. The leader of the cult, Georgina Brayton, had reportedly told cult members that "when it was convenient, she was going to give [the boy] LSD and set fire to the structure in which he was chained and give him just enough chain to get out of reach of the fire." Killing the child had also been discussed (and apparently condoned by the boy's mind-fucked mother).

Eleven adult members of the sect were charged with felony child abuse, the majority of them young white men in their early twenties. All were brought to trial and convicted. In a curious bit of timing, the raid that resulted in the arrests and convictions coincided with the torture and murder of musician Gary Hinman by a trio of Manson acolytes. Though it is, not surprisingly, vehemently denied by concerned parties, various sources have claimed that Manson had ties to the group, which also maintained a home near the USC campus in Los Angeles. There is no doubt that Charlie preached the same dogma, including the notion of an apocalyptic race war looming on the horizon. The massacre at the Tate residence occurred less than two weeks after the raid on the OTO compound. Manson's Barker Ranch hideout would be raided a few months later, on October 12, 1969 – the birthday, as I may have already mentioned, of Aleister Crowley, the Grand Poobah of the OTO until his death in 1947.

Sorry about that little digression, folks. I'm not entirely sure how we ended up at the Barker Ranch when the focus of this installment was supposed to be on the Young Turks. So having now established that those Turks were a fully integrated part of the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene, and also that they played an important role in luring the public out to the new clubs to check out the new bands, our next task is to get to know a little bit about who these folks are and where they came from. Let's begin with Mr. Bruce Dern, who has some of the most provocative connections of any of the characters in this story.

It is probably safe to say that Dern's parents had rather impressive political connections, given that baby Bruce's godparents were sitting First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and future two-time Democratic presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson (he lost both times, in 1952 and 1956, to Eisenhower). Bruce's paternal grandfather was a guy by the name of George Dern, who served as Secretary of War under President Franklin Roosevelt (for the youngsters in the crowd, 'Secretary of War' is what we used to call the 'Secretary of Defense' in a slightly less Orwellian era). George had also served as Governor of Utah and Chairman of the National Governors' Association. Bruce's mother was born Jean MacLeish, and she happened to be the sister of Archibald MacLeish, who also served under Franklin Roosevelt, as the Director of the War Department's Office of Facts and Figures and as the Assistant Director of the Office of War Information. In other words, Archibald MacLeish was essentially America's Minister of War Propaganda. He also served at various times as an Assistant Secretary of State and as the Librarian of Congress. By far the most impressive item on his résumé, however, was his

membership in everyone's favorite secret society, Skull and Bones (class of 1915, one year before Prescott Bush was tapped in 1916).

It would appear then that, even by Laurel Canyon standards, Mr. Dern has friends in very high places. Let's turn our attention next to the guy being embraced by Dern in the photo above, Mr. Peter Fonda. Of course, we all know that Fonda is the son of good ol' Hank Fonda, lovable Hollywood liberal and all-around nice guy. And certainly even a contrarian such as myself would not be so bold as to suggest that Henry Fonda might have some skeletons in his closet ... right? Just for the hell of it though, there are a few chapters of the Hank Fonda saga that we should probably review here.

We can begin, I suppose, by noting that Hank served as a decorated US Naval Intelligence officer during World War II, thus sparing Peter the stigma of being the only member of the Laurel Canyon in-crowd to have not been spawned by a member of the military/intelligence community. Not too many years after the war, Hank's wife, Francis Ford Seymour, was found with her throat slashed open with a straight razor. Peter was just ten years old at the time of his mother's, uhmm, suicide on April 14, 1950. When Seymour had met and married Hank, she was the widow of George Brokaw, who had, curiously enough, previously been married to prominent CIA asset Claire Booth Luce.

Fonda rebounded quickly from Seymour's unusual death and within eight months he was married once again, to Susan Blanchard, to whom he remained married until 1956. In 1957, Hank married yet again, this time to Italian Countess Afdera Franchetti (who followed up her four-year marriage to Fonda with a rumored affair with newly-sworn-in President John Kennedy). Franchetti, as it turns out, is the daughter of Baron Raimondo Franchetti, who was a consultant to fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. The countess is also the great-granddaughter of Louise Sarah Rothschild, of the ever-popular Rothschild banking family (perhaps you've heard of them?)

Before moving on, I should probably mention that Hank's first wife, Margaret Sullavan – who was yet another child of Norfolk, Virginia – also allegedly committed suicide, on New Year's Day, 1960. Nine months later, her daughter Bridget followed suit. In 1961, very soon after the deaths of first her mother and then her sister, Sullavan's other daughter, Brook Hayward, walked down the aisle with the next Young Turk on our list, Dennis Hopper. For those who may be unfamiliar with Hopper's body of work, he is the guy who was once found wandering naked and bewildered in a Mexican forest. And the guy who, after divorcing Hayward in 1969, married Michelle Phillips on Halloween day, 1970, only to have her file for divorce just eight days later claiming that Hopper had kept her handcuffed and imprisoned for a week while making “unnatural sexual demands.”

Without passing judgment here, I think it's fair to say that Michelle Phillips has been around the block a time or two, if you catch my drift, so if even she thought Hopper's demands were a bit over the top, then one can only wonder just how “unnatural” they might have been. For what it's worth, Hopper just recently told a journalist that he “didn't handcuff her, [he] just punched her out!” In his mind, apparently, that makes him somewhat less of an asshole.

Most official biographies of Hopper would lead one to believe that he was the son of a simple farmer. Dennis recently acknowledged, however, that that was clearly not the case: “My mother's father was a wheat farmer and I was raised on their farm. But my father was not a farmer.” To the contrary, Hopper's dad was “a working person in intelligence” who during WWII “was in the OSS. He was in China, Burma, India.” Hopper has proudly proclaimed that

his father “was one of the 100 guys that liberated General Wainright out of prison in Korea,” which might be a little more impressive were it not for the fact that it was actually the Red Army that freed Wainright and other prisoners; the US intel team just came to pick them up, debrief them and transport them home ... but that, I suppose, isn’t really relevant.

After the war, according to Hopper, his dad carried a gun, which I suppose is what most lay ministers in the Methodist Church do. The family also left the farm in Kansas and relocated to San Diego, California, home of the Imperial Beach Naval Air Station, the United States Naval Radio Station, the United States Naval Amphibious Base, the North Island Naval Air Station, Fort Rosecrans Military Reservation, the United States Naval Training Center, the United States Marine Corps Recruit Depot, and the Miramar Marine Corps Air Station. And just north of the city sits the massive Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. Other than that though, San Diego is just a sleepy little beach town where Hopper’s dad ostensibly worked for the Post Office.

The modern version of Dennis Hopper, by the way, is wildly at odds with the hippie image that he at one time tried very hard to cultivate. Today’s Dennis Hopper is an unapologetic cheerleader for Team Bush who proudly boasts of having voted a straight Republican ticket for nearly thirty years. He could very well turn up on the campaign trail in the coming months with his lips firmly planted on the ass of war criminal John McCain.

To briefly recap then, we have thus far met three of the ‘Young Turks’ and we have found that one of them is the nephew of a Bonesman, another is the son of a Naval Intelligence officer who was once married to a Rothschild descendent, and the third is the slightly deranged son of an OSS officer. Come to think of it, we have actually covered one of the ‘Turkettes’ as well, since Jane Fonda obviously came from the same family background as her younger brother, Peter. As for the other female members of the posse, Sharon Tate was the daughter of Lt. Col. Paul Tate, a career US Army intelligence officer, and Nancy Sinatra is, of course, the daughter of Francis Albert Sinatra, whose known associates included Lucky Luciano, Meyer Lansky, Sam Giancana, Carlo Gambino, Goetano Luchese and Joseph Fishetti (a cousin of Al Capone).



10050 Cielo Drive (now 10066 Cielo Drive), as it looks today.

Frank Sinatra was also a client of hairdresser-to-the-stars Jay Sebring, as was Henry Fonda, who also at one time, strangely enough, lived in the guesthouse at 10050 Cielo Drive. Yet

another client of Sebring's was the next Young Turk on our list, Warren Beatty, whose father, Ira Owens Beaty, was ostensibly a professor of psychology. Young Warren, however, spent all of his early years living in various spooky suburbs of Washington, DC. He was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1937, after which his father moved the family to Norfolk, Virginia, which I think I may have mentioned is home to the world's largest Naval facility (the reason for that, by the way, is that Norfolk is the gateway to the nation's capital). The family later relocated to Arlington, Virginia, home of the Pentagon, where Warren attended high school and where he was known on the football field, as John Phillips (who attended a rival school) remembers it, as 'Mad Dog' Beaty.

Ira Beaty's relatively frequent relocations, and the fact that those relocations always seemed to land the family in DC suburbs that are of considerable significance to the military/intelligence community, would tend to indicate that Warren's dad was something other than what he appeared to be – though that is, of course, a speculative assessment. But if Ira Beaty was on the payroll of some government entity, working within the psychology departments of various DC-area universities, then it wouldn't require a huge leap of faith to further speculate about what type of work he was doing, given the wholesale co-opting of the field of psychology by the MK-ULTRA program and affiliated projects.

The next Young Turk up for review is the one who went on to become arguably the most acclaimed actor of his generation, Mr. Jack Nicholson. The following is a biographical sketch of Nicholson as presented by Wikipedia: "Bundy was born at the Elizabeth Lund Home for Unwed Mothers in Burlington, Vermont. The identity of his father remains a mystery ... To avoid social stigma, Bundy's grandparents Samuel and Eleanor Cowell claimed him as their son; in taking their last name, he became Theodore Robert Cowell. He grew up believing his mother Eleanor Louise Cowell to be his older sister. Bundy biographers Stephen Michaud and Hugh Aynesworth state that he learned Louise was actually his mother while he was in high school. True crime writer Ann Rule states that it was around 1969, shortly following a traumatic breakup with his college girlfriend."

Uhhm ... hang on a minute ... I think I might have screwed up. Something doesn't seem quite right, but I'm not exactly sure what Oh, shit! I see what I did wrong! I accidentally cut and pasted 'serial killer' Ted Bundy's bio instead of Jack Nicholson's. Sorry about that. This is how Jack's bio is supposed to read: Nicholson was born at some indeterminate location to an underage, unwed showgirl. The identity of his father remains a mystery ... To avoid social stigma, Nicholson's grandparents John Joseph and Ethel Nicholson claimed him as their son; in taking their last name, he became John Joseph Nicholson, Jr. He grew up believing his mother June Francis Nicholson to be his older sister. Reporters state that he learned June was actually his mother in 1974, when he was 37 years old. By then, June had been dead for just over a decade, having only lived to the age of 44.

It is said that Nicholson was born at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City, but there is no record of such a birth at the hospital or in the city's archives. As it turns out, Jack Nicholson has no birth certificate. Until 1954, by which time he was nearly an adult, he did not officially exist. Even today, the closest thing he has to a birth certificate is a 'Certificate of a Delayed Report of Birth' that was filed on May 24, 1954. The document lists John and Ethel Nicholson as the parents and identifies the location of the birth as the Nicholson's home address in Neptune, New Jersey.

It appears then that there is no way to determine who Jack Nicholson really is. He has told journalists that he has no interest in identifying who his father was, nor, it would appear, in

verifying his mother's identity. What we do know is that the nucleus of the 1960s clique known as the Young Turks (and Turkettes) was composed of the following individuals: the nephew of a Bonesman; the son of an OSS officer; the son of a Naval intelligence officer; the daughter of that same Naval intelligence officer; the daughter of an Army intelligence officer; the daughter of a guy who openly associated with prominent gangsters throughout his life; the son of a probable psychologist; and a guy whose early years are so shrouded in mystery that he may or may not actually exist.

I should probably also mention here that Henry Fonda scored his first acting gig through Dorothy "Dodie" Brando, the director of a local theater and the mother of Jack Nicholson's future neighbor, Marlon Brando. Being the small world that it is, Marlon's mom happened to be a good friend of Hank's mom, Elma Fonda. Truth be told, the families had likely had close ties for a long time. A very long time. The ancestors of both Marlon Brando and Henry Fonda, you see, arrived in New York at nearly the same time, roughly three-and-a-half centuries ago.

Marlon Brando is in a direct line of descent from French Huguenot colonists Louis DuBois and Catharine Blanchan DuBois, who arrived in New York from Mannheim, Germany circa 1660 and promptly founded New Rochelle. Other descendents of DuBois include former U.S. Senator Leverett Saltonstall, former Massachusetts Governor and CFR member William Weld, current California First Lady Maria Shriver, and quite likely U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Zachary Taylor.

Henry Fonda, on the other hand, is a direct descendent of Jellis Douw Fonda and Hester Jans Fonda, Dutch colonists who arrived in New York circa 1650 and settled near what would become Albany. The Fondas had sailed out of Friesland, Netherlands on a ship dubbed the Valckenier, which happened to be co-owned by a very wealthy Dutchman by the name of Jan-Baptist van Rensselaer. And Mr. van Rensselaer, as those who have been paying attention in class will recall, happened to be from the bloodline that would one day produce a guy by the name of David van Cortland Crosby.

It would appear then that Peter Fonda kind of owed Crosby that Triumph motorcycle that he gave him back in the '60s, what with David's ancestors having been cool enough to give Peter's ancestors a lift over to the New World and all.

One other thing we could note here about Hank Fonda before wrapping up this installment: on September 28, 1919, when Henry was just fourteen years old, he bore witness to a crime so brutally sadistic and depraved that one wonders what such an event would do to a young boy's psyche. According to an account published at the time, a young black man named Will Brown, accused of raping a white girl, was beaten unconscious by an angry mob. His clothes were then torn off and he was hanged from a lamppost. Though quite dead, his corpse was then riddled with bullets, after which he was cut down and dragged behind a car. His body was then doused with fuel and burned. Following that, Mr. Brown's charred, battered, bullet-ridden corpse was proudly dragged through the streets of downtown. To commemorate the event, the lynch rope was cut into small pieces that were sold for 10 cents each to eager buyers.

And that, my friends, is a snapshot of the sick society we live in ... but here, perhaps, I have digressed.



Another view of 10066 Cielo Drive; now as in the sixties it is accessed via the private road that runs behind the stilt homes.

Let's wrap up this installment with a quick review of what we have learned about the people populating Laurel Canyon in the mid-to-late 1960s. We know that one subset of residents was a large group of musicians who all decided, nearly simultaneously, to flood into the canyon. The most prominent members of this group were, to an overwhelming degree, the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence community. We also know that mingled in with them were the young stars of Hollywood, who also were, to an astonishing degree, the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence community. And, finally, we know that also in the mix were scores of military/intelligence personnel who operated out of the facility known as Lookout Mountain Laboratory.

I got to tell you here folks that, given the relatively small size of Laurel Canyon, I'm beginning to wonder if there was any room left over for any normal folks who might have wanted to live the rock 'n' roll lifestyle. But even so, I'm sure that there are still some hardcore 'coincidence theorists' in the crowd who will still see all of this as "much ado about nothing." I am committed though to helping those folks see the light, no matter how much it might hurt their sensitive eyes, so I am going to toss one more provocative element into the Laurel Canyon mix, courtesy of Paul Young's L.A. Exposed:

"The most infamous male madam [throughout LA's sordid history] would have to be Billy Bryars, the wealthy son of an oil magnate, and part-time producer of gay porn. Bryars was said to have a stellar group of customers using his 'brothel' at the summit of Laurel Canyon. In fact, some have claimed that none other than J. Edgar Hoover, the founder and chief executive officer of the FBI, was one of his best clients ... when Bryars fell under police scrutiny in 1973, allegedly for trafficking in child pornography, officers obtained a number of confessions from some of his hustlers, and some of them identified Hoover and [Clyde] Tolson as 'Mother John and Uncle Mike,' and claimed that they had serviced them on numerous occasions."

It appears then that the top law-enforcement officials in the nation were also a part of the

Laurel Canyon scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with various other unnamed persons of prominence. And we also find, not too shockingly at this point, that Laurel Canyon was a portal of child pornography, which of course goes hand-in-hand with the reports that we have already reviewed of organized, multi-perpetrator child sexual abuse. And lest we forget, we also have that long and bloody Laurel Canyon Death List, which, in the next installment, is going to get even longer, and even bloodier.

Stay tuned ...

* * * * *

And now, faithful readers, allow me to address a few common questions that have arisen, beginning with:

1. What is the subtitle of the series, “The Strange but Mostly True Story ...” supposed to mean? Do you just make this shit up as you go along?

The subtitle alludes to the fact that when dealing with anything concerning Hollywood, there is almost always more than one version of the ‘truth.’ Much of what passes for truth in Hollywood is actually legend and mythmaking, and much of what is dismissed as rumor and legend is actually at least an approximation of the truth. I have endeavored to report this story as accurately as humanly possible by utilizing my finely-honed bullshit detector to separate fact from fiction. Most of the important details of the story, in any event, are not disputed.

2. Are you planning on ultimately publishing this as a book?

I doubt it. I considered putting it together as a book manuscript, but I ultimately decided to put it out on the Internet instead, for a couple of reasons, the first of which is that I wanted people to actually read it. And you people, if we’re being honest here, aren’t really into that ‘old school’ concept of buying and reading books. The reality is that, based on the traffic to my site of late, far more people have read this series in the couple of months that it was been in progress than have read my last book after four years in print.

The other reason that I chose to present this material via the Internet is so that all of you can help to insure that the story is told as accurately as possible. This is, in a sense, a collaborative effort. Though I am willing to do most of the heavy lifting, I am relying on all of you to point out any gaffes or omissions. In other words, this is very much a work in progress and I have already made some minor corrections in previous posts thanks to feedback from readers.

Thanks to one particularly helpful reader who has access to California’s Birth, Death, Marriage and Divorce Indexes, as well as U.S. Census information, we now know a little more about the Paulekas clan than we did before. Vitautas Alfonso Paulekas was born on May 20, 1913 in Massachusetts, the son of John and Rose Paulekas. He had one older sister, Albenia, and two younger brothers, Bronislo and John. Vito married Szou (real name Sueanne C. Shaffer) on July 7, 1961, when he was 48 and she was just 18. If they met when she was 16, as seems quite probable, then Vito was 46 at the time, rather than in his fifties as previously reported.

By far the most interesting information to surface concerns young Godo Paulekas. Born on December 1, 1963, Godo died on December 23, 1966, having just made it past his third birthday. December 23 was, curiously enough, the winter solstice (or very close to it). And it wasn't just any winter solstice, mind you, but specifically the first winter solstice in the Age of Satan (as declared by Kenneth Anger's buddy, Anton LaVey, on April 30, 1966). The date of his death also means that young Godo died less than 48 hours before Christmas morning, and yet his parents still thought it a good time to go out dancing.

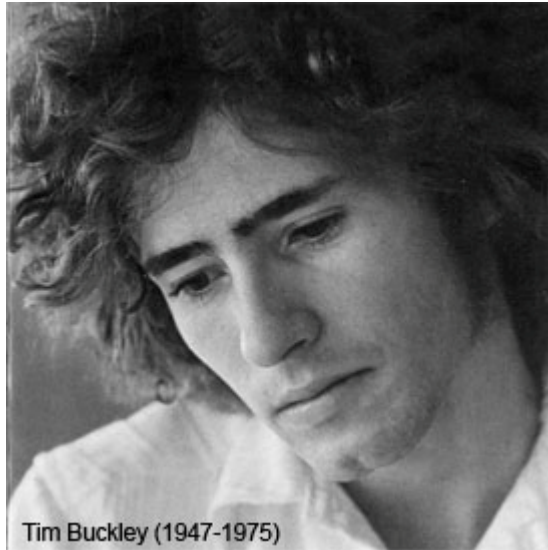
Vito and Sueanne divorced in Northern California in March of 1975. Before doing so, they produced several more children, each given increasingly ridiculous names. Gruvi Nipples Paulekas was born on June 23, 1967, exactly six months after Godo's death and, therefore, very near the summer solstice. Bp Paulekas was born on December 29, 1969, just days after the third anniversary of Godo's death. Bizarrely enough, Sky Paulekas was born on December 1, 1971, on what would have been Godo's eighth birthday. Last but certainly not least, Phreekus Mageekus Paulekas was born on January 28, 1974, a little over a year before Vito and Sueanne divorced. According to one report, Gruvi has joined Godo in the great beyond, a victim of her voracious appetite for drugs and alcohol.

As for Carl Franzoni, there were indeed a couple of brothers named Franzoni who were brought over from Italy in the early 1800s to carve the Masonic monuments of Washington. According to Ihna Thayer Frary's book, *They Built the Capitol*, Guiseppe Franzoni (and his brother Carlo) "had especially good family connections in Italy, he being a nephew of Cardinal Franzoni and son of the President of the Academy of Fine Arts at Carrara." Also shipped over were Francisco Iardella, a cousin of the Franzoni brothers, and Giovanni Andrei, a brother-in-law of Guiseppe Franzoni. Thus far, I have been unable to verify that Carl Franzoni is in fact descended from these men, but it seems quite likely given that Carl would probably not be aware of such an obscure chapter of American history were it not for a family connection.

One final note: I looked it up and it turns out that Bobby Sherman ended up becoming a sheriff's deputy. For real. Unlike his late-1960s *Here Comes the Brides* co-star, David Soul, who later became fake bad-ass cop 'Hutch,' Bobby became a real bad-ass cop. So I guess he was pretty cool after all. Except for, of course, the hair. And the clothes. And the sappy songs. And the bad acting. And ...

Let's just forget that I ever brought it up.

“No one here gets out alive” —Jim Morrison



Tim Buckley (1947-1975)

MY APOLOGIES TO readers for the long delay in getting this post up. These past several weeks have not been easy ones for your fearless host. Things started going south near the end of June, when our beloved family cat was taken ill and died upon arrival at the local vet's office. To many readers, this may seem a rather insignificant loss, but I have to say, in all honesty, that Thomas just may have been the coolest cat to ever prowl the streets of Los Angeles. His presence in our home is surely missed.

Not too long after Thomas' passing, my computer became quite ill as well. At first, it looked as though there was little hope of saving her. My tech buddy had all but pronounced her DOA when he unexpectedly detected a faint spark of life and a will to live. She could be saved, he proclaimed, but it would take some time and money. Given her advanced age (2 in human years, which is about 137 in computer years), he suggested I might be better off buying a new model. But then, of course, I would find myself face-to-face with the dreaded abomination known as Windows Vista. Also, I didn't really need the headache and tedium of setting up a new machine, transferring everything over, etc.

So I decided to wait it out, and for several days I found myself completely lost in the world. My computer and my cat, you see, were my two very best non-human friends. They were also, more importantly, my research assistants. I am a night-owl by nature and it is in the wee hours of the morning, when the wife and kids are fast asleep, that I create literary masterpieces (like the one you are reading right now). My two trusted and loyal companions in those endeavors have long been my computer and my cat. And now they were both gone. Fuck.

The computer ultimately made a full recovery and returned home ready for action. Thomas, unfortunately, would not be coming back, so we would have to soldier on without him. But then, alas, came news of a far greater tragedy: a friend of 20+ years had succumbed to injuries sustained in a rock-climbing accident near his home in Superior, Colorado. Just 47 years old and an avid outdoorsman, rock climber, mountain biker and hockey player, he leaves behind that which he cherished most in his life – three young kids, the oldest of whom is just 14. He was a good man and a good friend who touched many lives during his relatively short stay here on planet Earth, and he will not soon be forgotten.

It is, therefore, with a heavy heart that I return now to my position as self-appointed Laurel Canyon tour guide.

* * * * *

Sometimes pieces of the puzzle just seem to fall from the heavens. I don't really know why that happens – and to be honest, I find it somewhat disconcerting at times. On Sunday, July 6, the venerable Washington Post, in a most timely manner, generously provided a new piece of the puzzle that even I, your jaded host, find rather remarkable. It seems that a former reporter and novelist by the name of Alex Abella “has written a history of RAND, which was founded more than 60 years ago by the Air Force as a font of ideas on how that service might fight and win a nuclear war with the USSR ... Abella focuses on Albert Wohlstetter, a mathematical logician turned nuclear strategist who was the dominant figure at Rand starting in the early 1950s and whose influence has extended beyond his death in 1997 into the current Bush administration ... Wohlstetter epitomized what became known as the ‘RAND approach’ -- a relentlessly reductive, determinedly quantitative analysis of whatever problem the independent, non-profit think tank was assigned, whether the design of a new bomber or improving public education in inner-city schools.”

Let me interrupt here for just a brief moment to note that the RAND corporation is a lot of things, but “independent” has never been one of them. Anyway, getting back to the Post's timely book review, we find that “it was not so much Wohlstetter himself as his acolytes ... who had a major impact in Washington.” Most of those acolytes need no introduction, as the names should be instantly recognizable to just about everyone: Richard Perle (who once dated Wohlstetter's daughter), Paul Wolfowitz, Zalmay Khalilzad, and Andrew Marshall (“formerly a RAND economist, who, as promoter of the high-tech ‘Revolution in Military Affairs’ in Donald Rumsfeld's Defense Department, was dubbed the Pentagon's ‘Yoda.’”)

In the latter half of the 1950s and the early 1960s, while Wohlstetter was with the RAND corporation and also a professor at UCLA (and while his wife Roberta also worked as an analyst for RAND), Albert and his followers – the men who now serve as the apparent architects of US foreign policy – regularly met in a heavily wooded neighborhood in Los Angeles known as ... actually, I think I'm going to defer back to the Washington Post's book review and let journalist Gregg Herken tell you how “those bright, eager and ambitious young men ... had sat cross-legged on the floor with their mentor at his stylish house in (drum roll, please!) Laurel Canyon.”

The title of the Post's book review is “Dr. Strangelove's Workplace,” which presumably is a reference to the notorious RAND corporation. But I think that we can all agree that the title could just as easily apply to Wohlstetter's stylish Laurel Canyon home. In fact, as the pieces of this puzzle continue to fall into place, it is beginning to seem as though “Dr. Strangelove's Workplace” might be a good title for the entire damn canyon. We now know that, in addition to hosting both a secret military/intelligence facility and a call-boy/kiddy-porn operation servicing prominent public figures, Laurel Canyon was also the birthplace and meeting place of what we now know as the ‘neocon’/PNAC crowd, as well as the home base of the guiding light of the Rand corporation.

Thus far in our journey, we have encountered Masons, the FBI, the OSS, the CIA, the secret society known as Skull and Bones, the Rothschild family, military intelligence of every conceivable stripe, the OTO, the RAND corporation, the ‘neocon’ cabal, and just about every other nefarious group that regularly pops up in the ‘conspiracy’ literature – with one very

obvious exception: we have not yet met up with any member of the legendary Rockefeller clan. Luckily though, we're about to remedy that oversight.

This next contribution comes from deep within the archives of Time magazine, from an article entitled "The Bride Wore Pink," published six decades ago on February 23, 1948: "One morning last week, bespectacled Bryant Bowden, editor of the weekly Okeechobee (Fla.) News, sauntered into the Okeechobee courthouse and stopped to eye the bulletin board in the main hall. Among the marriage-license applications, which, by Florida law, must be publicly posted for three days before a ceremony, he saw something which made him goggle. Winthrop Rockefeller, 35, of New York – the fourth of John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s five sons and one of the most eligible bachelors in the world – had stated his intention of marrying one Eva Sears, also of New York."

"Editor Bowden had a bitter moment – his paper would not be published for two days. Then he remembered that he was the Okeechobee correspondent for the Associated Press. He telephoned the AP office in Jacksonville. A few hours later, the whole U.S. journalistic horizon glowed a bright pink with the fireworks he had touched off."

"While the first headlines blazed (and while Manhattan gossip columnists scrambled to assure their readers that they had known all about the romance for months), herds of reporters were dispatched to find an answer to the question: Who is Eva Sears? Hearst's Cholly Knickerbocker (Ghigli Cassini) haughtily announced that she was Mrs. Barbara Paul Sears of the fine old Philadelphia Pauls and thus a society girl of impeccable pedigree. He was wrong."

Indeed he was. So who was this mystery woman – this woman who had once had a brief career in Hollywood before moving to Paris and taking a job as a secretary at the U.S. embassy? She appears to have gone by many names at different times in her life, including Eva Paul, Eva Paul Sears, Barbara Paul, Barbara Paul Sears, and "Bobo" Rockefeller. None of them, however, was the name she was given at the time of her birth. As Time magazine noted so many years ago, "Her parents were Lithuanian immigrants and she was born Jievute Paulekiute in a coal patch near Noblestown, Pa." Even that, however, was not her real name – at least not by American custom and tradition.



In her parents' homeland, I am told, "Paulekiute" is the feminine version of a surname we have previously encountered: "Paulekas," which was her parents' surname. Eva Paul's father, as it turns out, just happened to be the brother of Vito

Paulekas' father (a fact verified by – and brought to my attention by – a member of the Paulekas family.) I'm no genealogist, but I'm pretty sure that that means that the self-styled "King of the Hippies" was a first cousin of "Bobo" Rockefeller, and a cousin-in-law (or something like that) of Winthrop Rockefeller himself. Vito was also a cousin of the couple's only child, Winthrop Paul Rockefeller, who would later serve as the Lieutenant Governor of the state of Arkansas.

The Paulekas family, alas, missed the couple's day of celebration. According to Time, "Bobo's mother and stepfather ... were unable to attend the ceremony because they were making a batch of Lithuanian cheese on their Indiana farm." I guess we all have our priorities. Truth be told though, the Paulekas clan has a somewhat different explanation: they were deliberately excluded from the ceremony as it was felt they were a bit too uncultured to break bread with the likes of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and the Marquess of Blandford.

We will be revisiting Vito Paulekas in an upcoming edition, to review other new information that has come my way. For now, we will just note that we can add the Rockefellers to the list of folks connected to the Laurel Canyon scene. And that, of course, made Laurel Canyon the ideal place for all the rock musicians and hippies and flower children to hang out in the 1960s and 1970s, even with the stench from all the dead bodies that kept piling up. Speaking of which, let's check in and see what names have been added to the Laurel Canyon Death List since we last took a peek.

The first new name I see is Mr. Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, who purportedly drowned without assistance in his home swimming pool on July 3, 1969, at the age of 27 (Jim Morrison would allegedly die precisely two years later, also at the age of 27). Just three days after Jones' tragic death, the Stones, with the Hells Angels providing security, played a previously-scheduled concert in Hyde Park, footage of which appears in Kenneth Anger's *Invocation of My Demon Brother*. Despite being the founder of the Stones and being widely regarded as the main creative force within the band, Jones had been unceremoniously dumped by the group on June 9, less than a month before his death. He was replaced just four days later by the vastly inferior talent known as Mick Taylor (who would later be replaced by Ron Wood). It would later be claimed that Jones was booted from the band due to his chronic substance abuse problems, although Keith Richards' legendary intake of drugs never seemed to pose a problem for the group.



Anton LaVey of the Church of Satan from *Invocation of my Demon Brother*

“Fair enough,” you say, “but what does any of that have to do with Laurel Canyon? Clearly the Stones were not a Laurel Canyon band.” True enough, but as Barney Hoskyns has written (in *Hotel California*), “In the summer of 1968 the English band was flirting heavily with Satanism and the occult ... and spending a lot of time in Los Angeles.” A lot of time, that is, in and around Laurel Canyon – and during that time, Mick Jagger was involved in two occult-drenched film projects: Kenneth Anger’s *Lucifer Rising* and Donald Cammell’s *Performance*.

Jagger was the first musical superstar tapped by Anger to compose a soundtrack for his *Lucifer Rising* project, which at the time was to star Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil (who had, as we all remember, replaced Godo Paulekas). Anger would later solicit a soundtrack for the long-delayed film project from Led Zeppelin’s Jimmy Page, the proud owner of one of the world’s largest collections of Aleister Crowley memorabilia, including Crowley’s notorious Boleskine estate on the shores of Scotland’s Loch Ness. When ultimately released, however, the film featured a soundtrack by neither Jagger nor Page, but rather one that was composed, recorded and arranged inside a prison cell by convicted murderer Bobby Beausoleil. The pre-prison footage that Anger had shot of Beausoleil, meanwhile, ended up in a different film: the aforementioned *Invocation of My Demon Brother*. Starring in *Lucifer Rising*, as Osiris, was *Performance* writer and co-director Donald Seaton Cammell.



Donald Cammell as Osiris from *Lucifer Rising*

Donald Cammell was the son of Charles Richard Cammell, who happened to be a close friend and biographer of notorious occultist and British intelligence asset Aleister Crowley. Donald himself was the godson of the Great Beast. Cammell's decidedly Crowleyian film was originally to star his good friend Marlon Brando, but the role ultimately went to actor James Fox. Brando and Cammell, by the way, once wrote a novel together – a novel so horrifyingly bad that I dare not mention its title here for fear that some of you may purchase it out of curiosity and then blame me for any trauma you endure while attempting to actually read it.

Speaking of Brando, by the way, have I mentioned yet the curious string of deaths that began eighteen years ago, on May 16, 1990, when Marlon's son Christian gunned down Dag Drollet, the father of his sister Cheyenne's unborn child, in Marlon's Laurel Canyon-adjacent home? Though convicted, Christian got off with a rather light sentence, thanks primarily to Marlon having had his own daughter, the prosecution's potential star witness, locked away in a mental institution in Tahiti, safe from subpoena. A few years later, on April 14, 1995, 25-year-old Cheyenne was found swinging from the end of a rope, her death unsurprisingly ruled a suicide. The next year, Christian Brando was released from prison and promptly became involved with a woman by the name of Bonnie Lee Bakley, who caught a bullet to the head on May 4, 2001 while in the company of new hubby Robert Blake (her tenth husband). Marlon dropped dead next, on July 1, 2004 (though his death wasn't particularly suspicious, given that he was getting on in years). His home was promptly purchased by good friend and neighbor Jack Nicholson, who immediately announced plans to bulldoze it, declaring the structure to be decrepit. He never did though explain why a man wealthy enough to own his own chain of Polynesian islands was purportedly living in a derelict abode. A few years later, on January 26 of 2008, Christian Brando dropped dead at the relatively young age of 49.

Returning now, after that brief digression, to our discussion of Donald Cammell's Performance, we find that Mick Jagger was cast to play the role of 'Turner,' a debauched rock

star (which, obviously, was a real stretch for Mick). Fox played 'Chas,' a violent organized-crime figure. He was trained for the role by David Litvinoff, a real-life crime figure and associate of the notoriously sadistic Kray brothers. Litvinoff reportedly sent Fox to the south of London for a couple of months to hang out with his gangster buddies; when he returned, according to various accounts, Fox had literally become the violent character he portrayed in the film.



Bobby Beausoleil from *Invocation of my Demon Brother*

Recruited to create the film's soundtrack was Bernard Alfred "Jack" Nitzsche, an occultist and the son of a supposed 'medium.' Nitzsche, along with Sonny Bono, had begun his music career as a lieutenant for gun-brandishing producer Phil Spector (Nitzsche was one of the architects of Spector's famed "wall of sound"). Nitzsche was also a familiar presence on the Laurel Canyon scene, collaborating with such noted bands and artists as Buffalo Springfield, Neil Young, Crazy Horse, Randy Newman, Michelle Phillips, The Turtles, Captain Beefheart and Carole King. Nitzsche also worked with several of the people we will be adding today to the Laurel Canyon Death List, including David Blue, Ricky Nelson and Sonny Bono. And one guy who was already added to the list: Tim Buckley.

Nitzsche's Performance soundtrack was composed, according to author Michael Walker, "in a witch's cottage in the canyon" (I'm not exactly sure what a "witch's cottage" is, but it's nice to know that Laurel Canyon had one). One of the musicians hired by Nitzsche to play on that soundtrack was Lowell George, who we will also be adding to the Laurel Canyon Death List. For now, let's add Donald Cammell to the list, since on April 24, 1996, he became yet another

of the characters in this story to catch a bullet to the head (need I add here that the wound was reportedly self-inflicted?) Nietzsche died five years later of a heart attack, on August 25, 2000. A few years earlier, he had made an appearance on primetime television – as a gun-brandishing drunkard arrested on the streets of Hollywood on Cops.

Before moving on, there is one other thing I need to mention about Cammell's film: John Phillips once stated that Performance was about estranging one's self from society in order to create a new, better social order. "With really intelligent people," according to Phillips, "it's almost a matter of inbreeding at this point." I don't know about all of you readers out there, but when I first stumbled upon that quote, it suddenly dawned on me that one element that was previously missing from this story was a pro-eugenics comment from one of our flower-power icons, so I'm glad that we were able to squeeze that in.

Since we now seem to have segued onto the topic of John Phillips, let's go ahead and add his good friend Steve Brandt to the Death List. Brandt, who was also a close friend of the victims at 10050 Cielo Drive, allegedly overdosed on barbiturates in late November of 1969, some three-and-a-half months after the Manson murders. In the days and weeks following those murders, Brandt had placed numerous phone calls to the LAPD. Those calls became increasingly frantic in nature, and Brandt became increasingly fearful that his own life might be in jeopardy. He soon decided to put some distance between himself and LA, so he headed for New York City. On the night of his death, according to Phillips' autobiography, Brandt attended a Rolling Stones concert at Madison Square Gardens, where he attempted to run on stage but was repelled and beaten by a security guard. He then went home and, according to official mythology, overdosed.

It seems obvious that if someone had information that desperately needed to be made public, and if it was the kind of information that authorities had, say, willfully failed to act upon, and if the information was of the type that could not, needless to say, be taken to the mainstream media, and if the year was 1969 and the mass communication technology that we now take for granted did not yet exist, then grabbing the mike at a Stones concert at Madison Square Gardens might just be one of the most effective means of disseminating that information. Brandt failed in what may have been an attempt to do just that, and he turned up dead just hours later. Shit happens, I guess.



Aleister Crowley makes an appearance in *Lucifer Rising* with Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin.

Moving on, I couldn't help noticing that when I mentioned David Blue a few paragraphs back, a lot of you scratched your heads and asked, "David Who?" Allow me then to quickly introduce you to another of the forgotten talents of Laurel Canyon. Blue was born Stuart David Cohen on February 18, 1941; shortly thereafter, his father was deployed overseas. According to David, his dad "came hobbling home on crutches and stayed depressed all his life" (not unlike, it seems fair to say, the family situation of our old friend Phil Ochs). David and his slightly older half-sister, Suzanne, endured a hellish existence consisting of alternating periods of rages and silences. Suzanne got out first, only to end up busted for prostitution in New York City in 1963. Suzanne's next stop, just a few months later, was at the county morgue.

David, meanwhile, had gotten out of the house as well, by dropping out of school and joining the US Navy at the age of seventeen – just as Lenny Bruce had done. Like Jimi Hendrix, Blue was purportedly booted out of the service, after which he decided to become a folk singer. His first album was released in 1966; a later effort was produced by Graham Nash, who also, as everyone surely recalls, produced a record for Judee Sill, with whom Blue had much in common (you people had better be paying attention because – I'm warning you! – there will, at some point, be a quiz on all this shit, and if you miss too many questions on that quiz, you will be locked out from further access to these articles!)

... .. Just kidding!! I don't even know how to set that shit up! But if I did, I would totally fucking do it! Anyway, let's get back to our story ...

Like Judee Sill, David Blue was one of the Laurel Canyon stars who never quite shone as brightly as they should have. And also like Sill, Blue was one of the first few acts signed by David Geffen's fledgling Asylum label. Finally, as with Judee, David was long forgotten by the time of his death, on December 2, 1982, when the forty-one-year-old Blue dropped dead while jogging in New York's Washington Square Park. The former rising star (and occasional actor) lay in the morgue for three days before anyone noticed that he was missing.

*“Everybody was experimenting and taking it all the way. It opened up a negative force of energy that was almost demonic.” —Frank Mazolla, editor of the film *Performance**

“There were a lot of weird people around. There was one guy who had a parrot called Captain Blood, and he was always scrawling real cryptic things on the inside walls of my house – Neil Young’s too.” — Joni Mitchell, describing the Laurel Canyon scene at the tail end of the 1960s



Like Brandon DeWilde, Kenneth Anger, Mickey Dolenz and Van Dyke Parks, Ricky Nelson began his Hollywood career as a child actor. He was the son, as everyone surely knows, of America’s favorite 1950s TV mom and dad, Ozzie and Harriet Nelson. Ricky began his rock ‘n’ roll career in 1957, when he was just seventeen. By 1962, he had scored no fewer than thirty Top 40 hits, trailing only superstars Elvis Presley and Pat Boone.

That reminds me that, before I forget, I need to add Elvis to the death list as well. And before you send me letters of protest, let me assure you that I do indeed know what a lot of you are thinking: “But Dave, Elvis isn’t dead! I just saw him the other day at the 7-11 right around the corner from my house. And, sure, he was looking a little bloated, but he was definitely alive. I mean, unless you’re going to try to convince me that I watched a dead guy put away a ¼ lb. Big Bite.”

Oh wait ... that might not be right ... what you are probably really thinking is: “Elvis?! The King?! You can’t be serious! How the hell does The King figure into any of this? What are you going to tell us next – that comedians John Belushi and Phil Hartman belong on the death list as well?”

Uhhh, have you been peeking at my notes or something? Because I actually am, as a matter of fact, going to include Mr. Hartman on the list (and I could include Mr. Belushi as well, since he did die at the Chateau Marmont Hotel, which happens to lie at the mouth of Laurel Canyon). But we’ll get to Phil Hartman later; for now, let’s talk a little bit about Mr. Presley and his admittedly tangential connections to Laurel Canyon.

Elvis arrived in LA in 1956, to begin what would prove to be a prolific film career that would continue throughout the 1960s and would result in the inexcusable creation of nearly three dozen motion pictures, each one arguably more appalling than the last. In the early years of his film career, Elvis reportedly spent his off-hours hanging out with his two best Hollywood

pals – a couple of young roommates and Canyonites named Dennis Hopper and Nick Adams. In later years, Presley's backing musicians – considered to be among the best session musicians in the business – were in high demand among the Laurel Canyon crowd. Elvis' bass player, for example, can be heard on some of the Doors' tracks. The entire band was recruited by "Papa" John Phillips to play on his less-than-memorable solo project. Mike Nesmith's critically-acclaimed post-Monkees project, the First National Band, featured Presley's band as well. Gram Parsons also hired Elvis' band to back him up on the two solo albums he recorded at what proved to be the twilight of his life and career.

Those two solo efforts by Parsons, by the way, prominently featured the voice of a young singer/guitarist named Emmylou Harris, a relatively late arrival to the canyon scene. Harris is the daughter – brace yourselves here for a real shocker, folks – of a career US Marine Corps officer. As with so many other characters in this story, she grew up in the outlying suburbs of Washington, DC, primarily in Woodbridge, Virginia – which happens to be the home of an imposingly large Army 'research and development' installation known as the Harry Diamond Laboratories Woodbridge Research Facility. In other words, Emmylou Harris fit right in with the rest of the Laurel Canyon crowd.

But here I seem to have digressed from our discussion of Elvis (which was, if I remember correctly, itself a digression from our discussion of Ricky Nelson). Given though that he had only peripheral connections to Laurel Canyon, I guess I don't really have much more to say about Elvis, other than that he reportedly died on August 16, 1977, the victim of a drug overdose at the young age of forty-two. As with Morrison, however, there have been persistent rumors that Elvis didn't actually die at all, but rather reinvented himself to escape from the fishbowl.

As for Nelson, in the mid-1960s he successfully shed his 'teen idol' image and emerged as a respected pioneer of the country-rock wave that Canyonites Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt and the Eagles would soon ride to dizzying heights of commercial success. One future member of the Eagles, Randy Meisner, played in Nelson's Stone Canyon Band. As the name of the band would seem to imply, Nelson did not live in Laurel Canyon but rather in one of the many neighboring canyons, but he and his band were very much a part of the early country-rock scene that included Laurel Canyon bands like The Byrds, Poco, the Flying Burrito Brothers and the First National Band.

Nelson was killed on New Year's Eve, 1985, in a rather unusual plane crash. According to Nelson's Wikipedia entry, "the original NTSB investigation long ago stated that the crash was probably due to mechanical problems. The pilots attempted to land in a field after smoke filled the cabin. An examination indicated that a fire originated in the right hand side of the aft cabin area at or near the floor line. The passengers were killed when the aircraft struck obstacles during the forced landing; the pilots were able to escape through the cockpit windows and survived."

I can't be the only one here who is pondering the obvious question: exactly when was it that the pilots were able to escape through the cockpit windows? I assume that they did not parachute out when the aircraft was still at altitude, leaving the passengers to crash and die. And they certainly couldn't have bailed out and survived while the aircraft was coming in for a landing. So was it after the plane touched down? If so, exactly how much time was there between when the plane touched down and when it impacted the fatal obstacles? How long was this 'escape window,' as it were? I would think it was mere seconds, if even that, which wouldn't seem to be enough time to execute an escape. And if the plane was going fast

enough on the ground that the impact killed all aboard, what are the odds that anyone would survive such an escape attempt? I think maybe the NTSB needs to take another look at this one.

For the final eight years of his life, Nelson lived in a rather unusual home. In 1941, swashbuckling actor Errol Flynn had purchased an eleven-and-a-half-acre chunk of the Hollywood Hills just off Mulholland Drive and had a sprawling home built to his specifications. According to Laurie Jacobson and Marc Wanamaker, writing in *Haunted Hollywood*, the mansion featured “several mysterious secret passageways, and more than a few peepholes.” The home appeared to have been designed to allow for surreptitious observation of guests in the home’s numerous bedrooms. It is claimed that Flynn incorporated the unusual design features so that he could satisfy his own voyeuristic impulses. Researcher/writer Charles Higham, however, has cast Flynn as a Western intelligence asset (and Nazi sympathizer). And if Flynn was an intelligence operative, then it is far more likely that the home was built not so much for Flynn’s personal pleasure, but rather as a means of compromising prominent public figures (much like the home of, for example, Craig Spence).

After Nelson’s death, the palatial home stood vacant until a curious incident took place; referring once again to Jacobson and Wanamaker, we find that “A gang broke in and murdered a girl in the living room. Then a mysterious fire burned half the house. The ruins were torn down.” Shit like that has been known to happen to folks foolish enough to leave their expensive canyon homes sitting vacant ... well, except for the part about the “gang.” As far as I know, the canyons have never had much of a “gang” problem. In the Hollywood Hills, the words “crime” and “gang-related” never show up at a party together. And when was the last time anyone ever heard of a “gang” kidnapping a girl and then taking her to a remote, isolated mansion to murder her?

All things considered, I’m thinking that perhaps what the authors meant to say was that “a group of people broke in and murdered a girl ...” But that, of course, raises the question of exactly what sort of group of people jointly commit a premeditated murder? Other than death squads, the only such groups that come to mind are generally referred to as “cults,” which I’m guessing are far more common in the canyons than are “gangs.”

In addition to having a fondness for multi-perpetrator murders, it appears as though cults also like to start fires, oftentimes because fires are a really effective way of destroying evidence. Some of you may, however, be thinking that since the Hollywood Hills are plagued by wildfires on a more or less annual basis, then there is nothing particularly unusual about the fact that Nelson’s home, and more than a few of the other homes in this story, were destroyed by fire. For the most part though, the fires that destroyed these structures were not natural wildfires but rather fires of mysterious origin that seemed to target specific buildings. As Michael Walker noted, “Laurel Canyon would burn and burn again, targeting with uncanny precision the homes of its seemingly enchanted rock demimonde.”

(One exception was the Laurel Canyon home of blues-rocker John Mayall, which burned down to its foundation in a ferocious wildfire on September 16, 1979; that wildfire also claimed the home of Whisky owner Elmer Valentine. It was from Mayall’s Bluesbreakers, by the way, that the Rolling Stones recruited guitarist Mick Taylor, who I regrettably disparaged in the initial version of the last installment of this series. Taylor was actually quite an accomplished guitarist whose work with the Stones was frequently uncredited and who was underutilized by the band. My apologies to all the fans of the Rolling Stones that I offended.)

Moving on then to the next new name on our list, we find that on December 31, 1943 – precisely forty-two years before the plane crash that would claim the life of Ricky Nelson – Henry John Deutschendorf, Jr., better known as John Denver, was born in Roswell, New Mexico. A few years later, the town of Roswell would make a name for itself and become something of a tourist destination. But that is not really our focus here today, though it should be noted that Henry John Deutschendorf, Sr. might well have known a little something about that incident, given that he was a career US Air Force officer assigned to the Roswell Army Air Field (later renamed the Walker Air Force Base), which was likely the origin of the object that famously crashed in Roswell.

After spending his childhood being frequently uprooted, as did many of our cast of characters, Denver attended Texas Tech University in the early 1960s. In 1964, he apparently heard the call of the Pied Piper and promptly dropped out of school and headed for LA. Once there, he joined up with the Chad Mitchell Trio, the group from which Jim McGuinn had recently departed to co-found The Byrds. By November 1966, Denver was front-and-center at the so-called ‘Riot on the Sunset Strip,’ alongside folks like Peter Fonda, Sal Mineo and a popular husband-and-wife duo known as Sonny and Cher.



A decade later, in the latter half of the 1970s, Denver could be found working alongside a spooky chap by the name of Werner Erhard, creator of so-called ‘EST’ training. After graduating from the ‘training’ program, Denver penned a little ditty that became the organization’s theme song. In 1985, Denver testified alongside our old friend Frank Zappa at the PMRC hearings. Twelve years later, in autumn of 1997, Denver died when his self-piloted plane crashed soon after taking off from Monterey Airport, very near where the Monterey Pop Festival had been held thirty years earlier. The date of the crash, curiously enough, was one that we have stumbled across repeatedly: October 12.

The next name we need to add to the list is one that has already worked its way into this narrative a time or two: Sonny Bono. As previously noted, Bono began his Hollywood career as a lieutenant for reclusive murder suspect Phil Spector. In the early 1960s, Bono hooked up with an underage Cherilyn Sarkisian LaPierre to form a duo known first as Caesar and Cleo, and then as Sonny and Cher. The pair were phenomenally successful, first on the Sunset Strip and later on television. Bono, of course, ultimately gave up the Hollywood life and found work in a different branch of the federal government: the U.S. House of Representatives.

On January 5, 1998, Sonny Bono died after purportedly skiing into a tree. At the time, Bono occupied a seat on the House Judiciary Committee, which was about to come to sudden prominence with the investigation and impeachment of President Bill. The ball was already rolling by the time of Bono’s death, and on January 26, 1998, just three weeks after the alleged skiing incident, Clinton held the now-notorious press conference in which he uttered

the fateful words: “I did not have sexual relations with that skank, by which I mean that the executive penis did not, at any time, penetrate her womanly parts, though it is possible that she may have taken a few puffs on the presidential cigar, if you fellas know what I mean. Does anyone else have a question?” By that time, of course, Bono’s seat on the panel had been set aside for his robowife (who was, perhaps, more willing to act out the charade).

And now, as promised, let’s turn our attention to Phil Hartman. As everyone likely remembers, Saturday Night Live alumnus Hartman was murdered in his Encino home on May 28, 1998. That much is not in dispute. Decidedly less clear is the answer to the question of who it was that actually shot and killed Hartman. The official story, of course, holds that it was his wife Brynn, who shortly thereafter shot herself – with a different gun, naturally, and reportedly after she had left the house and then returned with a friend, and after the LAPD had arrived at the home. There is a very strong possibility, however, that both Phil and his wife were murdered, with the true motive for the crime covered up by trotting out the tired but ever-popular murder/suicide scenario.

In most people’s minds, of course, Phil Hartman is not associated with the Laurel Canyon scene of the late 1960s and early 1970s. But as it turns out, Hartman did indeed have substantial ties to that scene. To begin with, during the time that Jimi Hendrix lived in LA (in the spacious mansion just north of the Log Cabin on Laurel Canyon Boulevard), Hartman worked for him as a roadie. Soon after that, Phil found work as a graphic artist and he quickly found himself much in demand by the Laurel Canyon rock royalty. In addition to designing album covers for both Poco and America, Hartman also, believe it or not, designed a readily recognizable rock symbol that has endured for nearly forty years: the distinctive CSN logo for Crosby, Stills and Nash.

Hartman had ties to the darker side of Laurel Canyon as well. He was, for example, a high school chum of Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme, who would later find herself living alongside Charlie Manson at the infamous Spahn Movie Ranch. In bygone years, by the way, that very same Spahn Movie Ranch was frequently used as a filming location by western star Tom Mix, who was, as we all know, the man whose name was forever tied to the Log Cabin. Curiously enough, the Log Cabin’s guesthouse (aka the Bird House), which is still standing, was designed and built by architect Robert Byrd, who also, according to one report, designed the house at 5065 Encino Avenue where Phil Hartman was murdered, and the house at 10050 Cielo Drive where Sharon Tate and friends were murdered.

While we’re on the subject of the Bird House, I should mention that you can find numerous photos of the guesthouse and the grounds of the property at [this website](#). Notice that among its other amenities, the house features a rather medieval-looking dungeon, because one never knows when a dungeon might come in handy for, uhmm, storing roots or something. Notice also that what was built as a ‘guesthouse’ probably makes your own home look like it belongs in a shantytown, which would tend to indicate that the property’s main residence, the Log Cabin, was a decidedly opulent dwelling.

One more curious factoid that I feel compelled to toss out here, since I did reference the Spahn Movie Ranch, is that during the days of the Manson clan’s stay at that now infamous former film set, there was a similarly dilapidated movie set that was located right across the road from Spahn. It’s name, in case you were wondering, was the Wonderland Movie Ranch.

Speaking of Wonderland, let’s turn our attention next to four individuals whose names will probably not be familiar to most readers: Ronald Launius, Billy Deverell, Barbara Richardson

and Joy Miller. All died on July 1, 1981, all by bludgeoning, and all at the same location: 8763 Wonderland Avenue in Laurel Canyon. All were members of a gang that trafficked heavily in cocaine and occasionally in heroin. The leader of the group was Ron Launius, who reportedly embarked on his criminal career, and established his drug connections, while serving for Uncle Sam over in Vietnam, which is also where he began to build his carefully-crafted reputation as a cold-blooded killer. At the time that he became a murder victim himself, Launius was a suspect in no fewer than twenty-seven open homicide investigations. He was also a drug supplier to various members of the Laurel Canyon aristocracy.



The death house at 8763 Wonderland Avenue, as it looks today

Victim Billy Deverell was Launius' second-in-command, and victim Joy Miller was Billy's girlfriend as well as the renter of the Laurel Canyon drug den. Victim Barbara Richardson was the girlfriend of another member of the gang, David Lind, who conveniently was not at the home at the time of the mass murder. That could well have been due to the fact that Lind was, according to various rival drug dealers, a police informant for both the Sacramento and Los Angeles Police Departments. He was also a member of the ultra-violent prison gang known as the Aryan Brotherhood (as is, by several accounts, a guy that we have bumped into

several times during this journey: Bobby Beausoleil). Lind, who met Launius when the two had served time together, is alleged to have overdosed in 1995, though it is widely believed that he actually went into the federal witness protection program.

The next name to go on our list is that of Brian Cole, bass player for The Association, an LA folk-rock band known for the hit songs “Along Comes Mary” and “Never My Love.” The Association was not a Laurel Canyon band but they did have close ties to the scene. The group was formed by Terry Kirkman and Jules Alexander; Kirkman had formerly played in a band with Frank Zappa, while Alexander was fresh from a stint in the US Navy. Jerry Yester, a guitarist and keyboardist with the band, was formerly with The Modern Folk Quartet, a band managed by Zappa manager Herb Cohen and produced by Byrds’ manager Jim Dickson. Guitarist Larry Ramos had formerly been with the New Christy Minstrels, which also produced Gene Clark of The Byrds.

On June 16, 1967, Cole and his band were the first to take the stage at the Monterey Pop Festival, followed by such Laurel Canyon stalwarts as The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and the Mamas and the Papas. Five years later, on August 2, 1972, Cole was found dead in his Los Angeles home. The cause of death was reportedly a heroin overdose. Cole was one month shy of his thirtieth birthday at the time of his death.

Another new name on the Laurel Canyon Death List is Lowell George, the founder and creative force behind the critically-acclaimed but largely obscure band known as Little Feat. George was the son of Willard H. George, a famous furrier to the Hollywood movie studios. Lowell’s first foray into the music world was with a band known as The Factory, which cut some demos with a guy by the name of Frank Zappa. The Factory evolved into the Fraternity of Man, though without George, who had left to serve as lead vocalist for The Standells. George returned, however, to join the band in the studio for the recording of their second album. By that time, as we have already seen, the Fraternity of Man had taken up residence in the Log Cabin, alongside Carl Franzoni and his fellow Freaks.

George next joined up with Frank Zappa’s Mothers of Invention, though his tenure there was destined to be a short one; like so many others, Lowell left embittered by Zappa’s dictatorial approach to making music and his condescending treatment of his bandmates. During his time with Zappa, George helped Frank out in the studio with the GTOs’ first (and only) album, as did Brits Jeff Beck and Rod Stewart (who, readers of *Programmed to Kill* will recall, was one of the last people known to have been in the company of a pair of underage girls before they became victims of a ‘serial killer’ in June 1980).

After parting company with Zappa, George formed Little Feat, a band composed mostly of musicians from the Fraternity of Man sessions. Lowell, who is credited with being a pioneer of the use of slide guitar in rock music, served as singer, songwriter and lead guitarist for the band, which released its debut album in 1970. Though well regarded within the industry and by critics, the band’s albums failed to sell and George ultimately announced the demise the band and recorded a solo album. After playing a show on June 29, 1979 at George Washington University in support of that album, George was found dead in an Arlington, Virginia hotel room, very near the Pentagon. Cause of death was said to be a massive heart attack, though George was just thirty-four years old at the time.

According to Barney Hoskyns (writing in *Hotel California*), “A regular social stop-off for George was a Laurel Canyon house on Wonderland Avenue belonging to Three Dog Night singer Danny Hutton. A drop-in den of debauchery, the Hutton house featured a bedroom

with black walls and a giant fireplace. Lowell would often swing by and entertain the likes of Brian Wilson or Harry Nilsson.” Nilsson and his regular drinking buddy, John Lennon, were frequent guests at this “den of debauchery.”

Former Beatle John Lennon is, to be sure, one of the most famous names to be found on the Laurel Canyon Death List. Lennon also has the distinction of being one of the few Laurel Canyon alumni whose cause of death is acknowledged to have been homicide. The ex-Beatle, of course, never lived in the canyon, but he was a fixture on the Sunset Strip and at various Laurel Canyon hangouts, frequently in the company of Harry Nilsson. And as readers surely recall, he was gunned down on December 8, 1980 – purportedly by Mark David Chapman, but more likely by a second gunman.

Lennon was, as everyone knows, murdered in front of New York’s Dakota Apartments, which had been portrayed by filmmaker Roman Polanski in the 1960s as a den of Satanic cult activity (in his film *Rosemary’s Baby*). Not long before Lennon’s murder, Chapman had approached occult filmmaker Kenneth Anger and offered him a gift of live bullets. Just days after Lennon was felled, Anger’s long-delayed final cut of *Lucifer Rising* made its New York debut, not far from the bloodstained grounds of the Dakota Apartments. And not long after that, the ‘Reagan Revolution’ began to transform America.

Exactly three weeks after Lennon’s death, Tim Hardin – Canyonite, folk musician, close associate of Frank Zappa, author of Rod Stewart’s “Reason to Believe,” onetime tenant in Lenny Bruce’s Laurel Canyon-adjacent home, and former U.S. Marine – died of a reported heroin and morphine overdose in Los Angeles. At the time of his death, on December 29, 1980, Hardin was just thirty-nine years old.

Eight years later, on July 18, 1988, singer/songwriter/keyboardist Christa Paffgen, better known as Nico, died of a reported cerebral hemorrhage in Ibiza, Spain under unusual circumstances. After achieving some level of fame as a vocalist with the Velvet Underground, Nico had left the Warhol stable and migrated west to Laurel Canyon, where she formed a bond with a then-unknown singer-songwriter named Jackson Browne, who contributed a few songs to Nico’s 1967 debut album, *Chelsea Girl* (so named for New York’s Chelsea Hotel, from where Devon Wilson took a dive, and where the persona of John Train murdered the persona of Phil Ochs). Also contributing a song to Nico’s solo debut was Mr. Tim Hardin.

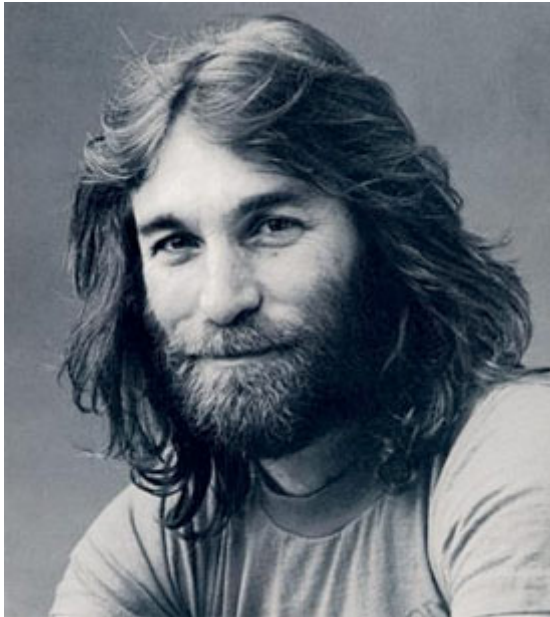
On December 4, 1993, some five years after Nico’s curious death, Frank Zappa died in his Laurel Canyon home of inoperable prostate cancer. Some have speculated that the cancer could have developed as a result of the chemical agents Zappa was exposed to throughout his early childhood at the Edgewood Arsenal.

And so it goes. In the next installment, we will add two more famous names to the death list, and we will use them as springboards to launch into two rarely-told stories that will add new levels of complexity to the Laurel Canyon saga.

Until then ...

“By the time Manson shifted base from Rustic Canyon to an old ranch in Chatsworth, he'd begun formulating the notion that he and his followers had to prepare themselves for a race war with Black America.” —Barney Hoskyns (in Hotel California, his take on the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene)

“There were a lot of weird people around. There was one guy who had a parrot called Captain Blood, and he was always scrawling real cryptic things on the inside walls of my house – Neil Young’s too.” — Joni Mitchell, describing the Laurel Canyon scene at the tail end of the 1960s



Dennis Wilson, Beach Boys

In this outing, we will be temporarily leaving Laurel Canyon. But don’t worry; we won’t be traveling far, and we’ll be returning soon enough.

Today we will be exploring Rustic Canyon, which lies about nine miles west of Laurel Canyon. It was there, in Lower Rustic Canyon, that Beach Boy Dennis Wilson lived in what Steven Gaines described in *Heroes and Villains* as “a palatial log-cabin-style house at 14400 Sunset Boulevard that had once belonged to humorist Will Rogers.” The expansive home sat on three landscaped acres of gently rolling hills.

In the summer of 1968, as is fairly well known, Charlie Manson and various members of his entourage moved in with Wilson. “Tex” Watson, curiously enough, was already living there. As many as two-dozen members of Manson’s clan spent the entire summer there, with Wilson picking up the tab for all expenses. The Mansonites (mostly nubile young women) regularly drove Wilson’s expensive cars and demolished at least one of them. Dennis didn’t seem to mind; he was busy recording Manson in his home studio and inviting fellow musicians, like Neil Young, over to the house to hear Charlie perform (Young was so impressed that he urged Mo Ostin to sign him).



The floor of upper Rustic Canyon

Dennis would later claim that he had destroyed all the Manson demo tapes, that he remembered almost nothing of his time with Charlie and the Family, and that he certainly knew nothing about the Tate and LaBianca murders, which were committed in the summer of 1969, about a year after the Family had vacated the Rustic Canyon residence.

At some point in time, Wilson had a change of heart and decided that maybe he did indeed know a little something about the murders. "I know why Charles Manson did what he did," said Dennis. "Someday, I'll tell the world. I'll write a book and explain why he did it." Needless to say, that book was never written and Wilson's story, if indeed he had one, was never told. Instead, Dennis Wilson drowned under questionable circumstances on December 28, 1983, in the marina where his beloved ship was docked.



But this story isn't really about Dennis Wilson; it's about Charlie Manson and his alleged motive for allegedly ordering the Tate and LaBianca murders. According to the 'Helter Skelter' scenario popularized by lead prosecutor/disinformation peddler Vincent Bugliosi, Manson was hoping to spark an apocalyptic race war. It is said that Charlie believed that America's black population would prevail over whitey, but that, having won the war, the victors would be incapable of governing themselves. And that, alas, is when Charlie and his retinue would emerge from the shadows to take command.

According to Barney Hoskyns, Manson began formulating his race war theory during his stay in Rustic Canyon. If true, then Charlie appears to have been following in the footsteps of a former Rustic Canyon guru – one who preceded him by a few decades, and who, like Charlie, had a certain fondness for swastikas.

Just to the north of Dennis Wilson's old home is a vast wilderness of undeveloped canyon lands. Lower Rustic Canyon soon gives way to Upper Rustic Canyon, and all signs of human civilization abruptly vanish. The land remains wild and undeveloped save for an old fire road that winds along the summit between Rustic Canyon and a neighboring canyon. That road is closed to the public and vehicle traffic is nonexistent. Aside from an occasional hiker wandering in from nearby Will Rogers State Park, there is nary a human to be seen.



A Mansonesque artifact on the floor of Rustic Canyon

The farther in one hikes, the more wild and untamed it becomes. Along with the sights of the city, the sounds and the scents quickly disappear as well. Within a very short time, it is surprisingly easy to forget that one is still within the confines of the city of Los Angeles. In its fall splendor, the canyon looks nothing like the Los Angeles that I know and don't quite love. It is beautiful, serene, pastoral. And yet, filled with mist and heavily overgrown, it is also vaguely ominous.

If one knows where to look, there is a narrow concrete stairway that is accessible from the fire road. This stairway descends down to the floor of the canyon, and it is a very, very long descent. Five hundred and twelve steps long, to be exact. As one makes the descent, this stairway, which seems to go on forever, seems wildly out of place. With time to kill on the way down, one finds oneself pondering (actually, most people probably wouldn't, but I did) how many man-hours it took to set forms for 512 poured concrete steps, and how truckloads of concrete had to be poured out here in the middle of nowhere.



The end of the line for the stairway leading to the floor of Rustic Canyon.

Reaching the canyon floor, one finds that, though the native flora has struggled mightily to reclaim the land, remnants of a past civilization can be seen everywhere. Some structures remain largely intact – a nearly 400,000-gallon, spring-fed reservoir serving a sophisticated potable water system; a concrete-walled structure that once housed twin electrical generators capable of lighting a small town; more concrete stairways hundreds of steps long, each snaking its way up the canyon walls; weathered livestock stables; professionally graded and paved roads; countless stone retaining walls; an incinerator; concrete foundations and skeletal remains of former dwellings; the rusting carcass of a Mansonesque VW bus; and, at the former entrance, an imposing set of electronically-controlled, wrought-iron security gates.



The now colorful water reservoir.

It is the kind of place that seems tailor-made for Charlie and his Family – remote and secluded, yet accessible by the Family’s custom-built dune buggies; with just enough crumbling infrastructure to provide rudimentary shelter for the clan; and with elaborate security provisions, including sentry positions and a formerly-electrified fence completely encircling the 50-acre compound (as well as, by some reports, an underground tunnel complex). And it was located just a short hike up the canyon from the place that Charlie Manson called home in the summer of 1968.



A former entrance to the tunnel complex?

While exploring this place, obvious questions begin to come to mind (they would, that is, if I didn't already know the answers, but try to work with me here): who developed this remote portion of the canyon? And why? Why here, in what feels like the middle of nowhere? The goal appears to have been to create a hidden and completely self-sustaining community, and an extraordinary amount of money was invested in infrastructure development ... but why?

Very few Angelenos know of the curious ruins in Rustic Canyon, and fewer still know the history of those ruins. Every now and then though, a local reporter will pay a visit and the story will make a one-time appearance in a local publication, briefly casting some light on a bit of the hidden history of Los Angeles. In May 1992, Marc Norman of the Los Angeles Business Journal was one such reporter ("Hermit Chic – Rustic Canyon").



Murphy Ranch's generator station as it looks today.

According to Norman, "County records show 'Jessie Murphy, a widow,' purchasing 50-plus acres north of [Will] Rogers' property in 1933, but the owners were actually named Stephens – Norman, an engineer with silver-mining interests, and Winona, the daughter of an industrialist and a woman given to things supernatural. Local lore has it that Winona fell under the spell of a certain unnamed gentleman ..." This trio, along with unnamed others, began "a 10-year construction program costing \$4 million ... starting with a water tank holding 375,000 gallons and a concrete diesel-powered generator station with foot-thick walls – both of which are still visible. The hillsides were terraced for orchards, an electrified fence circled the boundaries and a huge refrigerated locker was built into a hillside ... The one thing Murphy/Stephens couldn't seem to get right was their main house. The first architect hired was Welton Becket, but there are also sketches by Lloyd Wright, and in 1941, Paul Williams drafted blueprints for a sprawling mansion with 22 bedrooms, a children's dining room, a gymnasium, pool and a workshop in the basement."



Security gates still stand at the former entrance to the compound.

Thirteen years later, in September 2005, Cecelia Rasmussen of the Los Angeles Times added a few details to the story (“Rustic Canyon Ruin May Be a Former Nazi Compound,” September 4, 2005): “Southern California has been the cradle to many odd cults, credos, utopias and dystopias. Among the most mysterious are the ruins of a Rustic Canyon enclave once known as Murphy Ranch ... on [Rustic Canyon’s] secluded and woodsy floor stand the eerily burned-out and graffiti-scarred remains of concrete and steel structures, underground tunnels and stairways leading from the top of the canyon to the bottom ... Behind the locked and rusted wrought iron entrance gates and flagstone wall stand the traces of a small community that had the capacity to grow its own food, generate its own electricity and dam its own water ... The hillsides were terraced with 3,000 nut, citrus, fruit and olive trees, and fitted with water pipes, sprinklers and an elaborate greenhouse. A high barbed-wire fence discouraged intruders ... research indicates that it could have been home to up to 40 local Nazis from about 1933 to 1945 ... armed guards patrolled the canyon dressed in the uniform worn by Silver Shirts, a paramilitary group modeled after Hitler’s brownshirts ... A man known through oral histories only as ‘Herr Schmidt’ supposedly ruled the place and claimed to possess metaphysical powers.”



A portion of the over-grown foundation of what was once a state-of-the-art greenhouse.

Herr Schmidt, needless to say, was the gentleman whose spell Winona Stephens fell under. According to Marc Norman, Schmidt “convinced her that the coming world war would be won by Germany, that the United States would collapse into years of violent anarchy and that the chosen few (read: the Stephenses, the certain gentleman and other true believers) would need a tight spot in which to hole up, self-sufficient, until the fire storm had passed. Then they could emerge not only intact but, thanks to the superiority of their politics, rulers of the anthill and, not incidentally, the origin of its new population.”

Sound familiar?

Murphy Ranch also reportedly featured a 20,000-gallon diesel fuel tank, livestock stables, and dairy and butchering facilities. Along both sides of the compound “rise eight crumbling, narrow stairways of at least 500 steps each,” as the LA Times noted. Those stairways apparently led to sentry positions high on the canyon walls (for the record, they are not actually crumbling, though most are overgrown with impenetrable vegetation). During Murphy Ranch’s years of operation, nearby residents reportedly complained of late-night military exercises and the sounds of live gunfire echoing through the canyons.



The rusted and twisted remains of a residential structure.

To summarize then, it appears that the city of Los Angeles was home to a secret, militarized Nazi compound that was in operation both before and during World War II. Remnants of that blacked-out chapter of LA history can be seen to this day, though few make the trek. The purpose of the decaying compound was to ride out an anarchic, apocalyptic war, so that the chosen few could emerge as the rulers of the new world.

It was all so very Mansonesque, and, ironically enough, Manson and his crew spent an entire summer camped out at a home that was within a two-mile hike of this curious place. It should have been something of a Mecca for Charlie, and yet he apparently knew nothing of its existence. It seems somehow disrespectful that the Family didn't choose to set up camp here rather than at, say, Barker Ranch. At the very least, they should have paid a visit.



Former fruit and nut orchard with remains of a sophisticated irrigation system.

In the late 1940s, after the close of the war, Murphy Ranch was reportedly converted into an artist's colony. Architect Welton Becket, who designed several of the structures at the ranch, went on to design two of LA's landmark structures: the Capitol Records building and the Music Center. In 1973, the property once known as Murphy Ranch was purchased by the city of Los Angeles. As far as I know, the city has no plans to reopen the facility.

* * * * *

“Van Cortlandt and Untermyer functioned as outdoor meeting sites for the cult.”Maury Terry, referring to the cult behind the ‘Son of Sam’ murders (from The Ultimate Evil)

Just to the west of Laurel Canyon, and slightly to the east of Coldwater Canyon, lies a large estate known as Greystone Park, home of the long-vacant Greystone Mansion. The home, and the grounds it sits on, is said to be, to this day, the most expensive private residence ever built in the city of Los Angeles. Constructed in the 1920s, the home and grounds carried the then-unfathomable price tag of \$4,000,000 (by way of comparison, the Lookout Inn, built a decade-and-a-half earlier, was projected to cost from \$86,000-\$100,000; in other words, the single-family residence cost at least 40 times what the lavish 70-room inn cost – and the inn required bringing infrastructure and building materials to a remote mountaintop).



A modest courtyard on the grounds of the Greystone estate.

The massive, 46,000 square-foot edifice sits amid 22 lavishly landscaped acres of prime Hollywood Hills real estate. This rather ostentatious home was built by uberwealthy oil tycoon Edward L. Doheny as a wedding present for his son, Edward “Ned” Doheny, Jr.. If that plotline sounds vaguely familiar, it is probably because Edward Doheny was the inspiration for Upton Sinclair’s *Oil*, and thus for the homicidal Daniel Plainview character in *There Will Be Blood* (some of the interior shots near the end of that film, of expansive, marble-floored rooms, could very well have been shot in the real Greystone, though the exterior shots certainly were not).

Upon the home’s completion, in September 1928, young Ned Doheny and his new bride moved into the humble abode. Within months, the home would be bloodstained; soon after, it would be permanently abandoned.



The Greystone mansion

Poor Ned, you see, was found dead in the cavernous home on February 16, 1929. Near him lay the lifeless body of his assistant/personal secretary, Hugh Plunkett. Both men had been shot. Despite persistent rumors of an inordinately long delay in reporting the deaths, and of the bodies having been moved to re-stage the crime scene, no formal inquest was ever conducted and the case was written off as a murder/suicide arising from a gay lovers' quarrel. Plunkett was said to be the triggerman and the media quickly went into a frenzy playing up the scandalous homosexuality angle and portraying young Plunkett as positively demented.

It is anyone's guess whether or not the two really were gay lovers, but it matters little; the rest of the story was almost certainly a work of fiction. In reality, both men were likely murdered as part of the massive cover-up/damage-control operation that followed the disclosure of the Harding-era Teapot Dome scandal, which the Doheny family, as it turns out, was very deeply immersed in. The murder/suicide scenario was then trotted out because, as we all know, if the alleged perpetrator is already dead, it pretty much eliminates the need for things like investigations and trials.



Another courtyard on the Greystone grounds.

Some forty years after those gunshots rang out in the opulent Greystone Mansion, a new Ned Doheny, scion of the very same Doheny oil clan, would join the ranks of the Laurel Canyon singer-songwriters club. Like Terry Melcher and Gram Parsons, Doheny was viewed by some as a ‘trust-fund kid.’ His closest circle of friends included country-rockers Jackson Browne, J.D. Souther and Glen Frey. In addition to recording his own solo albums (his self-titled debut was released in 1973), Doheny contributed to albums by such Laurel Canyon superstars as Don Henley and Graham Nash.

Strangely enough, New York City once had a large estate known as Greystone as well. That Greystone was donated to the city as parkland, and it thereafter became known as Untermyer Park – the same Untermyer Park identified by Maury Terry as one of the two principal ritual sites used by the Process Church faction behind the ‘Son of Sam’ murders. The other site used by the cult was Van Cortlandt Park, named for Jacobus Van Cortlandt, a former Mayor of New York and one of David Van Cortlandt Crosby’s forefathers. Another of Crosby’s forefathers lent his name to Schuyler Road, which happens to run along the western boundary of the Greystone Park in the Hollywood Hills.

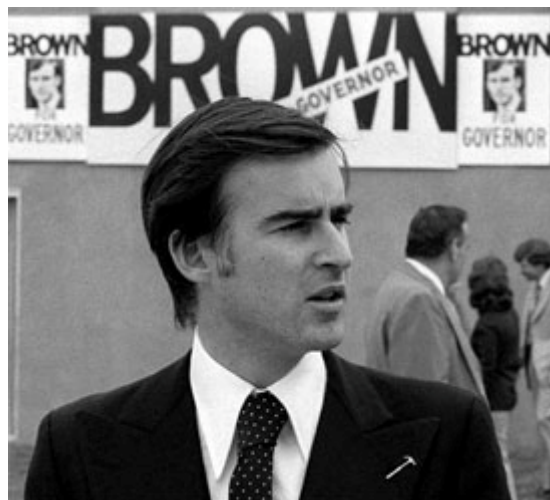


One of many gargoyles on the Greystone grounds.

I have no idea what, if anything, any of that means, but I thought it best that I toss it into the mix.

* * * * *

Before wrapping up this installment, this seems like as good a time as any to introduce you all to a couple of Laurel Canyon characters who we haven't yet met, and who would attain a certain amount of fame, though not in the entertainment industry.



One of the two, whom we'll call Jerry, had a decidedly conservative upbringing. Born into a politically well-connected Republican family, Jerry devoted his early years to pursuing a career in the Jesuit priesthood. His father, an active Republican Party operative, was an

aspiring politician who initially had no luck in getting himself elected to office. Ultimately though, he succeeded in capturing the coveted California Governor's seat in 1959, and he did it by employing a simple gimmick: he merely changed the "R" after his name to a "D." He held the seat for two terms, through 1967, and then was replaced by a fellow who had employed a similar trick: replacing the "D" after his name with an "R."

That gentleman, of course, was Ronald Wilson Reagan, who would govern the state through 1975, when he handed the reins over to Jerry, who, like his dad, had decided that he was a liberal Democrat. In fact, according to the media, Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr. was an ultraliberal extremist whose politics fell somewhere to the left of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.

During Laurel Canyon's glory years, Jerry Brown resided in a home on Wonderland Avenue, not too many doors down from the Wonderland death house (and from the homes of numerous singers, songwriters and musicians). His circle of friends in those days, as some may recall, included the elite of Laurel Canyon's country-rock stars, including Linda Ronstadt (with whom he was long rumored to be romantically involved), Jackson Browne and the Eagles.

Another figure making the rounds in Laurel Canyon during the same period of time was a gent by the name of Mike Curb. At various times, Curb worked as a musician, composer, recording artist, film producer and record company executive. He also had the notable distinction of serving as the musical director on the notorious documentary feature Mondo Hollywood, which ostensibly chronicled the emerging Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene. Filmed from 1965 through 1967 (well before the Manson murders), the film featured representatives from the Manson Family (Bobby Beausoleil), the Manson Family's victims (Jay Sebring), the Freak troupe (Vito, Carl, Szou and Godo), and Laurel Canyon's musical fraternity (Frank Zappa and his future wife, Gail Sloatman). It also featured acid guru Richard "Babawhateverthefuckitwasthathecalledhimself" Alpert.

Mondo Hollywood, as I mentioned in a previous installment, was the creation of filmmaker Robert Carl Cohen, who, as it turns out, has an interesting background for a guy whose destiny was to capture on film the emerging 1960s countercultural scene. In 1954, Cohen served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. The following year, he was on assignment to NATO. Following that, he served in Special Services in Germany. The very next year, he produced, directed, edited and narrated a documentary short entitled Inside Red China. Two years later, he wore all the same hats for a documentary entitled Inside East Germany. A few years later, he put together another documentary entitled Three Cubans.

Cohen has proudly proclaimed that he was the first (or at least among the first) Western journalists/filmmakers allowed to enter and shoot footage in each of these countries. In the case of Cuba (and likely the others as well), he did so under the sponsorship of the U.S. State Department. Mr. Cohen would like us to believe that he undertook these projects as nothing more than what he outwardly appeared to be – an independent filmmaker – but I have a hunch that few readers of this site are naïve enough to believe that a private citizen not working for the intelligence community could land such assignments.

Have I mentioned, by the way, that Cohen is not a fan of this website? I know this because he sent a few e-mails my way in which he denounced my site as being "based on slander and third-party hearsay," or some such gibberish, and he followed that up by issuing some empty legal threats. As it turns out though, I don't much give a fuck what Robert Carl Cohen thinks

of my website.

And now, after that brief digression, we return to our discussion of Laurel Canyon's dynamic duo of Jerry Brown and Mike Curb. In addition to his work on Mondo Hollywood, Curb also served as 'song producer' on another key countercultural film of the era, Riot on the Sunset Strip (which, despite its title, had little to do with the actual event). In addition, Curb scored a slew of cheaply-produced biker flicks, including The Wild Angels, Devil's Angels, Born Losers, The Savage Seven and The Glory Stompers. Along the way, he worked alongside many of Laurel Canyon's 'Young Turks,' including Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper.

It is unclear whether the paths of this odd couple crossed during Laurel Canyon's glory years, but as fate would have it, they were to cross in 1979 in Sacramento, California. Mike Curb, you see, after being encouraged by Ronald Reagan to venture into politics, was elected to serve as Governor Jerry Brown's second-in-command. And so it was that these two men, both veterans of the 1960s Laurel Canyon scene, came to sit side-by-side in the governor's mansion, one sporting a "D" after his name, and the other an "R."

Governor Brown, however, had little time to spend on actually governing the state of California. Tossing his hat into the presidential ring, he spent much of the first half of his second term out of the state, working the campaign trail. This allowed Lieutenant Governor Curb, as acting governor of the state, to sign into law a withering array of reactionary legislation that was far removed from what the people had in mind when they elected 'Governor Moonbeam.' This arrangement allowed the nominal liberal of the Laurel Canyon tag-team, Jerry Brown, to keep his hands clean even as his administration moved far away from its originally stated goals – and even as he made little effort to rein in his wayward underling.

These days, Jerry Brown maintains little of his liberal façade. As California's Attorney General, he works hand-in-hand with the state's Nazi-loving governor, Ahhnuld Schwarzenegger. Of course, if his carefully-crafted image is to be believed, Schwarzenegger is practically a liberal himself. The truth however, is something much different ... or maybe not. Given that we are living in an era when a straight-faced media can routinely describe Bill and Hillary and Barry O as liberals, then I suppose Jerry and Arnie have as much right to wear that label as anyone. But then again, so do George and John.



Google Earth, Greystone—lower left corner



Aerial view of Greystone



Aerial view of the former Murphy Ranch. Entrance gates and reservoir can be seen at top of map.

“By that, I mean, Get me a lead singer. He's got sort of an androgynous blonde hair, very pretty. We need a guitar player, sort of hatchet-faced, wears a hat, plays very fast, very dramatic. He must be very dramatic. Get me a pound of bass player, pound of drummer...they're making little cardboard cutouts. They hire a producer, they hire writers...And in the current stuff now, they don't even bother getting people to play. Don't bother with that guitar player, bass player, drummer - nonsense...The people in those bands can't write, play, or sing.” —David Crosby, describing the synthetic, manufactured nature of today's rock bands

“David was obnoxious, loud, demanding, thoughtless, full of himself - of the four of them [David Crosby, Steven Stills, Graham Nash and Neil Young], the least talented.” —David Geffen ”



David Crosby

First of all, before getting back into the Laurel Canyon scene, I need to say that some of you people really need to mellow out on the visits to my website. Seriously. This isn't a crack-house, for fuck's sake, so just chill out a little bit. I mean, I've grown accustomed to the fact that you feel free to drop in unannounced at all hours of the day and night, but maybe, just maybe, you could consider doing it a bit less frequently. Is that so much to ask?

Don't get me wrong here – I'm flattered by the attention. I really am. The problem though is that you have overloaded my now-overworked website, causing it to spontaneously disappear on, of all days, the morning of September 11, 2008. And to add insult to injury, the generic, no-frills page that popped up instead, proclaiming that my site was under house arrest for the crime of exceeding its bandwidth allocation, was arguably more attractive than my actual homepage.

Luckily, this problem was quickly brought to my attention by a few alert readers and I was able to liberate my site by digging deeply into my pockets to come up with the bail money that the jailers were demanding (I think they referred to it as “adding resources” to my site, but I wasn't really fooled by that. And I didn't, by the way, really dig that deeply into my pockets. But that's not the point. No, the point is that my site is – and I'm sure that there are many of you who do not know this – primitive by design. It is my belief that the ‘retro website’ look will soon be all the rage, and I want to be at the forefront of that movement. Everything old will someday become new again, and the ‘net has been around for long enough now, given our collectively short attention span, that a return to basics – to those first tentative baby-steps some of us took in creating one of those newfangled things called ‘websites’ – is all but guaranteed. My site, needless to say, will become the template that will

be followed by everyone who wants to run with the in-crowd. I will, of course, be regarded as something of a visionary. Unfortunately though, I will ultimately be revealed as a fraud when, a few years down the road, legions of fans suddenly realize that, long after the fad has passed, my site is still retro. Self-righteous critics will denounce me as a poser, a charlatan – they may even invoke that most demeaning of future slurs and label me a ‘Palin.’ But before that happens, the brief time during which I shall have basked in the limelight will have made it all worthwhile. Of course, none of that has much to do with purchasing additional bandwidth for my site, so I guess it does come down to the money issue after all. Because if your behavior continues, I fear that the situation could soon spiral completely out of control, forcing me to come to you, like every other asswipe on the Internet, with hat in hand. Before long, I could be spending all of my time organizing annual fundraising drives, with the word ‘annual’ defined here, as it appears to be elsewhere, as ‘every twelve days.’ And no one really wants to see that happen. And yes, by the way, I do realize that I am likely contributing to the problem by including lots of large color photos in the posts, which presumably hog up lots of bandwidth [that’s techno-speak that I am throwing in here to make me sound really smart, when the reality is that any attempt that I might make to define the word ‘bandwidth’ would sound a lot like the governor of Alaska attempting to explain the strategic significance of that frozen state: “You may not know this, but I have been told by a real scientist – I think he was an archacologist – that at one time there was a land bridge between Alaska and Russia that some cavemen or dinosaurs or something came across. Supposedly that was way back in olden times, like even before John McCain was born. But as everyone who goes to my church knows, ‘olden times’ wasn’t really that long ago, since the Earth is only about 438 years old. That’s why Todd and I believe that that bridge is still up there somewhere, and if the Russians find it before we do, then we could be in some serious gosh darn trouble. That’s why I wanted all that earmark money for the ‘Bridge to Nowhere,’ because that was really a secret codename for ‘the bridge to Russia.’ Once it is found and fully restored, my husband Todd is going to lead a special commando team on snowmobiles – he’s been training for it for years, you know – and they’re going to sneak across Siberia and kick Russia’s little behind. I’m not supposed to talk about any of that though, so try to keep it on the down-low. We don’t want to give President Gorbachev the heads-up, if you know what I mean ... by the way, are we on TV right now?”], but I prefer to place the blame on all of you. So try to mellow out just a little bit.)

And yes, I do realize that the preceding passage might have been a bit more topical had I actually gotten it posted when it was written, a couple of months ago. But let’s not dwell on that; instead, let’s get back to our little story, shall we?

At the very beginning of this journey, I noted that Jim Morrison’s story was not “in any way unique.” As it turns out, however, that proclamation is not exactly true. It was a true enough statement in the context in which it appeared – which is to say that Morrison’s family background did not differ significantly from that of his musical peers – but in many other significant ways, Jim Morrison was indeed a most unique individual, and quite possibly the unlikeliest rock star to ever stumble across a stage.

Morrison essentially arrived on the scene as a fully-developed rock star, complete with a backing band, a stage persona and an impressive collection of songs – enough, in fact, to fill the Doors’ first few albums. How exactly Jim Morrison reinvented himself in such a radical manner remains something of a mystery, since before his sudden incarnation as singer/songwriter, James Douglas Morrison had never shown the slightest interest in music. None whatsoever. He certainly never studied music and could neither read nor write it. By his own account, he never had much of an interest in even listening to music. He told one

interviewer that he “never went to concerts – one or two at most.” And before joining the Doors, he “never did any singing. I never even conceived of it.” Asked near the end of his life if he had ever had any desire to learn to play a musical instrument, Jim responded, “Not really.”



Rothdell Trail in Laurel Canyon, where Jim Morrison reportedly lived for a time in the late 1960s

So here we had a guy who had never sang (apparently not even in the shower or in his car, which seems rather odd to me), who had “never even conceived” of the notion that he could open his mouth and makes sounds come out, and who couldn’t play an instrument and had no interest in learning such a skill, and who had never much listened to music or been anywhere near a band, even just to watch one perform, and yet this guy somehow emerged, virtually overnight, as a fully-formed rock star who would quickly become an icon of his generation. And even more bizarrely, legend holds that he brought with him enough original songs to fill the first few Doors’ albums. Morrison did not, you see, do as any other singer/songwriter does and pen the songs over the course of the band’s career; instead, he allegedly wrote them all at once, before the band was even formed. As Jim once acknowledged in an interview, he was “not a very prolific songwriter. Most of the songs I’ve written I wrote in the very beginning, about three years ago. I just had a period when I wrote a lot of songs.”

In fact, all of the good songs that Morrison is credited with writing were written during that period – the period during which, according to rock legend, Jim spent most of his time hanging out on the rooftop of a Venice apartment building, consuming copious amounts of LSD. This was just before he hooked up with fellow student Ray Manzarek to form the Doors. Legend also holds, strangely enough, that that chance meeting occurred on the beach, though it seems far more likely that the pair would have actually met at UCLA, where both attended the university’s rather small and close-knit film school.

In any event, the question that naturally arises (though it does not appear to have ever been asked of him) is: how exactly did Jim “The Lizard King” Morrison write that impressive

batch of songs? I'm certainly no musician myself, but it is my understanding that just about every singer/songwriter across the land composes his or her songs in essentially the same manner: on an instrument – usually either a piano or a guitar. Some songwriters, I hear, can compose on paper, but that requires a skill set that Jim did not possess. The problem, of course, is that he also could not play a musical instrument of any kind. How then did he write the songs?

He would have had to have composed them, I'm guessing, in his head. So we are to believe then that a few dozen complete songs, never heard by anyone and never played by any musician, existed only in Jim Morrison's acid-addled brain. Anything is possible, I suppose, but even if we accept that premise, we are still left with some nagging questions, including the question of how those songs got out of Jim Morrison's head. As a general rule of thumb, if a songwriter doesn't know how to read and write music, he can play the song for someone who does and thereby create the sheet music (which was the case, for example, with all of the songs that Brian Wilson penned for the Beach Boys). But Jim quite obviously could not play his own songs. So did he, I don't know, maybe hum them?



The legendary Whisky-A-Go-Go, as it looks today

And these are, it should be clarified, songs that we are talking about here, as opposed to just lyrics, which would more accurately be categorized as poems. Because Jim, as we all know, was quite a prolific poet, whereas he was a songwriter only for one brief period in his life. But why was that? Why did Morrison, with no previous interest in music, suddenly and inexplicably become a prolific songwriter, only to just as suddenly lose interest after mentally penning an impressive catalogue of what would become regarded as rock staples? And how and why did Jim achieve the accompanying physical transformation that changed him from a clean-cut, collegiate, and rather conservative looking young man into the brooding sex symbol who would take the country by storm? And why, after a few years of adopting that persona, did Jim transform once again, in the last year or so of his life, into an overweight,

heavily-bearded, reclusive poet who seemed to have lost his interest in music just as suddenly and inexplicably as he had obtained it?

It wasn't just Morrison who was, in retrospect, a bit of an oddity; the entire band differed from other Laurel Canyon bands in a number of significant ways. As *Vanity Fair* noted many years ago, "The Doors were always different." All four members of the group, for example, lacked previous band experience. Morrison and Manzarek, as noted, were film students, and drummer John Densmore and guitarist Robby Kreiger were recruited by Manzarek from his Transcendental Meditation class – which is, I guess, where one goes to find musicians to fill out one's band. That class, however, apparently lacked a bass player, so they did without – except for those times when they used session musicians and then claimed that they did without.

Anyway, the point is that none of the four members of the Doors had band credentials. Even a band as contrived as the Byrds, as we shall soon see, had members with band credentials. So too did Buffalo Springfield, with Neil Young and Bruce Palmer, for example, having played in the Mynah Birds, backing a young vocalist by the name of Rick "Superfreak" James (Goldie McJohn of Steppenwolf, oddly enough, had been a Mynah Bird as well). The Mamas and the Papas were put together from elements of the Journeymen and the Mugwumps. And so on with the rest of the Laurel Canyon bands

The Doors could cite no such band lineage. They were just four guys who happened to come together to play the songs written by the singer who had never sung but who had a sudden calling and a magical gift for songwriting. And as you would expect with four guys who had never actually played in a band before, they pretty much sucked. But don't take my word for it; let's let the band's producer, Paul Rothchild, weigh in: "The Doors were not great live performers musically. They were exciting theatrically and kinetically, but as musicians they didn't make it; there was too much inconsistency, there was too much bad music. Robby would be horrendously out of tune with Ray, John would be missing cues, there was bad mike usage too, where you couldn't hear Jim at all."

As luck would have it, I have heard some audio of a young and quite inebriated Jim Morrison at the microphone, and I would have to say that not being able to "hear Jim at all" might have, in many cases, actually improved the performance. But sucking as a band, of course, does not really set the Doors apart from its contemporaries. Another thing that was unusual about the band, however, is that, from the moment the band was conceived, the lineup never changed. No one was added, no one was replaced, no one dropped out of the band over 'artistic differences,' or to pursue a solo career, or to join another band, or for any of the other reasons that bands routinely change shape.



The Whisky circa 1966, with Arthur Lee and Love featured as the house band (screen cap from Mondo Bizarro)

It would be difficult to identify another Laurel Canyon band of any longevity that could make the same claim. After their first two albums, the Byrds changed line-ups with virtually every album release. Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention were in a near-constant state of flux. Laurel Canyon's country-rock bands were also constantly changing shape, usually by incestuously swapping members amongst themselves.

But not the Doors. Jim Morrison's band arrived on the scene as a fully-formed entity, with a name, a stable line-up, a backlog of soon-to-be hit songs – and no previous experience writing, arranging, playing or performing music. Other than that though, they were just your run-of-the-mill, organic, grass-roots rock-and-roll band – with a curious aversion to political advocacy.

Jim Morrison was, by virtually all accounts, a voracious reader. Former teachers and college professors expressed amazement at the breadth and depth of his knowledge on various topics, and at the staggering array of literary sources that he could accurately cite. And yet he was known to tell interviewers that he “[had]n’t studied politics that much, really.” But that was okay, according to drummer John Densmore, since “a lot of people at our concerts at least, they’re sort of – it seems like they don’t really come to hear us speak politics.”

That’s the way it was in the 1960s, you see; the young folks of that era just didn’t concern themselves much with politics, and certainly didn’t want their anti-war icons engaging in anything resembling political discourse.

* * * * *

During the Doors’ glory days on the Sunset Strip, Morrison “struck up an intimate friendship” with Whisky-A-Go-Go owner Elmer Valentine, according to a Vanity Fair article (“Live at the Whisky”). At the time, Valentine was also, coincidentally of course, very close to his own secretary/booking agent, Gail Sloatman, whom Jim had known since kindergarten through

Naval officers' circles. Valentine was also – by pretty much all accounts, including his own – a 'made man.'

It was mentioned previously that Valentine was a former Chicago vice cop, but what wasn't mentioned is that he was a fully corrupt cop. By his own account, he worked as a police captain's bagman, "collecting the filthy lucre on behalf of the captain." He also boasted that, even while working as a vice cop, his night job was "running nightclubs for the outfit – for gangsters." One "very close friend" from his days in Chicago was "Felix Alderisio, also known as Milwaukee Phil, who was arguably the most feared hit man in the country in the 1950s and 60s, carrying out at least 14 murders for Sam Giancana and other Chicago bosses."

Valentine was ultimately indicted for extortion, though he managed to avoid prosecution and conviction. Venturing out to LA circa 1960, he soon found himself running PJ's nightclub at the corner of Crescent Heights and Santa Monica Boulevards (which, as you may recall, was co-owned by Eddie Nash and was the favored hang-out of early rocker/murder victim Bobby Fuller). It wasn't long though before Valentine had his very own club to run – the legendary Whiskey-A-Go-Go, where numerous Laurel Canyon bands, including the Doors in the summer of 1966, served their residency.



The Doors get their start at London Fog while Love plays two doors down at the Whisky (from Mondo Bizarro)

Valentine obviously had considerable financial backing to launch his business enterprise, and it wasn't much of a secret on the Strip where that backing came from. Frank Zappa once cryptically referred to Valentine's backers as an "ethnic organization," while Chris Hillman of the Byrds simply noted that, "whoever financed Elmer, I don't want to know."

Valentine received far more than just financial backing to launch the Whisky; he got a generous assist from the media as well. As Vanity Fair noted, "Within months of the Whisky's debut, Life magazine had written it up, Jack Paar had broadcast an episode of his

post-Tonight weekly program from the club, and Steve McQueen and Jayne Mansfield had installed themselves as regulars.” During that very same era, it should be noted, Mansfield was also a high-profile member of the Church of Satan, with close ties to founder Anton LaVey, who in turn had ties, as we have already seen, to the dance troupe led by Vito Paulekas, which, as we have also seen, had close ties to Laurel Canyon’s very first band, the Byrds.

How was that for a segue?



The Byrds 1971

As a fledgling band, the Byrds had any number of problems. The first and most obvious was that the band’s members did not own any musical instruments. That problem was solved though when Naomi Hirschorn, best known for funding such other quasi-governmental projects as the Hirschorn Museum in Washington, D.C., stepped up to the plate to provide the band with instruments, amplifiers and the like. But that didn’t solve a bigger problem, which was that the band’s members, with the exception of Jim (later Roger) McGuinn, didn’t have a clue as to how to actually play the instruments.

Cast to play the bass player was Chris Hillman, who had never picked up a bass guitar in his life. As he candidly admitted years later, he “was a mandolin player and didn’t know how to play bass. But they didn’t know how to play their instruments either, so I didn’t feel too bad about it.” On drums was Michael Clarke, who had never before held a set of drumsticks in his hands, but who bore a resemblance to Rolling Stone Brian Jones, which was deemed to be of more significance than actual musical ability. As Crosby co-author Carl Gottlieb recalled, “Clarke had played beatnik bongos and conga drum, but had no experience with conventional drumming.”

Gene Clark, though by far the most gifted songwriter in the band and a talented vocalist as well, could play the guitar, but not particularly well, so he was relegated to banging the tambourine, which was Jim Morrison’s (and various non-musically inclined members of the Partridge Family’s) instrument of choice as well. David Crosby, tasked with rhythm guitar duties, wasn’t much better. Crosby himself admitted, in his first autobiography (does anyone really need to write more than one autobiography, by the way?), that “Roger was the only one who could really play.”

The band had another problem as well: with the exception of Gene Clark, who was good but not terribly prolific, the group was a bit lacking in songwriting ability. To compensate, they initially played mostly covers. Fully a third of the band’s first album consisted of covers of Dylan songs, and nearly another third was made up of covers of songs by other folk

singer/songwriters. Clark contributed the five original songs, two of them co-written with McGuinn. As for Crosby, who emerged as the band's biggest star, his only contribution to the Byrd's first album was backing vocals.

Carl Franzoni perhaps summed it up best when he declared that "the Byrds records were manufactured." The first album in particular was an entirely engineered affair created by taking a collection of songs by outside songwriters and having them performed by a group of nameless studio musicians (for the record, the actual musicians were Glen Campbell – yes, that Glen Campbell, who also briefly served as a Beach Boy – on guitar, Hal Blaine on drums, Larry Knechtel on bass, Leon Russell on electric piano, and Jerry Cole on rhythm guitar), after which the band's trademark vocal harmonies, entirely a studio creation, were added to the mix.

As would be expected, the Byrds' live performances, according to Barney Hoskyns in *Waiting for the Sun*, "weren't terribly good." But that didn't matter much; the band got a lot of assistance from the media, with *Time* magazine being among the first to champion the new band. And they also got a lot of help from Vito and the Freaks and from the Young Turks, as was previously discussed.

We shall return to the Byrds, and to our old friend Vito, in the next outing. For now, I leave you with this curious little story about Byrd Chris Hillman's initial arrival in Laurel Canyon, as told by Michael Walker in *Laurel Canyon*: "In the autumn of 1964, a nineteen-year-old bluegrass adept and virtuoso mandolin player named Chris Hillman stood at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Kirkwood Drive contemplating a FOR RENT sign on a telephone pole across from the Canyon Country Store ... It didn't take him long to find [a place to stay], and, in the canyon's emerging mythos of enchanted serendipity, one presented itself as if by magic. 'This guy drives up and he says 'you looking for a place to rent?' Hillman recalls. 'I said yeah, and he said. 'Well, follow me up.' It was this young guy who was a dentist. It was his parent's house, a beautiful old wood house down a dirt road – and he lived on the top, and he was renting out the bottom part. I just went, 'Wow, perfect.' The guy ended up being my dentist for a while ... It was the top of the world, a beautiful, beautiful place. I had the best place in the canyon."

In Los Angeles, you see, it is quite common for a very wealthy person to offer exquisite living accommodations to a random, scruffy vagrant. I know this to be true because it happened to Charlie Manson on more than one occasion. In any event, no one will ever guess what happened to Chris Hillman's mountaintop home, so I'll just go ahead and tell you: it burned to the ground on what Walker described as a "hot, witchy day in the '60s." According to Hillman, "Crosby was at my house an hour before the blaze. I can't connect it yet—where the Satan factor came into play with David—but I'm working on it."

I think maybe I will work on that as well.



The Whisky's signature 'Go-Go Dancers' work it out circa 1966 (screen cap from Mondo Mod)

* * * * *

In unrelated news, I recently stumbled upon a childhood artifact that, because I am a giver, and because I made you all wait so long for this installment, I am going to share with each and every one of you. So remember this the next time that I am running a little late due to the fact that, you know, I have a life and all, and you find yourself feeling inclined to pen me an e-mail pleading in vain for the next chapter. Without further ado then, take a look at this series of [images](#).

For the curious, [here](#) is the line-up of aspiring young artists. To prove that I really am a giver, I am prepared to offer a free subscription to this newsletter to the first reader who can correctly identify me in that photo ... oh, yeah, this is a free newsletter, isn't it? ... I forgot there for a minute, probably because the way some people complain about the timeliness of these posts, you'd think they were actually paying for this shit ... but anyway, I guess there won't actually be a prize given away, other than the reward of knowing that you have successfully completed the challenge. Good luck.

"I'd have to say that, personally speaking, Crosby was worse for the good feelings of [the local] rock'n'roll [scene] than Manson was." —Terry Melcher
"I had been to Terry Melcher's house on Cielo Drive many times." —David Crosby "



Terry Melcher 1974

I'm not going to sugarcoat this at all: you people really suck when it comes to picking me out of a photo lineup. And I'm not talking about sucking just a little bit here, folks - no, I'm talking about totally sucking ass. And it wasn't even a particularly difficult task, to be perfectly honest. After all, I provided you with twenty-one composite sketches of what I looked like circa 1966, and yet only one of you - just one! - could correctly identify me. So to give the rest of you a sporting chance, I'm going to narrow it down for you: I'm one of the three wise men - which is to say, the three hairless kids - in the top row.

Anyway, I believe we were discussing the Byrds when class was last convened, so let's now meet a formidable behind-the-scenes player and the band's first producer, Terry Melcher. It is fairly well known that Melcher was the son of 'virginal' actress Doris Day, who was just sixteen when impregnated and seventeen when Terry was born. Melcher's father was trombonist Al Jorden, who reportedly regularly beat Day, and likely Terry as well. Jorden wasn't around for long though; his death, when Melcher was just two or three years old, was naturally ruled a suicide.

After an equally short-lived second marriage, Doris Day married her agent and producer, Marty Melcher, who was universally regarded as one of the biggest assholes in Hollywood - and that's not an easy title to attain, given the fierce competition. Like Jorden, Melcher was well known to be a tyrannically violent and abusive man. He also reportedly embezzled some \$20 million from his wife/client. On the bright side though, he did adopt and help raise Terry, who took his name.

Terry Melcher was arguably one of the most important figures lurking about the periphery of the Laurel Canyon saga, by virtue of the fact that he had deep ties to virtually all aspects of the canyon scene, including the Laurel Canyon musicians, the Manson Family, the Vito Paulekas dance troupe, and the group of young Hollywood actors generally referred to as 'The Young Turks.'

As it turns out, Melcher first met Vito Paulekas when Terry was still in high school in the late 1950s. As Melcher later recalled, "Vito was an art instructor. When I was in high school, we'd go to his art studio because he had naked models." A half-a-decade or so later, these two

would, each in his own way, become key players in launching not just the career of the Byrds, but the entire Laurel Canyon music scene, as well as the accompanying youth counter-cultural movement.

Also while still in high school, Melcher befriended Bruce Johnston, the adopted son of a top executive with the Rexall drugstore chain. While growing up on the not-so-mean streets of Beverly Hills and Bel Air, the two recorded together as singing duo Bruce and Terry. Johnstone also played in a high school band with Phil Spector, who, it will be recalled, shared with Melcher (and various others in this story) the distinction of having lost a parent to an alleged act of suicide.

As I probably have already mentioned, it would be Spector's crack team of studio musicians, dubbed The Wrecking Crew, who would provide the instrumental tracks for countless albums by Laurel Canyon bands. Bruce Johnston, meanwhile, would go on to become a Beach Boy, replacing Wrecking Crew member Glen Campbell, who had briefly replaced Brian Wilson after Brian abruptly decided that he no longer wanted to perform live. Brian's little brother Dennis, meanwhile, famously forged a close bond with Terry Melcher, as well as with Gregg Jakobson, a would-be actor and talent scout who was married to Lou Costello's daughter. Costello's only son, by the way, Lou Jr., drowned in the family pool on November 4, 1943, just before reaching his first birthday.



© Dave McGowan—The Canyon Country Store, where Chris Hillman had a fortuitous encounter.

The trio of Wilson, Melcher and Jakobson, who dubbed themselves the "Golden Penetrators" (Wilson referred to himself rather subtly as "The Wood"), famously forged a close bond with a musician/prophet/penetrator by the name of Charlie Manson. In 1966, Melcher, along with Mark Lindsay of the band Paul Revere and the Raiders, leased and moved into the soon-to-be infamous home at 10050 Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon (Lindsay would later have the dubious distinction of also living for a time in the other infamous canyon death house, on Wonderland Avenue; Lindsay was also a regular visitor to the Log Cabin). The two were soon joined by Melcher's girlfriend, actress Candace Bergen. Melcher and Bergen remained in the

home until early 1969, frequently entertaining numerous high-profile guests from both the music and film industries.

During the summer of 1968, when Charlie Manson and numerous members of his entourage, including Charles "Tex" Watson and Dean Moorehouse, were shacking up with Melcher's best buddy, Dennis Wilson, Tex and Dean were known to regularly visit the Melcher/Bergen home on Cielo Drive. Charlie Manson is known to have visited the Melcher home on several occasions as well, and to have occasionally borrowed Melcher's Jaguar. Just after Melcher and Bergen vacated the home, Jakobson reportedly arranged for Moorehouse to live there briefly, before Tate and Polanski took possession in February of 1969. During Moorehouse's stay, Tex, who would later be portrayed as the leader of the Tate and LaBianca hit squads, came calling regularly. His address book would later be found to contain a phone number for a former Polanski residence.

Watson had moved out to LA from Texas in 1966 after opting to drop out of college, which those who knew him viewed as being wildly out of character. By the spring of 1968, when Charles Watson met Charles Manson at Dennis Wilson's home, Tex was the modish co-owner of Crown Wig Creations on the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. Through that business enterprise, he had developed extensive Hollywood contacts - contacts that came in handy when he began handling large drug transactions and large piles of cash for Charlie Manson. Tex Watson soon grew so close to Manson that, according to Ed Sanders, he was known to complain at times "that he actually thought he was Charlie."

According to Vanity Fair, Tex Watson was also "a regular patron of the Whisky," which isn't too surprising given that Elmer Valentine's club was well known to be a major drug trafficking site during the late 1960s. Watson's frequent sidekick Dean Moorehouse, by the way, hailed from Minot, North Dakota, identified by Maury Terry as the longtime home of a Process Church faction with deep ties to Offutt Air Force Base. Though it is purely speculation, it seems entirely possible that Moorehouse served as a handler for both Charlies - Manson and Watson (perhaps tellingly, disinformation-peddler Vincent Bugliosi mentions Moorehouse only once in his nearly 700-page treatment of the Manson case, in much the same way that David Crosby ignores Vito Paulekas in his wordy autobiography).

In the spring of 1969, the trio of Wilson, Melcher and Jakobson got close to Bobby Beausoleil as well. Jakobson made at least two trips to the Gerard Theatrical Agency to hear demo tapes that Bobby had recorded. The agency, headed by Jack Gerard, specialized in supplying topless dancers to seedy clubs, and actors and actresses for porno film shoots. Beausoleil's primary job with the agency was to deliver carloads of girls to the clubs; more than a few of those girls were members of Charlie's Family. In March of 1969, just months before he was arrested for the torture-murder of Gary Hinman, Bobby had signed a songwriting contract with the agency and begun recording demos.

Beausoleil also accompanied Melcher and Jakobson on at least two trips out to the Spahn Movie Ranch, once in May of 1969 and then again the next month. Jakobson was a frequent visitor to Spahn and was known to boast of having held over 100 hours of conversations with the all-knowing prophet known as Charles Manson. Gregg also lobbied NBC to shoot a documentary film about the Manson Family's 'hippie commune,' and the network was for a time quite interested in the project. Along with Dennis Wilson, Jakobson also arranged for Charlie to record at an unnamed studio in Santa Monica; that session was also attended by Terry Melcher, Bobby Beausoleil and several of the Manson girls.

Lest anyone think otherwise, by the way, the Manson Family certainly had no shortage of talented musicians. Convicted murderer Charles Manson, of course, was widely viewed by his contemporaries in the canyon as a talented singer/songwriter/guitarist. So too was convicted murderer Bobby Beausoleil, who had jammed with Dennis Wilson, played rhythm guitar for the pre-Love lineup known as the Grass Roots, knew Frank Zappa and had visited the Log Cabin, and later composed and recorded the film score for Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising*. Convicted murderer Patricia Krenwinkel was an accomplished guitarist and songwriter. Convicted murderer Steve "Clem" Grogan was a talented musician as well; he later played in the prison band assembled by Beausoleil to record the *Lucifer Rising* soundtrack. In addition, Family members Brooks Poston and Paul Watkins were accomplished musicians, and Catherine "Gypsy" Share was a virtuoso violin player as well as being a singer and occasional actress (see, for example, *Ramrod*, costarring Bobby Beausoleil and filmed partially at - where else? - Spahn Movie Ranch).



© Dave McGowan—Stilt houses along the private road leading to 10050 Cielo Drive as they appear today.

Catherine Share is notable in other ways as well, including her unparalleled feat of raising the bar so high on parental suicides that no one else, even in Laurel Canyon, is likely to be able to clear it. Orphaned as a child when both biological parents purportedly committed suicide, Gypsy was adopted by a psychologist and his wife. Her adoptive mother then allegedly committed suicide as well, leaving her to be raised by her adoptive father. Share is also notable for being the oldest of Charlie's girls, nearly twenty-seven at the time of the murders (most of the others were under twenty-one, and many, including Dean Moorehouse's daughter Ruth Ann "Ouisch" Moorehouse, were minors). Gypsy lived with Bobby Beausoleil before meeting and living with Manson, and she seemed to serve as a recruiter for both of them.

According to Ed Sanders, Gypsy Share also "arranged for Paul Rothchild, the producer of The Doors, to hear the family music." It seems as though just about everyone had an opportunity to hear the Family's music. Some of it was recorded in Beach Boy Brian Wilson's state-of-the-art home recording studio. Some was recorded by Terry Melcher and Gregg Jakobson at Spahn Ranch using a mobile recording studio. Some was recorded in Santa

Monica. By some reports, some was recorded by a major Hollywood studio. Other recordings were likely made as well, though nobody really likes to talk about such things. Gregg Jakobson recorded many of his marathon conversations with Charlie, but as with the demo recordings made by Dennis Wilson, everyone likes to pretend that such recordings were lost or destroyed or never existed.

The Family was filmed at Spahn Ranch by Melcher as well. Family members also shot an extensive amount of film making 'home movies,' which many witnesses have claimed included Family orgies and ritualized snuff films. A vast amount of NBC camera equipment and film was found to be in the possession of Charlie's motley crew, all of which was claimed to be stolen. It seems likely, however, given the network's known involvement with the Family, that the equipment was provided to them so that they could film their exploits.

When not hanging out with Charlie and Tex and Bobby, Terry Melcher also found time to produce the records that first catapulted the Byrds to fame: "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Turn, Turn, Turn." The first, recorded in January 1965 and released a few months later, was the record that announced to the world the arrival of a new breed of music: folk-rock. It was created, simply enough, by borrowing from the songbooks of folk legends (primarily Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger) and then playing those songs on amplified equipment. Dylan himself followed suit not long after, at the Newport Folk Festival in July 1965, much to the consternation of the gathered crowd of folkies.

In *Hotel California*, Barney Hoskyns writes that the Byrds were, from the very outset, "conceived as an electric rock and roll group." What Hoskyns doesn't really clarify though is who exactly it was that initially conceived of this hugely influential band in those terms. Surely it wasn't the band members themselves who decided that they were going to pioneer a new musical genre, since they probably had their hands full with just learning to play their instruments.

It would probably be slightly more accurate to say that the Byrds appear to have been initially conceived as an electric folk-rock group. By July of 1966, however, when the band released its third album, featuring the Gene Clark-penned "Eight Miles High," it had morphed into something different and by doing so helped pioneer another genre of music - psychedelic rock. With the later addition of Gram Parsons and the growing influence of Chris Hillman, the Byrds would next morph into a country-rock band, thus helping to spawn that genre of music as well.



© Mondo Mod—Pandora's Box, circa 1966

According to rock 'n' roll legend, the first two Byrds to get together were James Joseph McGuinn III and Harold Eugene Clark. McGuinn hailed from Chicago, the son of best-selling authors James and Dorothy McGuinn. Jim had played with Bobby Darin, the Limelites, and the Chad Mitchell Trio, and he was considered to be a talented guitarist. In 1962, he left the Chad Mitchell Trio and worked for a time in New York City as a studio musician - before hearing the call that so many others seemed to hear and making his way to Los Angeles. Once there, he wasted no time hooking up with Gene Clark.

Clark had been born in Tipton, Missouri, the second oldest in a family of thirteen siblings. An undeniably talented songwriter and vocalist, Clark cut his first record with a local rock 'n' roll combo when he was just thirteen years old. He later joined the New Christy Minstrels, a vocal ensemble known during his tenure primarily for the hit song "Green, Green." Like so many others, however, Gene soon found himself packing his bags for - where else? - Los Angeles, where he met up with the recently-arrived Jim McGuinn. The newly-formed folk duo soon added a third voice to the mix - our old friend David Crosby, who had formerly been a vocalist with Les Baxter's Balladeers.

Crosby brought in manager Jim Dickson, with whom he had done some solo sessions in 1963. The year before that, Dickson had produced a self-titled album for a band known as the Hillmen, featuring a young mandolin player out of San Diego named Chris Hillman. Hillman had cut his first album, with a band known as the Scottsville Squirrel Barkers, while still in high school. He was a highly regarded young bluegrass musician and was generally considered to be a virtuoso mandolin player - which I guess is why Jim Dickson cast him to play the part of the bass player in the world's first folk-rock band. And as we already know, Hillman had just lucked upon luxurious living accommodations right in the heart of what was

to become the music community's epicenter, so he was all set to become a rock star.

Raised on a ranch in San Diego, Hillman had traveled alone to Berkeley when he was just fifteen, ostensibly to take private Mandolin lessons. At about that same time, his father had - wait for it - reportedly committed suicide. Those two closely aligned events would have, I would guess, had a profound impact on the young musician.

Hillman would ultimately become a skilled bass player and a major figure in the Laurel Canyon-spawned country-rock movement. Like many others of that bent, Hillman had been a huge fan of Spade Cooley during his formative years and he later cited Cooley as a major influence on his own musical direction. I'm guessing that most readers are not familiar with the story of the "King of Western Swing," which is kind of a shame because as stories go, it's a pretty good one, so let's digress here briefly and meet the man who was frequently cited as one of the forefathers of country-rock.



© Dave McGowan—The Roxy Theater, opened by Elmer Valentine, Lou Adler and David Geffen, as it looks today.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Donnell Clyde "Spade" Cooley was a popular local musician and bandleader. His weekly shows at the Redondo Beach Pier (which was close enough to my childhood home, by the way, that my friends and I occasionally rode our bikes there) could draw as many as 10,000 appreciative fans, few of whom knew of his alcoholism, violent temper, or prior arrest for attempted rape. His popularity ultimately landed him his own local television show, The Spade Cooley Hour. His career, however, came to an abrupt end on April 3, 1961, when he tortured and murdered his young wife, Ella Mae Cooley, while forcing his fourteen-year-old daughter to watch in horror.

According to court transcripts, Ella Mae had been spending a considerable amount of time in the company of two men, identified as Luther Jackson and Bud Davenport, both of whom worked in the sprawling, CIA-infested medical research facility at UCLA. On the day of her death, Ella Mae had made the rather bold decision to inform Spade that the two men had initiated her into a 'free love' cult and that she had decided to give up her family and all her possessions to join the group, which was in the process of buying land near the ocean to build

and operate a private compound.

Spade Cooley's response to his wife's declaration was to brutally beat, stomp and strangle her to death, but only after repeatedly burning her with a lit cigarette. All of this was witnessed by daughter Melody, who had been told by her father that "now you're going to watch me kill this whore." After doing just that, Spade then asked his daughter if she thought that Ella Mae was really dead, adding, "Well, let's see if she is." He then proceeded to burn her lifeless body repeatedly with another lit cigarette, until he apparently was satisfied that she was indeed dead.

Unlike so many other celebrity homicide suspects, Cooley was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to serve a life sentence. He was sent to the rather notorious Vacaville facility where he served eight years before being offered early parole. Just before his scheduled release, he arranged a November 23, 1969 comeback concert in Oakland for which his captors had agreed to release him on a three-day pass. The concert was reportedly a huge success and it looked as though Cooley's star was about to shine once again upon his pending release from prison. But that's not quite how this story ends; instead, Cooley walked back to his dressing room right after the show and promptly dropped dead, thus ending the saga of Spade Cooley and allowing us to return to where we left off ...

... actually, let's take one more quick detour here and note that not long after Spade Cooley was scheduled for release, another peripheral character in this story decided that it might be a good idea to whack his wife as well. "Humble" Harve Miller was a popular DJ on LA's #1 pop music station during that era, KHJ on the AM dial. During the latter half of the 1960s, Miller was yet another of the players who helped launch the careers of the Laurel Canyon bands, by getting their new singles on the radio. But then he, like Cooley, killed his wife and was sent to prison. Also like Cooley, he was granted early release. But unlike Spade, Miller successfully resumed his career. And now, at long last, we can return to our story ...



© Dave McGowan—Ciro's Nightclub, AKA The Comedy Store, as it looks today.

By mid-1964, the nucleus of what would become the Byrds had formed with the bonding of McGuinn and Clark. Between the two of them, they would provide the band with its signature 12-string guitar sound, its two lead vocalists, and (in the early years, at least) its best songwriters. Along then came David Crosby, who added little more than harmony vocals, at least on the first two albums, but who seems to have largely hijacked the band with the help of

manager Jim Dickson, who added fake bass player (but real musician) Chris Hillman. Crosby then rounded out the band by adding fake drummer Michael Clarke.

Clarke had been born Michael Dick in Spokane, Washington. At seventeen, Dick ran away from home and hitchhiked to the land of enchantment known as California, apparently becoming Michael Clarke along the way. The year was 1963. According to rock history as told by David Crosby, Clarke and Crosby met in Big Sur, which coincidentally happens to be the location of the notorious Esalen Institute (where CSNY would play some years later). A year later, the vagrant teenager with no drumming experience would find himself cast to play the role of the drummer in the band designed to be America's answer to the Beatles. According to Crosby, Clarke's first LA address was the home of Terry Melcher.

The band, now complete, first dubbed themselves the Jet Set and then the Beefeaters, even recording a less-than-memorable single under the latter moniker, before finally settling on the Byrds. Before the end of 1964, Jim Dickson had signed the band to a deal with Columbia Records. As Barney Hoskyns recounts in *Waiting for the Sun*, "The obvious ineptitude of Michael Clarke and shakiness of most of the others was still a problem when Jim Dickson got the band signed to Columbia in November. [They were] Assigned to staff producer Terry Melcher ..."

That assignment, it would seem, was a rather fortuitous one given that the fledgling band's rehearsal space just happened to be in the very same basement studio that Melcher snuck off to while in high school. Just two months after signing with Columbia, the band, or rather its surrogates, were already in the studio recording "Mr. Tambourine Man," at the insistence of Jim Dickson. Despite the objections of various band members, Dickson reportedly pushed hard for the song to be the band's first single. On March 26, 1965, just two months after pretending to lay down the instrumental tracks for "Mr. Tambourine Man," the Byrds played their first real live show, as the first act at the refurbished and reopened *Ciro's* nightclub.

I obviously wasn't there so I can't say for sure, but I'm going to go out on a limb here and guess that a band whose entire rhythm section was just learning to play their instruments probably did not put on a very compelling performance. The Byrds apparently played one other live show before the *Ciro's* opening, though the nature of that show appears to be in dispute (or perhaps there were two previous shows). According to Jim Dickson, "The Byrds first public gig was booked by Lenny Bruce's mother, Sally Marr. She got them a job at Los Angeles City College, noon assembly, for a half hour." According to Carl Franzoni and various others, however, it was Vito Paulekas who booked the Byrds' first live show, at a rented hall on Melrose Avenue just a day or two before the show at *Ciro's*.



© Dave McGowan—The Hyatt House, AKA the riot house, looms over The Comedy Store, as it did over Ciro's in the 60's.

In any event, "Mr. Tambourine Man" was released about a month after the band had its big public debut at Ciro's and the LA music scene would never be the same again. Before long, clubs big and small were popping up all along the fabled Sunset Strip and bands were spilling out of Laurel Canyon to play them. As Terry Melcher recalled, "kids came from everywhere. It just happened. One day you couldn't drive anymore. It was, like, overnight - you couldn't drive on the Strip."

That would soon change though. By the summer of 1967, the mythical Summer of Love, the club scene on the Strip was quickly dying. It had been killed, deliberately or not, by some of the key players who had created it: Terry Melcher, producer of the scene's first band; Lou Adler, business partner of club owner Elmer Valentine; and John Phillips, leader of The Mamas and the Papas and composer of such ditties as "California Dreaming" and "If You're Going to San Francisco." It was the Monterey Pop Festival, you see, held on June 16-18, 1967, that killed the Sunset Strip scene. The bands that had filled the clubs became, literally overnight, too big to play such intimate venues. Over the course of the next decade, Laurel Canyon bands quickly moved from clubs to concert halls to massive sports arenas. But here we are, I suppose, getting ahead of ourselves.

As for the Byrds, they carried on for a good many years, albeit with numerous personnel changes. First out was the man who many feel was the most talented member of the group, Gene Clark, who dropped out in March of 1966, just one year after the band had first taken the stage at Ciro's. Clark was also the first original Byrd to pass away, on May 24, 1991, at just 46 years of age, reportedly due to a bleeding ulcer. Two-and-a-half-years later, on December 19, 1993, Michael Clarke died as well when his liver failed. Both deaths were

attributed to chronic alcoholism.

Jim McGuinn, who remained a Byrd through numerous band lineups, joined the Subud religious sect in 1965. Two years later, upon the advice of the cult's founder, he changed his name to Roger. A decade later, he became a born-again Christian. In a similar vein, Chris Hillman became an Evangelical Christian in the 1980s, but then later switched to the Greek Orthodox faith. Hillman played in various Byrds lineups, with Gram Parson's Flying Burrito Brothers, and in David Geffen's failed second attempt at creating a supergroup, this one known as Souther, Hillman, Furay. David Crosby, of course, left the Byrds and became 1/3 of David Geffen's first supergroup, Crosby, Stills & Nash. These days he primarily spends his time inseminating lesbians and occasionally reuniting with former bandmates.

Jim Dickson and Terry Melcher continued to work with some of the Byrds, particularly Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman. Melcher formed a particularly close bond with his fellow 'trust-fund kid,' Gram Parsons, as did Melcher's sometime sidekick, John Phillips. Both Melcher and Phillips, of course, knew Charlie Manson (Melcher raved about him to Ned Doheny), whose former prison buddy, Phil Kaufman, was Parsons' road manager (and cremator). I'm pretty sure though that I already mentioned that, but what I haven't yet worked into this narrative is that the Doors' road manager, Bill Siddons, was once a paramour of Mansonite Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme.

The Family's fingerprints, as always, can be found in nearly every nook and cranny of the Laurel Canyon scene.

"No one could recall ever seeing or hearing about Gram being involved in a protest of any sort." —Author Ben Fong Torres, who interviewed scores of people close to Gram Parsons while researching Hickory Wind



Gram Parsons

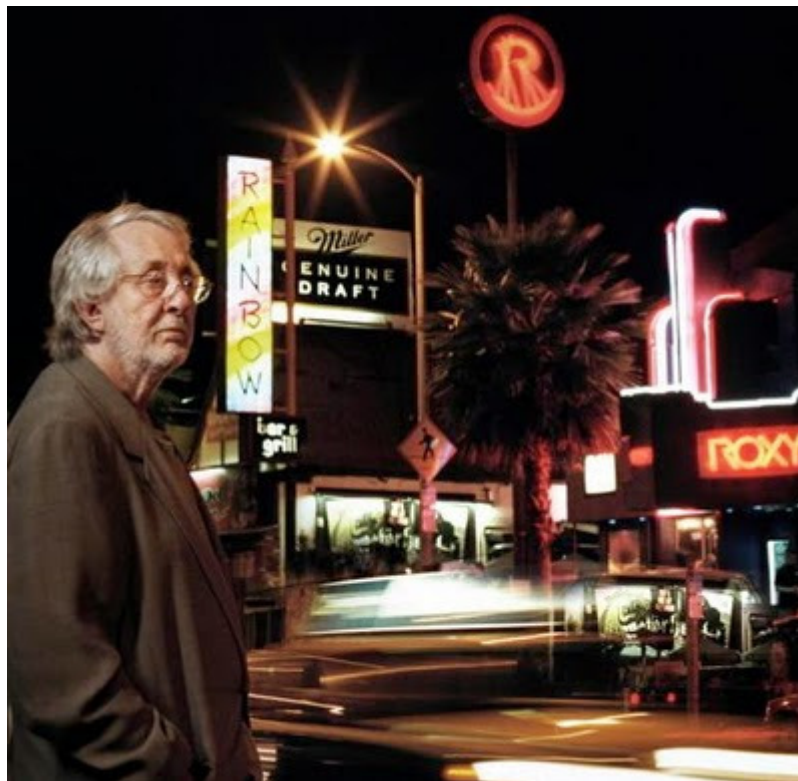
Timing is a curious thing. When I first started this series in May of 2008, the fact that Jim Morrison's father had served as the commander of the ships involved in the Gulf of Tonkin 'incident' had gone virtually unreported for some four-and-a-half decades. Readers were shocked - shocked, I tell you! - when I began this series by trotting out that revelation. Some even accused me of making it up, or of somehow twisting the facts.

But as fate would have it, as December of 2008 rolled around, the mainstream media was suddenly awash with reports of the unusual Morrison family connection. On December 8, for example, the *Los Angeles Times* carried a report on Admiral George Stephen Morrison, described therein as "a retired Navy rear admiral and the father of the late rock icon Jim Morrison." According to the Times report, "Morrison had a long career that included serving as operations officer aboard the aircraft carrier Midway and *commanding the fleet during the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident*, which led to an escalation of American involvement in Vietnam." (emphasis added)

The very next day, on December 9, the *New York Times* followed suit with a report by William Grimes: "George S. Morrison, *who commanded the fleet during the Gulf of Tonkin incident* that led to an escalation of the Vietnam War and whose son Jim was the lead singer of the Doors ... Aboard the flagship carrier Bon Homme Richard, Mr. Morrison commanded American naval forces in the gulf when the destroyer Maddox engaged three North Vietnamese torpedo boats on Aug. 2, 1964. A skirmish and confused reports of a second engagement two days later led President Lyndon B. Johnson to order airstrikes against North Vietnam and to request from Congress what became known as the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, allowing him to carry out further military operations without declaring war." (emphasis again added)

Mr. Grimes has penned a rather charitable account of the Tonkin Gulf incident, to be sure, but what is of far more interest here is the fact that the media is talking about the Morrison/Tonkin Gulf/Doors connection at all. What makes it okay to do so now, it would appear, is the fact that Admiral Morrison exited this world on November 17, 2008, at the ripe old age of 89. His death was reportedly due to unspecified injuries sustained in a fall. According to his obituaries, his distinguished career included raining bombs down on Japanese civilians and Pacific Islanders during the final year of World War II, and serving as "an instructor for secret nuclear-weapons projects in Albuquerque."

On December 7, the day before George Morrison's name turned up in the LA Times' obituaries, another key name from the Laurel Canyon saga appeared there as well: Elmer Valentine, co-owner of the hottest clubs on the Strip in the late 1960s and early 1970s - the Whisky-A-Go-Go, the Roxy, and the Rainbow. Valentine died of unspecified causes on December 3, 2008, at the age of 85. On December 9, the New York Times ran his obituary right alongside that of Morrison. Valentine was therein characterized as "a self-described crooked cop who fled Chicago to start a new life on the Sunset Strip."



In addition to Whisky a Go Go, Elmer Valentine founded the Roxy Theatre in Los Angeles. (Art Streiber/AUGUST/file 2000)

Some scribes, I suppose, would find it a bit disconcerting to find that some of the characters in their work-in-progress had suddenly started dropping dead. After all, the cause of death in both cases is a bit fuzzy, and Morrison dropped just four days after Part 11 was posted and Valentine followed suit 6 days after Part 12 went up. But they were both quite elderly, of course, so maybe it was just their time to go.

Anyway, the real focus of this chapter is singer/songwriter/guitarist/keyboardist Gram Parsons, and the Gram Parsons story, as it turns out, is essentially a microcosm of the Laurel Canyon story. Most of the classic elements are present and accounted for: the royal bloodlines, the not-so-well-hidden intelligence connections, the occult overtones, the extravagantly wealthy family background, an incinerated house or two, and, of course, a

whole lot of curious deaths. Without further adieu then, let's get to know a little more about Mr. Parsons.

First of all, let's begin with the obvious: Gram Parsons was far from being the biggest star to emerge from the Laurel Canyon scene. In his short lifetime, he failed to achieve any significant level of commercial success. None of his albums, whether recorded solo or with the International Submarine Band, the Byrds, or the Flying Burrito Brothers, climbed very high on the sales charts. But to many fans and musicians alike, he is considered a hugely influential and tragically overlooked figure.

It is safe to say that Parsons does not have nearly the number of fans that, say, David Crosby or Frank Zappa have. Compared to contemporaries who died during the same era and at roughly the same age - artists like Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix - Parsons is all but unknown. But the fans that he does have tend to be particularly rabid ones, and if you happen to be one of them, you might want to skip this chapter. And the next, actually, because this is kind of a long story.

We begin back about, oh, a thousand years ago, with Ferdinand the Great, the first King of Castille on the Iberian Peninsula. It is to him that the wealthy Connor family claims their family lineage can be traced. Also in the family tree was King Edward II of England, son of Edward I and Eleanor of Castille. According to some sources, Eddie II was murdered by having a red-hot iron rod shoved up his ass, though most of his loyal subjects probably didn't shed many tears. Bringing the royal bloodline to America was one Colonel George Reade, born in the UK in 1608 and married in Yorktown, Pennsylvania sometime thereafter.

Reade's offspring would ultimately spawn Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr., a well-to-do gent who settled in Columbia, Tennessee. Like his father before him, Cecil attended Columbia Military Academy. In May 1940, at the outset of World War II, he then enlisted in the US Army Air Force as a 2nd Lieutenant. In March of 1941, Cecil, who during the war would become known as "Coon Dog," though no one seems to remember why, was shipped off to Hawaii. Nine months later, of course, Pearl Harbor came under attack by Japanese bombers.

Not to worry though - Cecil was never in harm's way, having opted to forgo living in officer's quarters on the military base in favor of staying at a luxurious, massive estate near Diamond Head owned by uber-wealthy heiress Barbara Hutton. Hutton, for those who don't know, was the granddaughter of Frank Woolworth, the founder of the Woolworth's five-and-dime store chain. She was also the daughter of Franklyn Laws Hutton, a co-founder of E.F. Hutton, one of the nation's most prestigious brokerage firms until it ran afoul of the law for such crimes as check kiting, money laundering and mail fraud. Barbara was also the niece of Marjory Post Hutton, the daughter of C.W. Post, founder of what would become General Foods.

Like so many of the other characters who have populated this story (including Gram Parsons), Barbara was traumatized in childhood by the alleged suicide of a parent. According to news reports, it was 5-year-old Barbara who discovered her mother Edna's lifeless body in May of 1917. An empty bottle of strychnine was reportedly recovered by police from a nearby bathroom. There was no autopsy performed and no official inquest was ever conducted, as would be expected when an extremely wealthy person dies under questionable circumstances.

In 1930, just after the onset of the last Great Depression, Barbara was thrown a lavish debutante ball attended by those at the very top of the food chain, including members of the Astor and Rockefeller families. The next year, she inherited a fortune estimated to be worth

the equivalent of \$1 billion today. She was just nineteen at the time. Two years later, she received further inheritance that raised her net worth to an estimated \$2-\$2.5 billion (in today's dollars). Much of the rest of the country was busily wallowing in abject poverty.

Ms Hutton lived a very troubled life, with numerous failed marriages and relationships. One of her many paramours was Phillip van Rensselaer, who later penned a book about her life which he entitled *Million Dollar Baby*. Van Rensselaer, it will be recalled, was from the same family tree as Laurel Canyon's own David Crosby - the man whom Gram Parsons would briefly replace in the Byrds. And that, boys and girls, brings us back to our man-of-the-hour.

(I almost added "after that brief digression" to the preceding sentence, but then I remembered that, though I rarely read commentary on my work on the web, I did stumble across something the other day. The review was positive overall, though it did note that my website design was, uhmm, I think the word was "atrocious," and that I had (this may not be an exact quote) "an unnatural fondness for the word 'digress.'" I could, I suppose, mount a spirited defense against the charges, but the evidence appears to be overwhelming. But here I really have digres ... let's just get back to our story, shall we?)

As World War II drug on, Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr. worked his way up the chain of command to the rank of Major. In the Pacific theater of operations, he was a decorated hero and a squadron commander who flew numerous combat missions. After the war, he continued to serve in the Air Force at a base in Bartow, Florida, very near the Snively family home in Winter Haven. On March 22, 1945, the spring equinox, "Coon Dog" Connor married Avis Snively.

The Snively clan had first come to America circa 1700, about a century after the arrival of the man who spawned the Connor clan. According to historical records and genealogical charts, Johann Jacob Schnebele, a Swiss Mennonite, was born in 1659. When in his late 50s, around 1715 or shortly thereafter, he ventured across the Atlantic and settled near Cornwall, Pennsylvania. Johann died and was buried in 1743 near Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Brought over with him to America was his son Jacob, born on the winter solstice of 1694, and his daughter Maria, born in 1702. In 1724, in Mannheim, Pennsylvania, Maria Schnebele married the son of immigrants Hans Hersche and Anna Geunder. That son had Americanized his name and become known as Andrew Hershey. The Schnebele name was likewise Americanized to Snively (or Snively). The Hershey and Snively clans would continue to happily intermarry, ultimately producing, in 1857, Milton Snively Hershey, the son of Henry Hershey and Fanny Snively.

Milton S. Hershey, of course, would go on to found the world's largest producer of chocolate confections. Less well known is that Hershey failed miserably in his first several attempts to launch a candy company, in Philadelphia, Chicago and New York City. All of those ventures were financed with Snively/Snavely family money. Hershey ultimately succeeded in launching the successful Lancaster Caramel Company in 1883. In 1900, he sold the caramel company to focus exclusively on chocolate confections. With proceeds from that sale, he purchased 40,000 acres of undeveloped land and built not only the world's largest chocolate facility, but an entire company town.

The moral of this story, in case you missed it, is that without the Schnebele/Snavely/Snively family fortune, there never would have been any such thing as a Hershey bar or a town known as Hershey, Pennsylvania.

As for Maria's brother, Jacob Schnebele, he died in August of 1766 in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, but not before fathering an astounding nineteen children. One of those was son Andrew, who himself fathered fourteen kids. From that branch of the family tree would emerge John Andrew "Papa John" Snively, born in 1888, who headed off to Florida in the early 1900s to seek his fortune. By the 1950s, Snively Groves was the largest shipper of fresh fruit in the state of Florida.

Avis Snively, who exchanged vows with Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr., was the daughter of Papa John. On November 5, 1946, Coon Dog and Avis gave birth to their first child and only son, Ingram Cecil Connor III, later known as Gram Parsons. Soon after, the family relocated to Waycross, Georgia, where, as with Winter Haven, the Snively family owned a massive amount of land devoted to citrus fruit production. It was there that young Ingram "Gram" Connor was raised.

The Connor family home in Waycross, as would be expected, was large and luxurious, and there were numerous servants in attendance, all of whom had considerably more skin pigmentation than did the Connors. Coon Dog and Avis entertained frequently, and both were well known to be heavy drinkers; there were hushed rumors that they were 'swingers' as well. As Gram's younger sister, known as Little Avis, would later recall, "Things were mighty strange around the house."

In September of 1957, when Gram was not yet eleven, he was sent off to attend the Bowles School, a combination prep school and military academy in Jacksonville, Florida. On his entry questionnaire, he was asked for his top three college choices; Gram chose Annapolis, West Point, and Georgia Tech. While attending Bowles, he became a member of the Centurions, the school's version of an elite fraternity.

The following year, just before Christmas 1958, Ingram Cecil "Coon Dog" Connor, Jr. was found sprawled across his bed in the family home, a bullet hole in his right temple. A .38 handgun was found nearby. There was no note to be found. Cecil's brother Tom had visited just the month before, around Thanksgiving, and Coon Dog had told him that he'd never been happier and that life with Avis was wonderful. Curiously, his death was initially ruled to be accidental.

Just ten months before Cecil's death, Papa John Snively, Avis' dad, had also died, and now she found herself with both of the men in her life gone. And yet, according to a family member, she never appeared to grieve and she displayed a "total lack of remorse" over anything she may have done to drive Coon Dog to allegedly commit suicide (by some reports, she had been having an affair).

Some six months after Cecil's death, Avis, Gram and Little Avis boarded a train for a cross-country trip. They were gone the entire summer. Not long after returning, the family moved from the house that Cecil had died in and Avis soon met Robert Ellis Parsons, who owned a business that ostensibly specialized in leasing heavy construction equipment. Parson's clients, curiously enough, happened to be in Cuba, then under the brutal hand of Batista, and in various South American countries that were also under the thumb of US-installed dictators

It is unclear, by the way, where the "Ellis" in Parsons name comes from, so it would probably be irresponsible to mention the Ellis family that is an intermarried branch of the Bush family, but with the Cuba connection and all, it's hard for the mind not to wander there.

The Snively clan took an immediate dislike to Parsons, who was described by one family member as a "greedy son of a bitch." Nevertheless, Avis quickly married him and Bob Parsons quickly took control of her life. One of his first moves was to adopt Gram and Avis, even going so far as to have new birth certificates drawn up listing him as their biological father (how exactly does one go about doing that, by the way?) He also promptly impregnated Avis and convinced her to file a \$1.5 million lawsuit against her brother, John, Jr., and her sister, Evalyn. The suit was settled out of court, with Avis receiving an unspecified number of citrus groves, but the real repercussions would be felt some fifteen years later with the bankruptcy of much of the family business in 1974.

In 1960, just a year after marrying, Bob and Avis added daughter Diane to the family. Also added was eighteen-year-old babysitter Bonnie, whom Bob immediately began an affair with, which apparently was not a very well-kept secret. What was a somewhat better kept secret is that, in the early 1960s, following the Cuban revolution, Robert Ellis Parsons became involved in the 'Cuban cause,' which is to say that he had very close ties to the leaders of an exile group that was being trained in Polk County, Florida to overthrow the Cuban government.

On one occasion (or at least one occasion that is acknowledged), he brought young Gram along to visit the group's training camp. As luck would have it, a team from Life magazine happened to also be there that day and Gram - wouldn't you know it? - was photographed at the camp. When Avis was informed of that development, she worked quickly to insure that those photos were never published. To this day, they have never surfaced.

During that same era, Bob Parsons converted a downtown warehouse that he owned into a teen nightclub to showcase the talents of his 'son,' Ingram "Gram" Parsons, who sang and played keyboards and the guitar. Circa 1963, Gram got a folk combo together that was known as the Shilos. During the summer of 1964, the summer before Gram's senior year of high school, the band spent a month in New York. During that brief time, Parsons met and bonded with Brandon DeWilde, Richie Furay, and John Phillips, then of the Journeymen. He would meet up with all three again a couple years later in Laurel Canyon.

Despite his early preference for Annapolis or West Point, Gram applied to Harvard and Johns Hopkins. Despite decidedly unimpressive grades and test scores, he was accepted by Harvard, purportedly due to an essay he submitted that he likely didn't actually write. During his last year of high school, Gram and the Shilos booked an hour gig at the campus radio station at Bob Jones University ... yes, that Bob Jones University.

At his high school graduation in June of 1965, Gram was in his cap and gown and all set to proceed with the ceremonies when he was pulled aside and informed that his mother Avis had suddenly passed away. Seemingly unaffected, he chose to participate in the ceremonies. A classmate and friend has said that there was no sign that anything was troubling Gram that day as he went through the graduation rituals.

Avis had died in the hospital, reportedly of alcohol poisoning, right after Bob Parsons had smuggled her in a bottle of scotch. Gram's mother was just forty-two at the time of her death. His father, Coon Dog, had only made it to the age of forty-one. Neither of their kids, Gram or Little Avis, would make it even that far.

Soon after his mother's death, Gram received a draft notice from the Selective Service. Not to

worry though - Bob quickly got him a 4-F deferment and Gram happily went off to Harvard, enrolling in September of 1965. By February of 1966, just five months later, Gram had had enough of Harvard and he withdrew. According to some sources, he never really went to Harvard at all, but rather spent all his time taking in the folk music scene in Cambridge and putting his own band together.

Gram arrived at Harvard a few years too late to catch the peak of the folk music scene in Cambridge. In the early 1960s, the college town had been one of the cradles of the resurgent folk movement, hosting such luminaries as Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Bob Neuwirth, Tom Rush, Pete Seeger, Richard and Mimi Farina, Geoff and Maria Muldaur, Eric Andersen and Joni Mitchell.

The epicenter of the Cambridge folk scene was the legendary Club 47, opened in 1958 as a jazz and blues venue. A very young Joan Baez, whose reputedly CIA-connected father worked at nearby MIT, was the first folkie to take the stage, not long after the club opened. Dylan reportedly first performed there in 1961, taking the stage between the billed acts. The scene hit its peak in the summer of 1962, which was the Cambridge equivalent of the Haight's Summer of Love.

The Cambridge scene, and others in Greenwich Village and elsewhere, were necessary precursors to the Laurel Canyon scene. The canyon scene was essentially created by taking the music of that earlier scene, particularly the work of Dylan and Seeger, and mixing it with the instrumentation being utilized across the pond by a band known as the Beatles. It is entirely fitting then that, as with Laurel Canyon, the Cambridge scene came complete with its own resident psycho killer.

In addition to the folk scene hitting its peak in the summer of 1962, something else newsworthy happened in Cambridge that summer: a lot of women started turning up dead - six of them in that first summer alone, and seven more over the next couple of years. And as Susan Kelly noted in *The Boston Stranglers*, one of those victims was killed right across the street from Club 47: "Just across the street from [victim Beverly Samans'] apartment, a very young and not yet famous Joan Baez and an equally youthful and unknown Bob Dylan were playing to reverently hushed audiences at the Club 47."

As the title of Kelly's book implies, there actually was no such person as the Boston Strangler, but that didn't stop authorities and the media from pinning all the murders on one Albert DeSalvo, far better known as the Boston Strangler. And so it was that just as Laurel Canyon would have Charlie Manson as its unofficial mascot, the earlier scene in Cambridge had Albert DeSalvo. And neither of them, curiously enough, appear to have actually committed any murders, though a whole lot of people certainly did get murdered.

Folkie Richard Farina, by the way, was the husband of Mimi Baez, Joan's younger sister. Farina had attended Cornell University as an engineering major. Cornell also happened to be where Joan and Mimi's dad, Albert Baez, conducted classified research. Albert Baez tended to move around a lot, popping up for varying periods of time at Stanford, UC Berkeley, Cornell, and MIT, all of which have been repeatedly identified as hotbeds of MK-ULTRA research.

Albert Baez also traveled abroad, to France, Switzerland, and, in 1951, to Baghdad, Iraq, where he spent a year purportedly teaching physics and building a physics laboratory at the University of Baghdad. 1951 also happened to be the year that Mossadegh was duly elected in neighboring Iran and the CIA immediately began planning a coup to oust him, but I'm sure

that that is just a coincidence.

Anyway, Farina married Mimi when he was twenty-six and she was just seventeen. The two of them, along with Joan, became stars of the Cambridge folk music scene, which they were introduced to when their dad moved the family to Boston in 1958 when he went to work at MIT. Richard and Mimi's marriage was a short one, alas, as Richard Farina was killed in a motorcycle accident in Carmel, California, on, of all days, April 30, 1966. On that very same day, in nearby San Francisco, Anton Szandor LaVey declared it to be the dawn of the Age of Satan.

But perhaps I've gotten sidetracked here...



During Gram's brief time at Harvard, he began gathering together what would become the International Submarine Band. When he dropped out in early 1966, he and his new bandmates moved to the Bronx in New York, where Gram rented an 11-room party house where marijuana and LSD flowed freely. One unofficial member of his band was child-actor-turned-aspiring-musician Brandon DeWilde, known in the 1950s as "the king of child actors." Parsons and DeWilde worked together on demo tapes during their time in New York.

In November/December 1966, nine months after leaving Harvard for New York, Gram ventured out to California. While there, he met a certain Nancy Ross, who at the time was living with David Crosby. In Ben Fong-Torres' *Hickory Wind*, Ross provides some interesting biographical details: "I grew up with David Crosby here in town ... I was thirteen when we met. David and I were part of the debutante set ... My father was a captain in the Royal Air Force of England ... I married Eleanor Roosevelt's grandson, Rex, at sixteen, seventeen. I was still married to Rex when I was with David ... The marriage lasted a couple of years. I got an apartment and started designing restaurants for Elmer Valentine of Whisky-a-Go-Go."

At age nineteen, Ross went with Crosby "up to his little bachelor apartment, where I drew pentagrams on the wall." Soon after, Crosby bought a house on Beverly Glen and Ross moved in with him. That is where Gram Parsons found Nancy Ross and stole her away from David Crosby: "Brandon DeWilde, who was a good friend of David's and Peter Fonda's, brought Gram up to our Beverly Glen house one Christmas time." According to Nancy, Gram quickly stole her heart.

Shortly after, in early 1967, Parsons permanently relocated to Los Angeles with his band in

tow. According to Fong-Torres, Gram - who received up to \$100,000 a year from his trust fund, a considerable amount of money in the mid-1960s - "found a house for the rest of the band on Willow Glen Avenue, off Laurel Canyon Boulevard and just north of Sunset." He and Nancy found an apartment together nearby.

Meanwhile, back home, Bob Parsons had married Bonnie shortly after the death of Avis, and the newlywed couple had then moved with Little Avis and Diane to New Orleans. Back in Waycross, the Connor family home that had been abandoned after Coon Dog's (alleged) suicide had been occupied since 1960 by the family of Sheriff Robert E. Lee. In late 1968, on the eve of the election that put Richard Nixon in the White House, the stately home exploded from within and caught fire. The cause of the explosion was never determined.

*"Oh, and as I watched him on the stage
My hands were clenched in fists of rage
No angel born in hell
Could break that Satan's spell
And as the flames climbed high into the night
To light the sacrificial rite
I saw Satan laughing with delight
The day the music died"*
—Don McLean, American Pie



Gram Parsons

Once ensconced in the hills above Los Angeles, Gram Parsons and his band began recording what would prove to be their only album, *Safe at Home*, which some pop music historians regard as the first country-rock album, but others regard as a straight country album performed by guys who look like they should be playing in a rock band. Whatever the case, by the time the album was released, in 1968, Gram had disbanded the International Submarine Band and unofficially joined the Byrds, replacing the recently departed David Crosby, who had determined that there wasn't quite room in the band for both he and his ego.

Parsons' time with the Byrds was rather brief, just four to five months, after which he was replaced by virtuoso guitarist Clarence White, who had been part of the Cambridge folk scene. Despite his brief tenure, Parsons is credited with having a major influence on the album that the band produced during that period, *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, which is also regarded by some music aficionados as the first true country-rock album.

Soon after leaving the Byrds, Parsons ran into Richie Furay, who was casting about for a new band after the breakup of Laurel Canyon's own Buffalo Springfield. Gram and Furay considered working together but quickly realized that they wanted to go in different musical directions, so Furay went to work putting Poco together while Parsons assembled the Flying Burrito Brothers. By 1969, Gram's new band had taken shape, with Gram supplying lead vocals and guitar, Chris Hillman also on guitar, Chris Etheridge on bass, and "Sneaky Pete" Kleinow on pedal steel guitar. With various other local musicians sitting in, the band recorded and released *The Gilded Palace of Sin*, which is probably also regarded by some as the first true country-rock album. Byrd Michael Clarke would later join the band, as would soon-to-

be-Eagle Bernie Leadon.

Also in 1969, late in the year, 23-year-old Gram hooked up with 16-year-old Gretchen Burrell. His new love interest was the daughter of high-profile news anchor Larry Burrell, who was very well-connected in Hollywood. Before long, Gretchen had moved into Parsons' place at the notorious Chateau Marmont Hotel, with her parents' blessings - because most wealthy parents, I would think, want their teenage daughter living in a debauched rock star's drug den. Another guest at the hotel at that same time, incidentally, was Rod Stewart (at whose home, readers of *Programmed to Kill* will recall, one of the victims of the so-called Sunset Strip Killers would later be last seen).

At the tail end of 1969, Parsons and his fellow Burrito Brothers had the dubious distinction of playing as one of the opening acts at the Rolling Stones' infamous free show at Altamont. Gram had become a very close confidant of the Stones, particularly Keith Richards, and he would later be credited with being the inspiration for the country flavor evident on the Stones' *Let it Bleed* album.

Parsons had first met up with the Stones when they were in Los Angeles in the summer of 1968 to mix their *Beggar's Banquet* album. Also hooking up with the Stones around that same time was Phil Kaufman, a recently-released prison buddy of Charlie Manson. Kaufman initially lived with the Manson Family after being released in March of 1968, and he thereafter remained what Kaufman himself described as a "sympathetic cousin" to Charlie. He also went to work as the Rolling Stones' road manager for their 1968 American tour, which is the type of job apparently best filled by ex-convict friends of Charles Manson.

In late summer of 1969, following the probable murder of Brian Jones in July, the Stones were back in LA to complete their *Let It Bleed* album and prepare for yet another tour. According to Ben Fong-Torres, writing in *Hickory Wind*, "Mick and Keith stayed at Stephen Stills's [sic] house near Laurel Canyon ... Before Stills, the house had been occupied by Peter Tork of the Monkees." (For the record, other reports hold that the Peter Tork house was in, not near, Laurel Canyon.)

On December 6, 1969, temporary Laurel Canyon residents Mick and Keith, along with permanent Laurel Canyon residents Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and the Flying Burrito Brothers, all gathered at a desolate speedway known as Altamont to stage a free concert. By the time it was over, four people were dead and another 850 concert-goers were injured to varying degrees, mostly by members of the Hell's Angels swinging leaded pool cues.



The Angels had, of course, been hired by the Stones to ostensibly provide security. That decision is almost universally cast as an innocent

mistake on the part of the band, though such a claim is difficult to believe. It was certainly no secret that the reactionary motorcycle clubs, formed by former military men, were openly hostile to hippies and anti-war activists; as early as 1965, they had brutally attacked peaceful anti-war demonstrators while police, who had courteously allowed the Angels to pass through their line, looked on. It was also known that the Angels were heavily involved in trafficking meth, a drug that was widely blamed for the ugliness that had descended over the Haight.

Perhaps less well known was that more than a few of those biker gangs had uncomfortably close ties to Charlie Manson, particularly a club known as the Straight Satans, one of whose members, Danny DeCarlo, watched over the Family's arsenal of weapons. At least one of the performers taking the stage at Altamont, curiously enough, also had close ties to the motorcycle clubs; as was revealed in his autobiography, Crosby "had friends in every Bay Area chapter of the Hells Angels."

The death that the concert at Altamont will always be remembered for, of course, is that of Meredith Hunter, the young man who was stabbed to death by members of the Hell's Angels right in front of the stage while the band (in this case, the Rolling Stones) played on. The song they were playing, contrary to most accounts of the incident, was *Sympathy for the Devil*, as was initially reported in Rolling Stone magazine based on the accounts of several reporters on the scene and a review of the unedited film stock.

Most accounts claim that Hunter was killed while the band performed *Under My Thumb*. All such claims are based on the mainstream snuff film *Gimme Shelter*, in which the killing was deliberately presented out of sequence. In the absence of any alternative filmic versions of Hunter's death, the Maysles brothers' film became the default official orthodoxy. Of course, someone went to great lengths to insure that there would be only one available version of events; as *Rolling Stone* also reported, shortly after the concert, "One weird Altamont story has to do with a young Berkeley filmmaker who claims to have gotten 8MM footage of the killing. He got home from the affair Saturday and began telling his friends about his amazing film. His house was knocked over the next night, completely rifled. The thief took only his film, nothing else."

Contrary to the impression created by *Gimme Shelter*, Hunter was killed not long into the Stones' set. But as the film's editor, Charlotte Zwerin, explained to *Salon* some thirty years later, the climax of the movie always has to come at the end: "We're talking about the structure of a film. And what kind of concert film are you going to be able to have after somebody has been murdered in front of the stage? Hanging around for another hour would have been really wrong in terms of the film." What wasn't wrong, apparently, was deliberately altering the sequence of events in what was ostensibly a documentary film.

One of the young cameramen working for the Maysles brothers that day, curiously enough, was a guy by the name of George Lucas (it is unclear whether it was Lucas who captured the conveniently unobstructed footage of the murder.) Not long after, Lucas began a meteoric rise to the very top of the Hollywood food chain. Also present that day, and featured in the film gyrating atop a raised platform near the stage, was the King of the Freaks himself, Vito Paulekas.

Many of the accounts of the tragedy at Altamont include the demonstrably false claim that Hunter can unmistakably be seen drawing a gun just before being jumped and killed by the Angels (some accounts even have Hunter firing the alleged gun). The relevant frames from the film are included here for your review. What can certainly be fairly clearly seen is the

large knife being brought down into Hunter's back. But a gun being brandished by Mr. Hunter? If you can see one, then you either have far better eyes than I, or a far more active imagination. Or both.



The Angel who was charged with the murder and then ultimately acquitted, Alan David Passaro, was found floating facedown in a reservoir in March of 1985 with \$10,000 in his pocket. Despite a widespread belief to the contrary, Passaro's acquittal was not based on the jury having been convinced that Hunter had drawn a gun, but rather on the fact that the knife wounds that killed Hunter were apparently upstrokes, which meant that they were not the wounds inflicted on-camera by Passaro. He and/or someone else continued to stab Hunter after he was down, and it was those wounds, which the cameras didn't clearly record, that killed him.

About one year after Altamont, otherwise obscure singer/songwriter Don McLean penned the lyrics to what was destined to become one of the most iconic songs in the annals of popular music: *American Pie*. Those lyrics are essentially a chronological recitation of various tragedies that shaped the world of popular music. Not long after a reference to the August 1969 Manson murders and their connection to the Laurel Canyon music scene (Helter Skelter in a summer swelter, The birds flew off with a fallout shelter, Eight miles high and falling fast), and just before a reference to the October 1970 death of Janis Joplin (I met a girl who sang the blues, And I asked her for some happy news, but she just smiled and turned away, I went down to the sacred store, Where I'd heard the music years before, but the man there said the music wouldn't play), can be found a verse, reproduced at the top of this post, in which McLean characterizes the death of Hunter as a ritualized murder.

I, of course, would never make such a wild and reckless claim.



Augustus Owsley Stanley III—Chronicle 1967

As was the custom with big events in the mid to late-1960s, particularly in the northern California area, Altamont was drenched in acid. And as was also the custom at that time, that acid was provided free-of-charge by Mr. Augustus Owsley Stanley III, also known as The Bear. At the so-called "Human Be-In" staged in January of 1967, for example, Owsley had kindly distributed 10,000 tabs of potent LSD. For the Monterey Pop Festival just five months later, he had cooked up and distributed 14,000 tabs. For Altamont, he did likewise.

The 1960s were, you see - and you can look this up if you don't believe me - the era of brotherly love. So if someone happened to have, say, a cache of acid with a street value of \$20,000-\$30,000 (a considerable amount of money in the 1960s), he was naturally expected to hand it out for free to thousands of random strangers. Of course, probably the only person who routinely had such vast stockpiles of LSD was the premier acid chemist of the hippie era, Augustus Owsley Stanley.

No one - not Ken Kesey, not Richard "Babawhateverthefuckhecalledhimself" Alpert, not even Timothy Leary - did more to 'turn on' the youth of the 1960s than Owsley. Leary and his cohorts may have captured the national media spotlight and created public awareness, but it was Owsley who flooded the streets of San Francisco and elsewhere with consistently high quality, inexpensive, readily available acid. By most accounts, he was never in it for the money and he routinely gave away more of his product than he sold. What then was his motive? According to Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain, writing in *Acid Dreams*, "Owsley cultivated an image as a wizard-chemist whose intentions with LSD were priestly and magical."

To be sure, Owsley is revered by many as something of an icon of the 1960s counterculture - a man motivated by nothing more than an altruistic desire to 'turn on' the world. But then again, the trio listed in the preceding paragraph are revered by many as well, so you'll excuse me if I'm a bit hesitant to embrace Owsley as some sort of anti-hero - especially given his rather provocative background and family history.

Augustus Owsley Stanley III is the son, naturally enough, of Augustus Owsley Stanley II, who served as a military officer during World War II aboard the USS Lexington and thereafter found work in Washington, D.C. as a government attorney. He raised his son primarily in - where else? - Arlington, Virginia. Young Owsley's grandfather was Augustus

Owsley Stanley, who served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1903 through 1915, as the Governor of Kentucky from 1915 through 1919, and as a U.S. Senator from 1919 through 1925. Senator Stanley's father, a minister with the Disciples of Christ, served as a judge advocate with the Confederate Army. His mother was a niece of William Owsley, who also served as a Governor of Kentucky, from 1844 through 1848, and who lent his name to Owsley County, Kentucky.

During Owsley III's formative years, he attended the prestigious Charlotte Hall Military Academy in Maryland, but was reportedly tossed out in the ninth grade for being intoxicated. Not long after that, at the tender age of fifteen, Owsley voluntarily committed himself to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C.. St. Elizabeth's, it should be noted, had a far more sinister name upon its founding in 1855: the Government Hospital for the Insane. He remained confined there for, uhmm, 'treatment' for the next fifteen months. During that time, his mother, in keeping with one of the recurrent themes of this saga, passed away.

Owsley apparently resumed his education following his curious confinement, but he had reportedly dropped out of school by the age of eighteen. Nevertheless, he apparently had no trouble at all gaining acceptance to the University of Virginia, which he attended for a time before enlisting in the U.S. Air Force in 1956, at the age of twenty-one. During his military service, Owsley was an electronics specialist, working in radio intelligence and radar.

After his stint in the Air Force, Owsley set up camp in the Los Angeles area, ostensibly to study ballet. During that same time, he also worked at Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which was undoubtedly the primary reason for his move to LA. In 1963, Owsley moved once again, this time to Berkeley, California, which just happened to be ground-zero of the budding anti-war movement. He may or may not have briefly attended UC Berkeley, which is where he allegedly cribbed the recipe for LSD from the university library.

Owsley soon began cooking up both Methedrine and LSD in a makeshift bathroom lab near the campus of the university. On February 21, 1965, that lab was raided by state narcotics agents who seized all his lab equipment and charged Stanley with operating a meth lab. As Barry Miles recounted in *Hippie*, "Berkeley was awash with speed and Owsley was responsible for much of it." Nevertheless, Owsley walked away from the raid unscathed, and, with the help of his attorney, who happened to be the vice-mayor of Berkeley, he even successfully sued to have all his lab equipment returned. He quickly put that equipment to work producing some 4,000,000 tabs of nearly pure LSD in the mid-1960s.

Also in February of 1965, Owsley and his frequent sidekicks, the Grateful Dead, moved down to the Watts area of Los Angeles, of all places, to ostensibly conduct 'acid tests.' The group rented a house that was conveniently located right next door to a brothel, curiously paralleling the modus operandi of various intelligence operatives who were (or had been) involved in conducting their own 'acid tests.' The band departed the communal dwelling in April 1965, just a few months before Watts exploded in violence that left thirty-four corpses littering the streets.

Owsley had been with the Dead from the band's earliest days, as both a financial backer and as their sound engineer. He is credited with numerous electronic innovations that changed the way that live rock music was presented to the masses - and likely not in a good way, given that his work as a sound technician undoubtedly drew heavily upon his military training.

In 1967, Owsley unleashed on the Haight a particularly nasty hallucinogen known as STP.

Developed by the friendly folks at Dow Chemical, STP had been tested extensively at the Edgewood Arsenal as a possible biowarfare agent before being distributed to hippies as a recreational drug. Owsley reportedly obtained the recipe from Alexander Shulgin, a former Harvard man who developed a keen interest in psychopharmacology while serving in the U.S. Navy. Shulgin worked for many years as a senior research chemist at Dow, and later worked very closely with the DEA.

In 1970, Owsley began serving time after a conviction on drug charges. That time was served, appropriately enough, at Terminal Island Federal Correctional Institution, the very same prison that had, just a few years earlier, housed both Charlie Manson and Phil Kaufman. A few years later, it would also be home to both Timothy Leary and his alleged (but not actual) nemesis, G. Gordon Liddy. After his release, Owsley continued to work as a sound technician, eventually graduating to a new medium: television.

After that rather lengthy digression, we return now to our regularly scheduled program: the Gram Parsons saga. Along with Mick and the boys, Gram made a hasty exit from the chaos at Altamont via the Stones' private helicopter. The next year, his Flying Burrito Brothers released their second album, *Burrito Deluxe*, which was produced by Jim Dickson, the man who played such a pivotal role in shaping Laurel Canyon's first band, the Byrds. By June, Parsons had been booted out of the band, reportedly due to chronic alcohol and drug abuse. He quickly signed with A&M Records and was partnered with our old friend Terry Melcher.

Gram became a regular visitor to Melcher's Benedict Canyon home, where the self-destructive pair worked on songs together, with Gram on guitar and Melcher on piano. John Phillips became a close associate of Parsons at this time as well. Meanwhile, sister Avis had been institutionalized back in New Orleans. She had gotten pregnant, after which Bob Parsons had moved quickly to have her committed and to have her marriage annulled. Little Avis reached out repeatedly to big brother Gram for help, but got none.

In late October of 1970, Gram went to A&M and signed out the master tapes of ten songs that he had recorded with Melcher; those tapes were never seen or heard again, as seems to happen from time-to-time with recordings made with Melcher. During roughly that same period of time, Parsons was busted with a briefcase full of prescription drugs. As would be expected, however, the charges were quietly dropped and Gram walked away unscathed.

There are many who claim, by the way, that the musicians under examination in this series were relentlessly persecuted by agents of the state, ostensibly to silence their voices of protest. But if that is true, then why is it that on more than one occasion when the state seems to have had solid evidence of crimes that could bring prison time, no action was taken? Our old friend David Crosby, for example, has candidly acknowledged that "the DEA could have popped me for interstate transport of dope or dealing lots of times and never did ..." And John Phillips, busted for wholesale trafficking of pharmaceuticals, was, by his own account, "looking at forty-five years and got thirty days." He began serving his sentence on April 20, appropriately enough, and served just twenty-four days - in a minimum security prison that offered "residents" such activities as "basketball, aerobics, softball, tennis, archery, and golf," and that featured a "delicious kosher kitchen, an elaborate salad bar, and a tasty brunch on Sundays."

Sorry, but we seem to have drifted off course once again. I'll try to stay focused on the Gram Parsons story for the rest of this post.

In 1971, Gram married Gretchen Burrell. The lavish affair was held, curiously enough, at the

New Orleans home of step-dad Bob Parsons, a fact that has left Gram's chroniclers somewhat puzzled. Bob Parsons was, after all, the man who had - at least in the eyes of many family members - terrorized and institutionalized Gram's younger sister, carried on a scandalous affair with the family's babysitter, murdered Gram's mother and subsequently married that babysitter, and repeatedly looted the family coffers. And yet it was Bob Parsons, of all people, whom Gram trusted to host his wedding, suggesting a bond between the two that would seem to defy conventional explanations.

That same year, Gram spent some time in France, hanging out once again with the Rolling Stones. The following year, he was signed to Reprise Records by Mo Ostin and he and Gretchen moved back into the Chateau Marmont, where Gram and Emmylou Harris began working on the songs that would make up his first solo album. Emmylou, as Fong-Torres notes, had been raised on "various military bases around Virginia," so she quickly fit right in with the Laurel Canyon crowd.

In 1973, with his first solo album, entitled simply *GP*, due for release, "Gram and Gretchen finally moved out of the Chateau Marmont and found a cozy brown wood-shingled house on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, which wound its way north from Hollywood through the stars' favorite canyon." Working once again with Emmylou, Gram began working on tracks for what would be his posthumously-released second solo album, *Grievous Angel*.

As July of 1973 rolled around, a series of tragedies befell Parsons and the people around him. In July of the previous year, Gram's friend Brandon DeWilde - who had introduced Gram to Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Bruce Dern and Jack Nicholson, resulting in Gram's involvement in *The Trip* - had been killed in a traffic accident. A year later, on July 15, 1973, Gram's friend and fellow musician, Clarence White, was hit by a car and killed. According to Fong-Torres, "Around the same time that Clarence White was killed, Sid Kaiser, a familiar face in the Los Angeles rock scene, a close friend of Gram's and, not so incidentally, a source of high-quality drugs, died of a heart attack." Just after those two deaths, "In late July 1973 ... [Gram's] house in Laurel Canyon burned down."

Other sources, for the record, have placed that house in Topanga Canyon rather than Laurel Canyon. Whatever the case, Gram was home when the house caught fire and was briefly hospitalized for smoke inhalation. Having lost their home and all their possessions, Gram and Gretchen "moved into Gretchen's father's spacious home on Mulholland Drive in Laurel Canyon." Because the Burrells, naturally enough, also lived in everyone's favorite canyon.

Gram wouldn't live in the Burrell estate long though; on September 19, 1973, Ingram Cecil Connor III died in a nondescript room at the Joshua Tree Inn. His death is usually attributed to a drug overdose, but toxicology reports suggest otherwise. Parsons' death received minimal press coverage, partly because, as fate would have it, singer/songwriter Jim Croce went down in a blaze of glory the very next day, on September 20, 1973. But though the media had moved on, the Gram Parsons story wasn't quite over yet.

Parsons had been a regular visitor to Joshua Tree National Park, where one of his favorite pastimes was said to be ingesting hallucinogenic drugs and then searching for UFOs. Sometimes he would take friends, such as Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, along with him to help with the search. I'm no expert, to be sure, but it seems to me that if your goal is to succeed in spotting UFOs, then the dropping-acid strategy is probably a pretty good approach. But again, that's not really my area of expertise.

In September of 1973, Gram was accompanied to Joshua Tree by his personal assistant, Michael Martin, Martin's girlfriend, Dale McElroy, and Parson's former high school sweetheart, Margaret Fisher. As the story goes, the group soon ran out of pot and quickly dispatched Martin back to LA to pick up a fresh supply. He was, therefore, officially not there at the time of Gram's death, though why he hadn't returned has never been explained, especially given that his job was, specifically, to keep an eye on Gram and monitor his drug intake.

How Gram Parsons died is anyone's guess. There are as many versions of the event as there were witnesses to it. Actually, that's not quite true - there are more versions than there were witnesses, because some of those witnesses have told more than one story. Officially, Parsons died of an overdose, but forensic testing revealed no morphine or barbiturates in his blood. Morphine showed up in his liver and urine, but as experts have noted, those toxicology results indicate chronic, but not recent, use.

Police seem to have had little interest in getting at the truth and made no apparent effort to reconcile the various conflicting accounts. Details of the incident - such as how long Gram had been left alone, whether he was still alive when discovered, who made that discovery, etc. - were wildly inconsistent in the accounts of Fisher, McElroy, and Frank and Alan Barbary (the Inn's owner and his son, who were also witnesses, and whose accounts conflicted both with each other and with the girls' accounts).

At the hospital, police spoke briefly with the two girls and then released them. Within two hours, Phil Kaufman was on the scene to pick up Fisher and McElroy. Bypassing the police and the hospital, Kaufman went directly to the Inn, which the girls had returned to, and quickly hustled them straight back to LA. Police never spoke to either of the women again, despite the conflicting accounts and the open question of what exactly it was that killed Gram.

On the autumnal equinox of 1973, Kaufman and Martin, driving a dilapidated hearse provided by McElroy, arrived at LAX to claim the body of Gram Parsons. Apparently no one, including the police officer who was nearby, found it at all unusual that two drunken, disheveled men in an obviously out-of-service hearse (it had no license plates and several broken windows) had arrived without any paperwork to claim the body of a deceased celebrity. In fact, according to Kaufman's dubious account, the cop even helped the pair load the casket into the hearse - and then looked the other way when Martin slammed the hearse into a wall on the way out of the hangar.

Kaufman and Martin then drove the body back out to Joshua Tree, doused it with gasoline and set it ablaze. Local police initially speculated that the cremation was "ritualistic," which indeed it was, but such reports were, and continue to be, scoffed at.

On September 26, LAPD detectives, led by anchorman Larry Burrell, came knocking on Kaufman's door with warrants to serve. Bizarrely enough, director Arthur Penn was there with a full crew shooting scenes for the film *Night Moves* with star Gene Hackman (because when you're a friend of Charlie Manson's, it would appear, everyone in Hollywood wants to hang out with you). While the crew continued working, Kaufman was taken in, but he was back just a few hours later. In the end, he and Martin were fined \$300 each plus reimbursement for the cost of the coffin.

In January 1974, four months after his death, *Grievous Angel* was released to critical acclaim and public indifference. Later that year, Gram's adoptive father, Bob Parsons, died as well,

reportedly of alcohol-related illness. He had apparently been making moves aimed at gaining control of the deceased musician's estate. In keeping with family tradition, Bob failed to make it to the age of fifty (Gram's real dad, Coon Dog, had died at forty-one, his mother at forty-two, and Gram at just twenty-six).

By sheer coincidence, no doubt, the deaths of Gram and Bob Parsons were followed by the bankruptcy of much of the Snively family business, which also occurred in 1974. Around that same time, Little Avis gave birth to daughter Flora. Sixteen years later, both were killed in a boating accident in Virginia. Avis had made it all the way to age forty.

The Byrds were the very first folk-rock band to take flight, and the one that achieved the greatest fame, but to many discerning ears, Laurel Canyon's other folk-rock powerhouse, the Buffalo Springfield, was the more talented band.



Buffalo Springfield

In the literature chronicling the 1960s music scene, few stories are repeated more frequently than the legend surrounding the formation of what would later be regarded as perhaps the first 'supergroup.' All such accounts unquestioningly retell the story as though it were the gospel truth, seemingly oblivious to the improbability of virtually every aspect of the legend. And curiously, virtually every version of the story contains some form of the word "serendipity," as though everyone has been copying off the same kid's homework.

As the story goes, Stephen Stills and Richie Furay, formerly of the Au Go-Go Singers, had recently transplanted themselves to Los Angeles after the breakup of the manufactured folkie group. Stills had been the first to relocate, in August of 1965. Furay flew out to join him in February 1966, after spending a little time working at defense giant Pratt & Whitney, and the two set their sights on putting together a folk-rock band.

Meanwhile, up in Toronto, Neil Young and Bruce Palmer were playing in a band known as the Mynah Birds - a band fronted by an AWOL Navy man known as Ricky James Matthews, who would later morph into funkmeister/torturer/rapist Rick James, but whose real name was James Ambrose Johnson, Jr.. The Mynah Birds broke up in March of 1965, just after authorities came calling on Matthews and tossed him in the Brooklyn Brig. Now in search of a new band, Young made the curious decision to head out to LA, for no better reason than that he had what Palmer described as "a hunch, a feeling that ... Stephen Stills was in LA."



Steven Stills

Of course, Young had no clue if Stills was in fact there, nor did he know anyone else in LA. And you would think that he would have realized that, even if Stills was there, there was virtually no chance of finding some random person in a city of millions, especially when the person doing the searching had no idea how to get around the city. But no matter. Neil had a calling, so he jumped into an old hearse, of all things, recruited Palmer to ride shotgun, and the two set off on the lengthy trek to Los Angeles.

They arrived, the legend tells us, on April 1, 1966 - April Fool's Day, appropriately enough - and began the search for Stills. Several days of searching yielded no results, however, and on the afternoon of April 6, the frustrated pair decided to head off to San Francisco in the hopes that maybe they would have better luck finding Stephen there. Perhaps they were going to go on a tour of all the big cities in America, in the hopes that somewhere along the way they might find Stephen Stills.

But as fate would have it, just as they were about to head out of town, Stephen Stills found them. As Barney Hoskyns tells the story in his *Hotel California*, "Early in April 1966, Stills and Richie Furay were stuck in a Sunset Strip traffic jam in Barry Friedman's Bentley. As they sat in the car, Stephen spotted a 1953 Pontiac hearse with Ontario plates on the other side of the street. 'I'll be damned if that ain't Neil Young,' Stills said. Friedman executed an illegal U-turn and pulled up behind the hearse. One of rock's great serendipities had just occurred. Young, a lanky Canadian, had just driven all the way from Detroit in the company of bassist Bruce Palmer. They'd caught the bug that was drawing hundreds of other pop wannabes to the West Coast."

The pair had actually driven out from Toronto, not Detroit, and the hearse was a 1959 model by most accounts, and Stills and Furay were in a van rather than a Bentley, but such inconsistencies are typical of all Hollywood legends. In any event, John Einarson, in *For What It's Worth*, supplies a somewhat longer, and more hyperbole-filled, version of the legend: "What transpired next is no longer considered simply a chance encounter. Transcending mere fact, the events of the next few minutes have taken on mythic proportions to become, in the annals of popular culture, legendary. More than pure luck, coincidence or serendipity, at that very moment the planets aligned, stars crossed, everyone's karma turned positive, divine intervention interceded, the hand of fate revealed itself - whatever you subscribe to in order to explain the unexplained. Though each of the five participants in that moment in time tell it slightly differently, the fact remains that the occupants of the white van, individually or collectively, depending on who's retelling it, noticed the black hearse with the foreign plate heading the other direction. Once the light of recognition came on, the van

hastily pulled an illegal, and likely difficult in rush hour, U-turn, maneuvering its way through the line of northbound cars, horn honking frantically all the while, to pull up behind the hearse. One of the passengers leapt out, ran up and pounded on the driver's side window of the strange vehicle, yelling to the startled travelers inside who had taken no notice of the blaring car horn directly behind them. 'Hey Neil, it's me, Steve Stills! Pull over, man!' The drivers of the two vehicles managed to find curb space or a vacant store parking lot, again depending on whose version is being related, and the five piled out to embrace and introduce one another ... On April 6, 1966, in that late afternoon line of traffic, the course of popular music was altered forever."

Anyone who actually lives and drives in LA likely knows that "difficult" is not really the word to describe the feasibility of making an impromptu U-turn in rush hour traffic on the Sunset Strip; the correct word would be "impossible," which is the same word that accurately describes the likelihood of that van "maneuvering its way through the line of northbound cars," or of it finding "curb space" on Sunset Boulevard. But let's just play along and assume that Neil Young and Stephen Stills, each of whom, for some reason, had been dreaming about forming a band with the other, had a random, chance encounter on Sunset Boulevard. In that brief moment in time, a band was formed - or at least 4/5 of a band.

Retiring to the home of Barry Friedman, who would later legally change his name to Frazier Mohawk, the quartet of musicians quickly decided that their newly-formed band would only perform original material. With no less than three singer/songwriter/guitarists on board (Furay, Young and Stills), along with a bass player (Bruce Palmer), all that was needed was a drummer. Three days later, on April 9, 1966, they acquired one, in the form of Dewey Martin, formerly with the Dillards.

The Dillards, as it turns out, had just decided to go back to their acoustic bluegrass roots, so they no longer needed a drummer. They also apparently had no further need for a whole bunch of new electric instruments and stacks of amplifiers, so Dewey, according to legend, brought all of that with him. Because the Dillards, you know, were just going to throw it all away anyway. So now, with the stars all properly aligned, the band was not only complete but they each had shiny new electric instruments to play - and it all had magically come together in just 72 hours.

There was still much work to be done, of course. For one thing, they all had to learn to play those shiny new electric instruments. And they all had to learn to play together as a band. And they had to build up a repertoire of original songs. And they had to rehearse and polish those songs. But not to worry; they had, as we'll see, at least a couple of hours to work on each of those things.

Unlike, say, the Byrds, the members of the Buffalo Springfield were, by all accounts, talented musicians from the outset. Stills and Young were both skilled lead guitarists and songwriters, though Young's vocals were, to be sure, an acquired taste. Furay was an accomplished rhythm guitarist and songwriter, as well as being the group's best lead vocalist. Bruce Palmer was a respected bass player who, shockingly, actually had experience playing the instrument. And Dewey Martin, several years older than the rest of the crew, had drummed for such rock and country legends as the Everly Brothers, Charlie Rich, Roy Orbison, Patsy Cline, and Carl Perkins.

None of that, however, explains the absurdly meteoric rise of the Buffalo Springfield. On April 11, 1966, just five days after the quartet had purportedly first met, and just two days

after they had added a drummer and instruments, the band played its first club date at one of Hollywood's most prestigious venues: the Troubadour. Four days later, on April 15, they played the first of six dates around the southland opening for the hottest band on the Strip: the Byrds. That mini-tour was followed almost immediately by a six-week stand at the hottest club on the Strip, the Whisky. That gig wrapped up on June 20, 1966.

A month later, on July 25, the band landed the opening slot on the most anticipated concert of the year - the Rolling Stones show at the Hollywood Bowl, sponsored by local radio station KHJ. The station, by the way, had just been launched the previous year, in May of 1965, just a few weeks after the Byrds had taken the world by storm with the release of Mr. Tambourine Man and sparked a folk-rock revolution. Just as new clubs had magically appeared along the Sunset Strip in anticipation of the about-to-explode music scene, so too did a radio station magically appear to promote those new clubs and the artists filling them. Such things tend to happen, as we know, rather, uhmm, serendipitously.

Three days after the Stones concert at the Bowl, Buffalo Springfield released its first single, the Neil Young-penned Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing, which failed to connect with the record-buying public. Several months later, the band would release what was to be its only hit single, and what would become the most recognizable 'protest' song of the 1960s. But before we get to that, let's start back at the beginning ... actually, let's veer off on a tangent first, and then start back at the beginning.

As was duly noted in the last installment of this series, the law enforcement community had ample opportunity to silence the muses of the 1960s counterculture. That the state consistently chose not to utilize that power says much about the legitimacy of that counterculture. For if these iconic figures posed a demonstrable threat to the status quo, then why would they not have been silenced? Why, for example, were three members of the Buffalo Springfield - Neil Young, Richie Furay and Jim Messina, along with Eric Clapton, Furay's wife, the band's road manager, and nine others - arrested in a drug bust at a Topanga Canyon home, only to then walk away as if nothing had happened? Why was this case, and so many others like it, not aggressively prosecuted?

The state had other means to silence young critics, of course, one of the best being the military draft. As Richie Unterberger noted in Turn! Turn! Turn!, "Most folk rockers (if they were male), like their audience, were of draft age." But curiously enough, "Very, very few had their careers interrupted by the draft." Actually, Unterberger appears to just be playing it safe with the "very, very few" wording; after reading through both of Unterberger's books and numerous other tomes covering similar ground, I have yet to read about any folk rocker whose career was affected by the draft in the 1960s.

What you will find in the literature are numerous mentions of various people receiving their draft notices, but those are invariably followed by amusing anecdotes about how said people beat the draft board by pretending to be gay or crazy. Of course, if it were really that easy to fool the draft board, then Uncle Sam probably wouldn't have been able to come up with all those bodies to send over to Vietnam.

Hundreds of thousands of young men from all across the country were swept up and fed into the war machine, but not one of the musical icons of the Woodstock generation was among them. How could that be? Should we just consider that to be another one of those great serendipities? Was it mere luck that kept all the Laurel Canyon stars out of jail and out of the military during the turbulent decade that was the 1960s?

Not likely. The reality is that 'The Establishment,' as it was known in those days, had the power to prevent the musical icons of the 1960s from ever becoming the megastars that they became. The state, aka corporate America, could quite easily have prevented the entire countercultural movement from ever really getting off the ground - because then, as now, the state controlled the channels of communication.

A real grass-roots cultural revolution would probably have involved a bunch of starving musicians barely scratching out a living playing tiny coffee shops in the hopes of maybe someday landing a record deal with some tiny, local independent label and then, just maybe, if they got really lucky, getting a little airplay on some obscure college radio stations. But that's not how the '60s folk-rock 'revolution' played out. Not by any stretch of the imagination.

As Unterberger duly notes in his expansive, two-volume review of the folk-rock movement, "much folk-rock was recorded and issued by huge corporations, and broadcast over radio and television stations owned for the most part by the same or similar pillars of the establishment." Right from the start, in fact, it was the largest record labels leading the folk-rock charge. The very first of the folk-rock bands, the Byrds, signed with Columbia Records - whose name, in case you were wondering, is derived from a little place known as the District of Columbia, where the label was founded and headquartered some 120 years ago.

Laurel Canyon's other folk-rock powerhouse, the Buffalo Springfield - the band that was supposed to be as big as the Byrds and the Beatles and the Beach Boys - signed with Atlantic Records. Atlantic had been founded in 1947 by Ahmet Ertegun and dentist/investor Herb Abramson. Born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1923, the year the Turk Republic was established, Ahmet was the son, and the grandson, of career diplomats/civil servants. His father was named the first Turkish representative to the League of Nations in 1925 and thereafter served as the Turk Republic's ambassador to Switzerland, France, and England. In 1935, he was named the first Turkish ambassador to the United States and he promptly relocated the family to - where else? - Washington, DC.



Ahmet Ertegun

From about the age of twelve, Ahmet grew up along DC's Embassy Row, attending elite private schools with the sons and daughters of senators, congressmen, and spooks. In 1947,

three years after his father died, Ertegun founded Atlantic Records. At first, the label was home to jazz and R&B artists, including Ray Charles, the company's first big star. In the late 1950s, Ertegun took on his first assistant: a guy by the name of Phil Spector, who, rumor has it, was recently convicted of blowing a hole in Lana Clarkson's head. Atlantic soon shifted focus and rock luminaries like Eric Clapton, Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones would later join the label's stable of talent.

It would appear then that the two record labels that signed and launched Laurel Canyon's first two folk-rock bands were not only major record labels, they also just happened to be corporate entities that had deep ties to the nation's capitol and power center.

It was the major record labels, not upstart independents, that signed Laurel Canyon's newly-formed bands. It was the major labels that provided them with instruments and amplifiers. It was the major labels that provided them with studio time and session musicians. It was the major labels that recorded, mixed and arranged their albums. It was the major labels that released and then heavily promoted those albums. And so as not to be left out, the corporate titans of all three branches of the mainstream media - print, radio and television - did their part to help out the titans of the record industry.

Unterberger notes that "AM radio (and sometimes prime-time network television) would act as a primary conduit for this countercultural expression." Conservative, corporate-controlled AM stations across the country almost immediately began giving serious airplay to the new sounds coming out of Southern California, and network television gave the rising stars unprecedented coverage and exposure: "prime-time variety hours were much more likely to showcase rock acts than they would be in subsequent decades. New releases by the Byrds were often accompanied by large ads in trade magazines that simultaneously plugged the records and upcoming TV appearances."

The boys in the Buffalo Springfield, for example, managed to find themselves appearing as guests on an impressive array of network television shows, including American Bandstand, The Smothers Brothers Show, Shebang, the Della Reese Show, the Go Show, the Andy Williams Show, Hollywood Palace, Where the Action Is, Joey Bishop's late night show, and a local program known as Boss City. They also made guest appearances, curiously enough, on primetime hits like Mannix and The Girl From Uncle.

The print media did its part as well to raise awareness of the new music/countercultural scene. In September 1965, the nation's premier newsweeklies, Time and Newsweek, "ran virtually simultaneous stories on the folk-rock craze," just months after the first folk-rock release, the Byrd's Mr. Tambourine Man, had climbed to the top of the charts. The country's biggest daily newspapers chimed in as well, providing an inordinate amount of coverage of the emerging scene. By the end of 1967, the movement had its very own publication, Rolling Stone magazine. Initially designed to look as though it were a product of the underground press, it was, without question, very much a corporate mouthpiece.

Another avenue of the print media provided the scene with considerable exposure as well; as Einarson notes, many of the Laurel Canyon stars, particularly members of the Buffalo Springfield and the Monkees, were "the darlings of the California teen magazines," including Teenset, Teen Screen, and Tiger Beat.

As the story is usually told, the 1960s countercultural movement posed a rather serious threat to the status quo. **But if that were truly the case, then why was it the "pillars of the**

establishment," to use Unterberger's words, that launched the movement to begin with? Why was it 'the man' that signed and recorded these artists? And that heavily promoted them on the radio, on television, and in print? And that set them up with their very own radio station and their very own publication? And insured that new clubs sprung up like mushrooms along Sunset Boulevard so that all the new bands would have venues to play?

There are some readers, no doubt, who will say that this was simply a case of corporate America doing what it does so well: making a profit, off of anything and everything. Blinded by greed, the naysayers will claim, the corporate titans inadvertently created a monster. "Move along now folks, there's nothing more to see here ..."

The question that is begged by that explanation, however, is why, after it had become abundantly clear that a monster had allegedly been created, was nothing done to stop the growth of that monster? Why did the state not utilize its law enforcement and criminal justice powers to silence some of the most prominent countercultural voices? And why did the draft board - in every known case, without exception - allow those same voices to skip out on their military service?

It's not as if the state would have had to resort to heavy-handed measures to silence these allegedly troublesome voices. Being that the vast majority of them were draft-age males who were openly using and/or advocating the use of illegal substances, they were practically begging for the powers-that-be to take action. And yet that never happened.

And now, while you ponder all of that, I'll circle back around and tell the Buffalo Springfield story from the beginning, starting in 1945 when Stephen Arthur Stills was born to William and Talitha Stills. As John Einarson recounts in *For What It's Worth*, Stephen's "roots are firmly planted in Southern soil. His family traces its history back to the plantations of the rural antebellum South. After the Union armies laid waste to much of the Southern farm economy, the family relocated to Illinois."

Einarson describes William Stills as "somewhat of a soldier of fortune, an engineer, builder, and dreamer who frequently uprooted the family to follow his dreams and schemes." That is, I suppose, as good a definition as any for what he actually appears to have been: a military intelligence operative who was frequently on assignment in Central America. Stephen's childhood was spent in Illinois, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and various parts of Central America, including Costa Rica, El Salvador and the Panama Canal Zone.

At a fairly young age, he attended the Admiral Farragut Military Academy in St. Petersburg, Florida. In later years, his authoritarian manner and military bearing would earn him the nickname "The Sarge." He joined his first band, the Radars, as a drummer. In his next band, the Continentals, he played the guitar, alongside another young guitarist named Don Felder, who would later turn up in Laurel Canyon as a member of the Eagles, but we'll get to that later.

According to Einarson, "An unfortunate incident with the administration at his Tampa Bay high school resulted in Stephen's dismissal in 1961, after which he joined his wayward family then settled in Costa Rica." What that "unfortunate incident" may have been has been left to the reader's imagination. In any event, Stephen's next few years are rather murky. Some reports have him graduating from a high school in the Panama Canal Zone. Others have him shuffling back and forth between Florida and Central America. Stills himself has at times

claimed that he served a stint in Vietnam. Whatever the case, in March of 1964 he surfaced in New Orleans with his sights set on a career in music.

By the summer of 1964, he had drifted to New York's Greenwich Village, where he became fast friends with folkie Peter Torkelson, who was, like so many others in this story, a child of Washington, DC. The two played together briefly as a duo before Torkelson "migrated to Connecticut then Venezuela." Nothing unusual about that, I suppose. Torkelson would soon show up in Laurel Canyon, as Monkee Peter Tork. Stills would also audition for the show, but his bad teeth and thinning hair would render him unfit for a leading role on prime-time TV.

In July 1964, Stills found work as one of the nine members of the Au Go-Go Singers, the newly-formed house band for New York's famed Café Au Go-Go. Singing alongside of Stills was a young Richie Furay, the son of a pharmacist who had run a family drugstore in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Furay's father died when Richie was just thirteen, as tends to happen from time to time in this story.

By November 1964, the Au Go-Go Singers already had an album out. But trouble soon arose, due primarily to the fact that the band was under contract to Morris Levy, a known organized-crime figure who would soon be indicted on an array of criminal charges. The band soon broke up and Furay headed off to Connecticut where a cousin got him a job at Pratt & Whitney. While working there, he took a little time off to audition for a slot in the Chad Mitchell Trio, but he was beat out by a military brat from Roswell named John Deutschendorf, later to become John Denver.

Stephen Stills, meanwhile, hung out in New York for a while longer before heeding the call of the Pied Piper and heading out to LA in August of 1965. That was the summer, according to Einarson, that "the epicenter of American rock'n'roll shifted coasts, Los Angeles replacing New York as the power base of the music industry."

Richie Furay apparently soon found himself missing Stills but didn't know how to reach his former bandmate, so he sent a letter to Stills' dad in El Salvador, according to legend, and William Stills forwarded the message to Stephen. And what exactly, you may be wondering, was the elder Stills doing in El Salvador circa 1965/66? Details aren't readily available, but as William Blum has duly noted in *Killing Hope*, "Throughout the 1960s, multifarious American experts occupied themselves in El Salvador by enlarging and refining the state's security and counter-insurgency apparatus: the police, the National Guard, the military, the communications and intelligence networks, the coordination with their counterparts in other Central American countries ... as matters turned out, these were the forces and resources which were brought into action to impose widespread repression and wage war."

Meanwhile, up in Canada, Neil Young and Bruce Palmer were handling guitar and bass duties for the Mynah Birds. Neil Percival Kenneth Ragland Young was born on November 12, 1945 in Toronto to Scott Young, a sportswriter and novelist, and Edna "Rassy" Ragland, a Canadian television personality. Scott Young had spent a considerable amount of time abroad during World War II, first as a journalist and then as a member of the Royal Canadian Navy. Scott's father (Neil's grandfather), like Richie Furay's, had been a pharmacist/drug store owner.

As Einarson recounts, "Neil Young and Stephen Stills had more in common than music. Both had grown up in transient families, Neil's journalist father Scott uprooting his mother Edna 'Rassy,' Neil, and older brother Bob several times during Neil's first 15 years." Novelists, I'm

guessing, need to move around a lot.

Just after his seventeenth birthday, Neil formed his first band, the Squires, and began playing local gigs. It was during those early years, according to legend, that Young and Stills first briefly crossed paths up in Canada. That meeting would, a couple years later, allegedly send Young and Palmer - also born in Toronto, to a violinist father and artist mother - off on a cross-country quest to find Stephen Stills.

The Mynah Birds, by the way, also at one time featured Nick St. Nicholas and Goldie McJohn, both of whom defected to a rival local band known as the Sparrows. The Sparrows, after a lead singer replacement, would morph into Steppenwolf. And Steppenwolf, like the other band spawned by the Mynah Birds, would migrate to - guess where? - Laurel Canyon.

At the time of the 'serendipitous' encounter on Sunset Boulevard, Stills was living at the home of Barry Friedman, a former circus clown, fire-eater, TV producer, and freelance publicist. To say that his home was a bit odd would probably be an understatement. According to folkie Nurit Wilde, "It had a bathtub in the middle of the living room and a secret room behind the bathroom where people carried on liaisons." The massive bathtub sat right in front of the equally massive fireplace. As Friedman himself would later acknowledge, "This was a very strange house."



A sign by the front door of this residence identifies it as the "Holly Mont Castle"

Not strange by canyon standards, perhaps, but strange nonetheless. Stranger homes can certainly be found, such as in the Holly Mont neighborhood near the base of nearby Beachwood Canyon. One such home, pictured above, is described in the book *Haunted Hollywood*. The house isn't actually haunted, of course, but it does contain some rather unusual features, as a past owner discovered: "the house's most startling feature - a secret passageway behind a built-in bookshelf he'd discovered during remodeling. It connected to a series of subterranean tunnels linking several houses on the hillside...While exploring the tunnel beneath his house, Grey found a makeshift grave. The headstone read 'Regina 1922.'"

Nothing weird about that, I suppose. Nor about the fact that the house pictured below, which sits right next-door, is also linked through the underground tunnel complex.

Anyway... as I was saying, Friedman had taken both Stills and Furay under his wing, providing them with a place to live and rehearse, doling out spending money, and introducing them to music industry contacts. Friedman was there when the fabled meeting took place, and it was to his home that the group adjourned after stopping on the Strip. It was also Friedman

who found them their drummer, Walter Milton Dwayne Midkiff, otherwise known as Dewey Martin.



Friedman, as it turns out, was working for Byrds' manager Jim Dickson, who also managed the Dillards. Dickson hooked Friedman up with Martin, and with a full slate of electric instruments, just as he had set the Byrds up with instruments and a bass player. Dickson and Friedman would soon become neighbors when Friedman moved from his odd house on Fountain Avenue to a home on Ridpath in - all together now! - Laurel Canyon.

That home, on 8524 Ridpath, would become a rather notorious party house. As Jackson Browne, who Friedman later took under his wing, recalled, "It was always open house at Paul Rothchild's and Barry Friedman's" (Paul Rothchild, for those who have forgotten, was the producer of the Doors, and in case I hadn't mentioned it before, an ex-convict). Barney Hoskyns writes in *Hotel California* that "Friedman ... orchestrated scenes of sexual and narcotic depravity that soon spun out of control." Among the regular visitors was "a gaggle of girls who mainly lived at Monkee Peter Tork's house" - which was also, as we all know, in Laurel Canyon.



8524 Ridpath in Laurel Canyon, as it looks today

Just a few doors down from Friedman, at 8504 Ridpath, lived Barry James, who also played a behind-the-scenes role in the success of the Byrds. Michael Ochs, brother of folk legend/self-professed CIA operative Phil Ochs, worked as James' assistant. A very young Jackson Browne, fresh from the "imposing Browne family home in the tony, old-money neighborhood of Highland Park," lived with James for a year, during which time Friedman worked to build a band around Browne. Toward that end, he recruited someone else who came from "old-money," a kid by the name of Ned Doheny.

Most members of the Springfield also took up residence in our favorite secluded canyon. Richie Furay initially moved in with Mark Volman of the Turtles, who already had a place on Lookout Mountain Avenue. After marrying in March of 1967, Furay got his own place right on Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Neil Young, ever the recluse, found himself what has been described as a "shack" at 8451 Utica Drive. And Stills eventually moved into Peter Tork's home, also on Laurel Canyon Boulevard. It is unclear whether Palmer and Martin took up residence in the canyon.



8504 Ridpath, which is now, curiously enough, the Chilean Consulate

Martin was older than the rest of the band, having been born on September 30, 1940 in Ontario. In the very early 1960s, he served a brief stint in the U.S. Army, though he appears to have been, like Young and Palmer, a Canadian citizen. Go figure. Following that, as previously noted, he played with many country and rock legends before briefly joining up with the Dillards. With him added to the Springfield, the band was complete.

It wouldn't stay that way for any length of time, however. Bruce Palmer had a habit of getting himself arrested on a regular basis, usually on drug charges. Some of those arrests led to deportations, since both he and Young were in the country illegally. He never seems to have had much trouble getting back into the country, however, and needless to say, none of his crimes seem to have actually been prosecuted in any meaningful way. But he did go missing on a fairly regular basis. During the band's two-year run, Ken Koblun, Jim Fielder (formerly of Zappa's Mothers of Invention), and Jim Messina all filled in on bass for varying lengths of time. And Doug Hastings filled in for a sometimes absent Neil Young, who had a habit of occasionally quitting the band, primarily due to ego clashes with The Sarge.



The 'shack' at 8451 Utica, as it looks today

The band's second single, recorded and mixed on December 5, 1966, and written just a couple weeks before, was released locally in December 1966 and nationally in early January 1967. It would be the group's only hit single and it is remembered today as the quintessential protest song of the 1960s. That song, of course, is For What It's Worth, the opening lines of which kicked off this series.

As a protest song, it must be said, it doesn't quite measure up. First of all, despite what is commonly believed nowadays, the song is not a commentary on Vietnam War protests. Far from it. The event under consideration was the so-called Riot on the Sunset Strip, which involved about 1,000 kids who were demonstrating against the imposition of a curfew and the announcement that a popular club - Pandora's Box, at 8118 Sunset Boulevard - was slated to be closed.



Scenes from a 'riot' (screen cap from Mondo Mod)

Pandora's was a small coffee shop that featured poetry readings, folk music... and Laurel Canyon bands like Love and Buffalo Springfield. This caused a bit of a problem though, as the club sat on a traffic island at the intersection of Sunset and Crescent Heights (the gateway to Laurel Canyon), and overflow crowds would spill out onto the boulevard, blocking traffic. Even before the problems began, the building was scheduled to be demolished as part of a planned road-widening project.



Nevertheless, the announcement of its closing sparked a demonstration, and on the night of November 12, 1966, 200 cops squared off against perhaps 1,000 kids. The LAPD, being the LAPD, began cracking heads and arresting everyone in sight. Protestors responded by throwing rocks, setting a car ablaze, and attempting to ignite a bus. One month later, a song commemorating the event would be blaring from car radios across the city. Eight months after that, Pandora's would be bulldozed.

Even if the song had been about anti-war protests, it still would be an odd choice for a protest song. Lyrics such as "Singing songs and carrying signs, mostly say hooray for our side," seem to largely dismiss the concerns of protesters. And the line "nobody's right if everybody's wrong" seems to suggest that protesters are no better than that which they are protesting against.

Another curious irony about the song is that it was authored by Stephen Stills, aka The Sarge, an authoritarian, law-and-order kind of guy if ever there was one. Stills himself later heaped derision on the very notion of a protest song: "We didn't want to do another song like For What It's Worth. We didn't want to be a protest group. That's really a cop-out and I hate that. To sit there and say, 'I don't like this and I don't like that' is just stupid."

Writing insipid pop ditties about Judi Collins, I suppose, was a much smarter course of action.

While For What It's Worth is now the best-remembered 'protest' song of the 1960s, the most successful one at the time was Barry McGuire's recording of P.F. Sloan's The Eve of

Destruction, which was also a curious choice for a 'protest' song, for reasons best explained by Paul Jones of the band Manfred Mann: "I think that Barry McGuire must have been paid by the State Department. The Eve of Destruction protests about nothing. It is simply a 'Thy Doom at Hand' song with no point."

Yet another curious 'protest' song of the 1960s was Glen Campbell's rendering of Buffy St. Marie's anti-war standard, Universal Soldier. The very same Glen Campbell told Variety magazine that draft card burners "should be hung... If you don't have enough guts to fight for your country, you're not a man." A young Bob Seger, meanwhile, penned and recorded Ballad of the Yellow Beret, a vicious put-down of draft dodgers, but that might be a bit off-topic.

Returning then to the Buffalo Springfield, I think it is safe to say that, to most music fans, there is a world of difference between a band like the Springfield and a band like the Monkees. That perception, however, is not necessarily accurate. As Unterberger has written, "there was not nearly as much gauche commercialism separating the Monkees and the bold Sunset Strip vanguard as is commonly believed. The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and Barry McGuire might have been landing hit records with social protest both gentle and incendiary, but they were tethered to a corporate media establishment in order to deliver those messages. On television's Where the Action Is you could see the Byrds lip-synching The Bells of Rhymney in front of vacuous, grinning beach bunnies and muscle men cavorting on diving boards and plastic inner tubes. When Buffalo Springfield mimed to For What It's Worth on The Smothers Brothers Show, they suffered the insertion of a shot of Tom Smothers pointing a gun at the camera during the line 'there's a man with a gun over there,' to a burst of uproarious canned laughter."

The ties between the bands actually ran far deeper than their mutual fondness for cheesy television appearances. Stephen Stills, it will be recalled, auditioned to be a Monkee, as did singer/songwriters Harry Nilsson and Paul Williams, and Danny Hutton of Three Dog Night. Stills and Tork remained close friends and frequently jammed together. Indeed, both Tork and fellow Monkee Mickey Dolenz joined the Springfield on stage at various local events. And Stills, Young and Dewey Martin all sat in on Monkees recording sessions.

On July 2, 1967, guitarist extraordinaire Jimi Hendrix played the Whisky and reportedly blew the roof off the place (figuratively speaking, that is). Shortly thereafter, he moved into Peter Tork's house in Laurel Canyon. By the middle of July, Hendrix had joined the Monkees tour as their opening act. He was dropped after just a few dates, however, due to the fact that Monkees fans couldn't quite wrap their heads around Jimi's brand of music.

Throughout the summer of 1967, Stephen and Dewey's Malibu home became the site of informal jam sessions involving Stephen Stills, Jimi Hendrix, Buddy Miles, David Crosby... and Monkee Peter Tork. Stills played bass, deferring lead guitar duties to Hendrix. All of them ultimately ended up living at Tork's Laurel Canyon spread, which, as previously mentioned, featured a gaggle of young groupies who spent an inordinate amount of time lounging around the pool in various states of undress.

Those jam sessions, both in Malibu and Laurel Canyon, were undoubtedly fueled by massive amounts of LSD. According to an anonymous insider interviewed by John Einarson, "Owsley [editor's note: remember him?] used to give Bruce [Palmer] baggies full of acid, a thousand tabs of purple. Somehow he befriended Bruce so we [the band and various hangers-on] never lacked for LSD."

There was yet one more curious tie between the Monkees and the Springfield: while together in Chicago, unnamed members of both bands were allegedly immortalized by the notorious Cynthia Plaster Caster. Our old friend Frank Zappa would soon take Cynthia under his wing and relocate her to LA to continue her, uhmm, work, just as he had taken the nubile young women who would become the GTOs under his wing. It could reasonably be argued, I suppose, that Zappa did more than anyone to create one of the more peculiar artifacts of the 1960s: the super-groupie.

Ahmet Ertegun, by the way, played a key role in launching the career of Mr. Zappa, so much so that Frank named one of his sons after him. Meanwhile, Zappa's shady manager, Herb Cohen, "was involved with the [Buffalo Springfield] financially... Stephen knew Herbie from New York," according to Einarson. The Laurel Canyon crowd, to be sure, was a close-knit group - all the more so because so many of them seem to have known one another before arriving there.

Just a couple of weeks before Jimi's Whisky debut, he had dazzled the crowd at the Monterey Pop Festival, where the band under review today, the Buffalo Springfield, had also played - though by most accounts, not very well. Neil Young was taking one of his leaves-of-absence from the band and Doug Hastings filled in on second lead guitar. In addition, Stills brought his buddy David Crosby out on stage to join the band, which by many accounts was a rather poor decision on Stephen's part.

In *For What It's Worth*, Einarson provides the following evaluation of Crosby's performance: "His profile was so low key many took no notice of him there save for his ever-present black cowboy hat, and his musical contributions, both instrumentally and vocally, were barely audible." Some of those who had been on stage with Crosby had a somewhat less charitable view. According to bassist Bruce Palmer, "Crosby stunk to high heaven. He didn't know what he was doing... he was all ego. He came on for forty minutes and embarrassed us." Guitarist Hastings agreed, explaining that Crosby's "problem was that he couldn't play rhythm guitar very well, though he thought he could... that was one of the reasons why we sounded so bad at Monterey."

Has anyone noticed, by the way, that I am not a huge fan of David Crosby and that I seem to relish tossing in gratuitous quotes questioning his talents?

After spending the 'Summer of Love' jamming with members of both Jimi Hendrix's Band of Gypsys and the Monkees, the Buffalo Springfield hit the road in November 1967 to begin a tour opening for the Beach Boys, a pairing nearly as odd as the Monkees and Jimi Hendrix. Bruce Palmer, whom we have already learned was not one to mince words, had this to say about the Beach Boys as a performing band: "They were real lousy musicians but they had terrific harmony and a name. They were a studio group. On stage it was like the Monkees. They would spend weeks and months in the studio with Brian Wilson perfecting harmonies and overdubs, but you put them on stage and they stunk."

That tour included a stop, curiously enough, at West Point Military Academy, which is, as we all know, a regular stop on most rock tours. While on the road, the members of the Springfield formed a close bond with Dennis Wilson, a bond that would be built upon in April of 1968 when the Springfield again went out on tour with the Beach Boys. That tour was launched on April 5, almost two years to the day from the fabled meeting that allegedly forged the band. It was the last major tour the group would undertake.

Just after returning from the 1968 tour, Dennis Wilson bonded with another local musician, a guy by the name of Charlie Manson. When Dennis introduced his new friend Charlie to his buddies in the Buffalo Springfield, Neil Young in particular was quite smitten - so much so that he reportedly went to record mogul Mo Ostin and recommended that Ostin sign Charlie right away.

How many of you, by the way, were getting a little worried that Manson wasn't going to make an appearance in this chapter of the Laurel Canyon saga?

On April 28, the band began playing its last series of local venues. On May 5, at the Long Beach Arena, the Buffalo Springfield played together as a band for the last time. They had been scheduled to play two shows that day, the first at a venue in Torrance (your fearless scribe's hometown), but that earlier show never materialized.

The band released their third and final album, *Last Time Around*, some three months later. As with albums by the Byrds and the International Submarine Band, the Springfield's final album is often cited as being a pioneering effort in the creation of the country-rock genre. It appears, by the way, that there wasn't actually a single album that could be considered the 'first' country-rock album, since the three albums most frequently singled out for that distinction - the Byrd's *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, the International Submarine Band's *Safe at Home*, and the Buffalo Springfield's *Last Time Around*, were all released, curiously enough, within days of each other in July of 1968.

That was just one curious shift that occurred in the local music scene. The folk-rock movement, you see, didn't really last very long in its original incarnation. It quickly splintered into three distinct new genres: country-rock, psychedelic rock, and the 'introspective singer-songwriter' school of folk-rock most closely associated with former mental patient James Taylor. None of these musical genres, notably, posed the slightest threat to the status quo. The navel-gazers eschewed social concerns in favor of focusing on tales of personal anguish, the acid rockers largely preached the mantra of 'turn on, tune in, drop out,' and the country-rockers largely stuck to traditional - which is to say, quite conservative - country music themes.

Following the breakup of the Buffalo Springfield, Richie Furay and sometime bassist Jim Messina went on to form the band Poco. Through various formations, the band was critically acclaimed but never had a great deal of commercial success. Jim Messina ultimately left to become half of Loggins and Messina; his replacement, Randy Meisner, went on to become an Eagle. A guy by the name of Gregg Allman, who played briefly with Poco during its formative days, went on to front the Allman Brothers.

Poco debuted at the Troubadour, which served as the breeding ground for the country-rock movement, in November 1968. Their first album, *Pickin' Up the Pieces*, hit the shelves six months later, three months after the release of the debut album by country-rock rivals The Flying Burrito Brothers, formed by former Byrds Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman.

Byrd David Crosby, meanwhile, teamed up with the Springfield's Stephen Stills and ex-Hollie Graham Nash (who had arrived in Laurel Canyon in December 1968 - and soon after moved in with Joni Mitchell) to form a band first known as the Frozen Noses, a name inspired by the trio's fondness for cocaine. By the late 1960s, the drug that would later become the drug of choice of the disco crowd had already begun pouring into Laurel Canyon. As glam-rocker Michael DesBarres recalled, "Every drug dealer was in Laurel Canyon." Along with the drugs

came lots of guns and huge piles of cash. Before long, according to Laurel Canyon chronicler Michael Walker, "cocaine became a pseudo-currency, like cigarettes in prison."

A decade later, the world would catch a glimpse of that dark canyon undercurrent when four battered bodies were bagged and removed from a house on Wonderland Avenue... but we've already covered that.

The newest Laurel Canyon band, of course, was quickly renamed Crosby, Stills & Nash, and by the summer of 1969, they had the top selling album in the country. It would remain on the charts for an unprecedented two years. When the band got ready to hit the road though, there was a little problem; given that Stills was the only serious musician in the band, and it was he who had played virtually all the instruments on that debut album, it was going to be difficult, as Barney Hoskyns noted, "to translate their layered studio sound to the stage." The solution was, as Einarson has written, to bring Neil Young on board, "to provide more umph to their live sets." And so it was that by the end of the year, CSN had become CSNY.

Now the band just needed a rhythm section. Dallas Taylor, who had played on sessions for the first album, was recruited as a permanent drummer. Stills and Young summoned Bruce Palmer to come down from Canada to handle bass duties. According to Palmer, however, that didn't work out, primarily because once he got to LA and "started rehearsing at Stephen's house with Crosby and Nash, it became real evident that they were nothing but backup singers. They didn't like it and decided to change it. They couldn't take that; they thought they were too big, too famous, too talented. They weren't talented, they were backup singers... It looked to them as if it was Crosby and Nash backing up Buffalo Springfield, being nothing more than harmony singers for Stephen, Neil, myself, and Dallas Taylor."

According to Palmer, the first CSN album was "95 percent Stephen doing everything and he's got his backup singer boys with him. He's been dragging them around with him for 25 years." Considering that Stills composed the majority of the material, played most of the instruments, and produced and arranged the album, Palmer's assessment seems a reasonable one. In any event, CSNY didn't last too long, dissolving after their 1970 tour. Stills next recruited the ubiquitous Chris Hillman to form Manassas, which also proved to be short-lived. Not long after, David Geffen teamed Hillman with Richie Furay and J.D. Souther to create the Souther, Hillman, Furay Band, which was supposed to be the second coming of CSN but which also proved to be short-lived. During the band's brief tenure, our old friend Phil Kaufman was on hand to serve as road manager.

Crosby, Stills and Nash was not the only Laurel Canyon band to release a debut album in 1969. Three Dog Night, mentored by Beach Boy Brian Wilson, released their self-titled debut in January, and in June, a psychedelic rock band from the LC issued its first LP. Throughout 1968, the band, then known as Nazz, was a regular presence on the Sunset Strip, where they gained a reputation for being heavy on the theatrics but light on the musicianship.

The band was fronted by Vincent Furnier, the boyfriend of Miss Christine of the GTOs. Miss Pamela, aka Pamela Des Barres, described Furnier as "a rich kid from Phoenix." A staunch supporter of the colonial occupation of Vietnam (isn't it time we stopped calling these things 'wars'?), Vince would later become a golf partner of uber-conservative Senator Barry Goldwater.

Furnier would soon change his own name, and the name of his band, to Alice Cooper, after deciding that he was the reincarnation of a witch who purportedly lived in the seventeenth

century. Our old friend Frank Zappa signed the band and its debut album, Pretties For You, was the first release on Zappa's Straight label. After transforming into a shock-rock band, the group would hit it big a few years later with the release of School's Out.

Cooper had a curious connection to another rather eccentric canyon character: Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys. In later years, both Cooper and Wilson would receive 'treatment' from a certain Dr. Eugene Landy, whose handling of Wilson would become quite controversial. According to various sources close to Wilson, Landy quickly took control of virtually all aspects of Brian's life.

On October 19, 1978, academy award-winning actor Gig Young and his fifth wife, Kim Schmidt, were found shot through the head in their New York City apartment. The 64-year-old Young - raised, as would be expected, in Washington, DC - had just married the young art gallery worker three weeks earlier. There was no note found and no one close to the pair could come up with a motive for either to commit suicide, so the incident naturally was written off as a murder/suicide. Young had just taped an episode of the Joe Franklin television show that day and he presumably had given no indication that anything was amiss. The show never aired.

One other curious side note: at the time of the murder/suicide, Young was receiving 'treatment' from Eugene Landy.

As for the original members of the Buffalo Springfield, Stephen Stills and Neil Young are still known to perform at times. Richie Furay founded the Cavalry Chapel near Boulder, Colorado, where he still serves today as senior pastor. Bruce Palmer died of a heart attack on October 1, 2004. And Dewey Martin was apparently found dead by his roommate just a few months ago, on February 1, 2009. No published reports have given a cause of death. He had been living, curiously enough, in an apartment in Van Nuys, California, just a fifteen-minute drive from the home of your favorite scribe.

“[Gene] used to slip into these dream states, which I thought was really amazing. He’d go into these dream states and lay down on the couch and go, ‘I’ll be right back, Patrick.’” —Pat Robinson, a friend and bandmate of Gene Clark

“[Gene] had these multiple personalities.” —John York, another friend and bandmate of Gene Clark

“[Gene] did seem like he had a lot on his mind and would often appear distracted. You’d say, ‘Hey, Gene, what are you thinking?’ and he would go, ‘Huh? Oh,’ like he was being brought back to reality.” —Bernie Leadon, yet another friend and bandmate of Gene Clark



Gene Clark

In many ways, the Gene Clark story reads a lot like the Gram Parsons story. Both were considered by their peers to be among Laurel Canyon’s brightest stars, yet both are now largely forgotten. Both of their lives were cut tragically short (though Clark lived considerably longer than Parsons). Both of their deaths were overshadowed to some extent by unusual events that occurred just after their passing. Both were considered pioneers of the country-rock genre. Both played for a time with the Byrds. Both recorded duets with Emmylou Harris, and both employed many of the same musicians on their various solo projects. Both had legions of female admirers. Both had a keen interest in UFOs and believed in alien visitations. Both were notorious drug and alcohol abusers.

Did anyone notice anything unusual, by the way, about that last sentence? Probably not, though there is an obvious redundancy on display. If I had written something slightly different, like “drug and heroin abusers” or “drug and cocaine abusers,” you likely would have picked up on it right away. But because I used a phrase that everyone is accustomed to seeing and hearing, “drug and alcohol abusers,” none of you batted an eye. I have no idea though what my point is here, so let’s just move on.

Harold Eugene Clark was born on November 17, 1944, in Tipton, Missouri, though the year of his birth was frequently reported as 1941. It seems quite likely that Gene Clark himself was the source of that erroneous biographical detail, to avoid questions about the fact that his father was overseas for all of 1944.

Tipton is a small town – the kind of town where everyone knows one another by name. In fact, Tipton is kind of like a big park where the same oversized family reunion is held every day of the year. As Bonnie Clark Laible told author John Einarson, “When I was in Tipton, Missouri, the year my grandfather died, in 1954, I found out I was related to almost everyone in the community. Everyone had married people they knew through the various families like Faherty and Sommerhauser. I couldn’t throw a stone without hitting a family member!”

Tipton was founded by Mr. William Tipton Seely, a rather wealthy and influential gent who opened a general store circa 1830. A community soon sprang up around his store, as tended to happen in those days, and Seely named his new little fiefdom Round Hill. A decade or so later, in the 1840s, a group of German immigrant families arrived in the area – the Nieuffers, the Lutzs, the Kammerichs, the Schmidts, the Hoens, the Shrecks and the Sommerhausers. These families proceeded to intermarry to a rather extreme degree.

In the 1850s, Seely lobbied hard to have both the Pacific Railroad and the Butterfield Overland Mail route pass through his little kingdom. Those efforts proved successful, though the railroad was routed a few miles north of Round Hill. Around that new railroad station was born Seely’s second town, tiny Tipton, where Gene Clark would spend the early years of his life.

Meanwhile, just before 1800, a group of Irish families led by a Mr. Edmund Faherty settled in southwestern Illinois. In addition to the Fahertys, the group included the Whelans, the O’Haras and the O’Neills. These families also proceeded to intermarry. Some factions of the family eventually crossed over the border into Perryville, Missouri, where they became slave owners. James and Helena Faherty split from the rest of the Missouri herd and moved to Cole Camp, not too far southwest of Tipton. According to chronicler Einarson, the move was recommended by a “priest who feared too much inbreeding among the families.”

Oscar Faherty, Gene Clark’s maternal grandfather, was born and raised near Tipton, as was the woman who was to be his wife and Gene’s grandmother, Rosemary Sommerhauser. Before long, the Fahertys and the Sommerhausers were intermarrying at a furious pace. According to Bonnie Clark, “The Faherty and Sommerhauser families had double cousins going on.”

I’m not sure what that means exactly, nor do I really want to know, but it can’t be a good thing.

On the summer solstice of 1920, Rosemary Sommerhauser Faherty gave birth to Mary Jeanne Faherty, Gene Clark’s mother. After completing elementary school, Mary Jeanne was sent away to work as a “domestic servant” for an unnamed wealthy family living near Kansas City, Kansas. The Depression years were pretty rough, from what I hear, but selling off your barely-teenaged daughter seems a bit harsh.

The other half of Gene Clark’s family tree is, curiously enough, shrouded in mystery and secrecy. As chronicler Einarson notes, “Unlike Jeanne Faherty Clark’s well-documented family history, the lineage of Gene’s father, Kelly George Clark, is far more murky and mysterious.” Indeed, Einarson’s extensive research turned up little more than the fact that Kelly Clark was born on November 11, 1918 in Lenexa, Kansas, and that, according to family lore, there might be Native American blood in the family tree that has been concealed.

Or maybe Pop Clark's history is murky for other reasons. Maybe he wasn't even Gene's dad. What we do know is that Kelly Clark apparently quit high school and went to work for the parks department as a groundskeeper. While tending the grounds at the Milburn Country Club, he met young Jeanne Faherty, who apparently was taken there fairly frequently by her 'employers' – because most wealthy people, I think we can all agree, take their young servants with them to the country club.

After a relatively brief courtship, the two married on May 29, 1941 and promptly started a family. Bonnie Clark was born on March 13, 1942, just 9½ months after the couple exchanged vows. Kelly Katherine was to be the couple's second child, but she was, alas, reportedly stillborn – on the summer solstice of 1943. Nothing suspicious about that. Nor about the peculiar fact that, while Gene and other members of the family would be laid to rest in the Sommerhauser family plot at St. Andrews cemetery in Tipton, "Kelly Katherine's is a solitary stone at the far south end of the cemetery."

A few months after Kelly Katherine Clark's curious death, Kelly George Clark was called up for radio and gunnery school. Following training, he was assigned to a unit that served as General George Patton's mop-up crew. Clark's crew landed at LeHavre, France and steadily made their way towards Germany. By May of 1945, immediately following the fall of the Third Reich, Clark was in Berlin.

Meanwhile, the third Clark child, Gene, was born in November 1944. Officially, Jeanne Clark was impregnated while her husband was briefly home on leave, presumably in February 1944, though it seems unlikely that he would have been at home at that time. In any event, Gene spent the first years of his life in a house at 304 Morgan Street, directly across the street from a funeral home.

Kelly Clark returned home at the end of World War II and promptly impregnated his wife once again; Nancy Patricia Clark was born on July 19, 1946. The family would continue to grow until there were no fewer than 10 Clark siblings, all living in a tiny house far off the beaten path. As a former classmate and friend recalled, "You had to take a dirt road up and it was the only house back in the woods, way up high. I couldn't believe the first time Gene took me there ... It was kind of spooky in a way."

As Bonnie Clark has acknowledged, the Clarks "were known as a very strange family in the community." I can't imagine why, though it may have had something to do with the family's rather unusual choice of recreational activities, such as throwing knives at laundry detergent boxes: "Gene was very good at it. We both were. This was one of the things we did as a family function," noted Bonnie.

Gene would have a lifelong fascination with knives – and guns. According to friend Joe Larson, after Clark began making money with the Byrds, he "started buying guns." In the cover photo for one of Gene's solo albums, he is sitting on a picnic table. As brother Rick Clark has noted, "there are bullet holes in the table where we would shoot at cans and bottles from the back porch with Gene's guns." One of those guns was an antique rifle given to Gene by fellow gun aficionado David Crosby.

Has anyone else noticed, by the way, that a lot of those peacenik hippie types in Laurel Canyon seem to have been packing heat?

Shockingly enough, most of the members of that "strange family" living in the backwoods did

not fare so well as they grew into adulthood. As of the time of the writing of Einarson's *Mr. Tambourine Man* (2005), one Clark sibling had been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic (which is, in reality, an arbitrary 'diagnosis,' but let's not get into that), another suffered from severe bouts of clinical depression, another was homeless due to untreated mental illness, another was on psychiatric meds most of her life before dying suddenly in 1987, another was bipolar, and yet another was diagnosed with severe mental retardation.

Even more shockingly, mysterious father Kelly Clark was said to be a raging alcoholic who suffered from severe mood swings!

Gene's formal education began in 1949 at a strict Catholic school in Raytown. According to big sister Bonnie, "there were truly some abusive people [there]. I can remember some of those nuns being real nightmares." By 1960, the family had moved to Bonner Springs, Kansas, where Gene attended high school. He was known to hang with a rough crowd during his high school days, and a few of his buddies from those years ended up serving prison time.

On August 12, 1963, Gene Clark, still a few months shy of his nineteenth birthday, was inexplicably offered a spot in the New Christy Minstrels vocal group; he was on a plane to California the very next day. The Minstrels were a very busy touring group, averaging some 300 dates a year, so Gene would spend a lot of time on airplanes during his six-month tenure as a Minstrel. Curiously though, fear of flying would be cited a couple years later as Gene's reason for leaving the Byrds.

One of the gigs the group played, on January 14, 1964, was at the White House as special guests of Lyndon Johnson, who had taken office less than two months earlier following the assassination of John Kennedy. After the performance, Gene and other Minstrels (including Barry McGuire, who, as was discussed in the last chapter, released *Eve of Destruction* a couple years later) went out on the town and partied with Johnson's two daughters, Lynda Bird and Luci Baines, who were just nineteen and sixteen at the time.

As the story goes, Gene quit the New Christy Minstrels a couple of weeks later, in February of 1964, after hearing the first album released by an obscure British band known as the Beatles. Clark immediately headed out to Los Angeles, as would so many others, where he regularly hung out at the Troubadour, just off the Sunset Strip. It was there that he met one James Joseph McGuinn III, who had, curiously enough, once been in the New Christy Minstrels himself, for exactly one day.

The two quickly formed a folk duo and began writing songs, hoping to soon get bookings at the Troubadour and other local clubs. But according to McGuinn, the pair "never got to the stage of performing as a duo ... Crosby came along quite quickly." McGuinn was initially quite wary of the interloper, but the three nevertheless became a trio known at first as the Jet Set. With Crosby, of course, came Jim Dickson, who would transform the trio into the Byrds.

According to Vern Gosdin – who, along with his brother, Rex, played with many of the Laurel Canyon musicians – it was Jim Dickson who "put the Byrds together, you might say. If I'm telling the truth, this is what I think: I don't think the Byrds had any ideas whatsoever, and Jim Dickson put it all together for them." Dickson originally envisioned the band as a Beatlesque quartet, with Gene as lead vocalist/rhythm guitarist, Roger on lead guitar and vocals, and Crosby on bass and vocals (ala Paul McCartney).

This arrangement proved unworkable, however, since Crosby was reportedly unable to sing

and play bass at the same time. This then led Dickson to recruit mandolin player Chris Hillman to take over bass duties, leaving Crosby with little to do other than provide harmony vocals. That didn't sit well with Lord Crosby, so he began a relentless campaign aimed at eroding Gene's confidence in his own guitar playing. Crosby's constant ridicule paid off and he soon enough took over rhythm guitar duties.

The five-man band was by then complete: Gene would provide most lead vocals and bang the tambourine, Jim/Roger McGuinn would provide the band's signature 12-string guitar sound and harmony vocals, Crosby would provide serviceable (at best) rhythm guitar work and harmony vocals, and Chris Hillman and Michael Clarke would pretend (initially at least) to play the bass guitar and the drums.

The band released its first single as the Beefeaters. The record was produced by Jim Dickson, who would go on to guide the Byrds' career, and Paul Rothchild, who would go on to guide the Doors' career. The single, released by Elektra Records, went nowhere. By November of 1964 though, the band, renamed the Byrds, was signed with Columbia Records. Just two months later they would record Mr. Tambourine Man and become huge stars. But there was a hurdle to overcome first; as Einarson notes, "[Gene] had received his draft notice. Roger and Michael had already dodged that bullet; now it was Gene's turn."

Not to worry though; Gene was able to dodge that bullet as well. According to Einarson, Gene was deemed unfit for military service due to an "old football disease," which is identified as "Osgood Schlatter's Disease." For the record, Osgood Schlatter's is not a "football disease." I'm not at all convinced, to be perfectly honest, that Osgood Schlatter's is a disease at all. I was diagnosed with the same thing when I was a kid and the only difference between me and other kids was that I had a 'disease' while they had 'growing pains.' According to the medical community though, it is a real childhood disease with no known treatment that one 'outgrows' as one approaches adulthood.

Luckily for Gene, it apparently didn't prevent him from playing football, but it did keep him out of the service – which was probably a good thing, because, after all, what use does the military have for a big, strong, powerfully-built former athlete who knew his way around a variety of weapons?

And now, with that out of the way, a correction is in order; regrettably, I claimed in an earlier chapter that Clark was a very good but not a terribly prolific songwriter. That is actually far from the truth (the fact that no one has alerted me to that egregious error, by the way, illustrates how little-known Clark is today). Without question, Gene was an astoundingly prolific songwriter. I had assumed otherwise due to the fact that relatively few of his compositions appear on Byrds' albums, which instead feature a lot of covers.

The truth though is that Gene had more than enough songs – and reportedly good songs – to fill the early Byrds' albums. Even Crosby has acknowledged that Clark "was prolific. He would show up every week with new songs and they were great songs." Crosby wasn't so generous though with his assessments of Gene's talents back in the day. According to most accounts, it was the jealousy of Crosby and McGuinn that kept Gene's tracks off the records.

In those days, there wasn't a lot of money to be made by performing and recording music. The real money was in song royalties, so Clark was paid considerably more than the rest of the band. As McGuinn put it, "Gene was into Ferraris and we were still starving." That disproportionate compensation quickly drove a wedge between Clark and the other 2/3 of the

original trio. At times, Gene even shared writing credits on his songs just to get them onto albums. The classic Eight Miles High, for example, was written by Gene but credited to Crosby and McGuinn as well (Crosby reportedly contributed just one line of lyrics and McGuinn handled the arrangement of Gene's composition).

* * * * *

"There was this persona and the rest of Gene was somewhere in there. He was hard to get to know ... He could be very warm and loving, but that could change in a heartbeat." Bonnie Clark, Gene's sister

"In later years, toward the end, he would have really bad nightmares. He would wake up in the middle of the night screaming ..." Kai Clark, Gene's son

"It is often difficult for those who knew him – even family members – to reconcile the two Gene Clarks: the cheerful, engaging yet shy loner with the vibrant imagination, and the frustrated, moody recluse who was sometimes prone to violence." Chronicler John Einarson

As has been noted previously, Vito Paulekas played a key role in the early days of the Byrds. And so it is that we find references to Vito and his entourage in Einarson's telling of the Gene Clark story: "Vito and Carl were legendary hipsters on the L.A. scene and were into LSD long before anyone else. It was at their studio that Gene believed the Byrds truly found their magic as a group." According to Morgan Cavett, the son of Oscar-winning screenwriter Frank Cavett, "They had this group of hippies before that term came into use. Somehow they had hooked up with the Byrds."

When the band launched its first national tour in July 1965, "Along for the trip were L.A. scene-makers Vito and Carl and their entourage of crazed hippie dancers whose uninhibited gyrations caused quite a stir in the heartlands of America." Actually, Vito stayed home while Carl Franzoni led the faction of the troupe that hit the road with the Byrds. Assisting Franzoni was Byrds' roadie Brian McLean, who shortly thereafter would beat out Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil for the rhythm guitarist position in Love.

As troupe dancer Lizzie Donohue would later recall, many of those in America's hinterlands "thought we were from outer space. In Paris, Illinois, they actually threw us off the dance floor." Gene Clark would later remember that the band "could have played out of tune all day. Nobody ever heard us anyway." According to many accounts, the band oftentimes did play out of tune all day. And all night as well.

When the band followed up its first national tour with a tour of the UK, they were not well received – in large part because they were notoriously unable to keep their instruments in tune. Often the band would spend more time tuning their instruments between songs than they did actually playing those songs. And by most accounts, the boys made virtually no attempt to forge a connection with the audience. Gene did though forge a bond with the Rolling Stones' Brian Jones, whose life would be tragically cut short a couple years later.

Sometime after that tour, members of the Byrds famously met with members of the Beatles and they all dropped acid together. Some accounts hold that this meeting took place in the Cielo Drive home where Sharon Tate would later be butchered, but it appears to have actually taken place in another home in Benedict Canyon, one that may have been formerly owned by Zsa Zsa Gabor. Laurel Canyon stalwart Peter Fonda was reportedly in attendance, and legend holds that it was he who supplied a very high John Lennon with the line "I know what it's like

to be dead.”

In March of 1966, a press release announced Gene Clark’s departure from the Byrds. McGuinn has alleged that Dickson and co-manager Eddie Ticknor encouraged Gene to split from the band so that they could exploit his solo potential. If so, then they must have been greatly disappointed, as Clark never came close to living up to that potential.

One of the first offers Gene received upon his departure from the Byrds was from drummer Dewey Martin, who invited Clark to join the newly-formed Buffalo Springfield. Clark declined, choosing to form his own band, the first of which was dubbed the Group. As Einarson explains, “Six weeks after rehearsals began, Gene Clark and the Group debuted at the Whisky-A-Go-Go on June 22 for a two-week stand, on the heels of a dazzling six-week stint by new group Buffalo Springfield.” One of the opening acts during the Group’s two-week engagement was a local band known as the Doors.

Around that same time, Clark began having an affair with Michelle Phillips, who lived with hubby John Phillips just a couple of blocks down the canyon (Gene at the time was living at 2014 Rossila Place, which appears to have been either renumbered or mowed down). Also living with John and Michelle Phillips, of course, was daughter MacKenzie Phillips, who some of you may have seen working the talk-show circuit not long ago, plugging a book about her incestuous relationship with her father.

Following what were reportedly unproductive recording sessions, Gene’s first post-Byrds formation broke up. On July 10, he was signed as a solo artist and he entered the studio the next month accompanied by doomed guitarist Clarence White, Brian Wilson handler Van Dyke Parks, our old friend Glen Campbell, the ubiquitous Chris Hillman, and Vern and Rex Gosdin, who had gotten their start alongside – who else? – Chris Hillman in the formation known as the Hillmen.

In January of 1967, Clark’s first solo album was released as Gene Clark with the Gosdin Brothers. Like many of the other records we have stumbled upon while on this journey, some fans and critics regard the record as the first country-rock album (released a year-and-a-half before the country-rock forays by the Byrds and the Buffalo Springfield). The album, unfortunately, was quickly overshadowed by the Byrd’s own Younger than Yesterday, which Columbia released just two weeks after releasing Gene’s solo effort.

By March of 1967, Clark had put together a new version of the Group, which debuted at the Whisky with Clark, Clarence White and two members of the Mamas and the Papas touring group, whom Gene had met through his paramour, Michelle Phillips. At the tail end of 1967, Gene briefly rejoined the Byrds, replacing the fired David Crosby. The reunion lasted only a few weeks but it was long enough for Gene to contribute to The Notorious Byrd Brothers, released in January 1968.

When Gene had left the Byrds, by the way, he had done so empty handed. Not so with Crosby, who was given a substantial settlement upon his departure. He used that money to purchase a yacht, which he dubbed the Mayan. Crosby thereafter was known to spend extended periods of time aboard the Mayan, sailing to and from various locations. He was not the only canyon musician to own and operate such a vessel. John Phillips had one as well. So did Dennis Wilson. All three of them also had a passion for controlled substances. And guns. I wonder if there’s some kind of connection there?

Following his brief reunion with the Byrds, Clark composed the original score for *Marijuana*, a short anti-drug film hosted by Sonny “watch out for that tree!” Bono. His next project, dubbed the *Fantastic Expedition of Dillard and Clark*, featured Gene, Doug Dillard (formerly of the Dillards, from whom Buffalo Springfield, it will be recalled, had obtained their instruments), Bernie Leadon (who had been a peripheral member of San Diego’s Scottsville Squirrel Barkers, alongside Chris Hillman, and who would later become an Eagle), and, of course, Chris Hillman.

By this time Gene had married and his wife, Carlie, was an avid reader of occult literature, particularly, as she recalled, “this lady named Madame Blavatsky.”

Circa 1971, Clark was approached by his friend and fellow Canyonite, Dennis Hopper, to compose songs for the soundtrack to Hopper’s *American Dreamer*. Around that same time, according to Einarson, “Gene’s running buddies included David Carradine and John Barrymore.” A rather curious group of friends, to say the least.

According to authors such as Craig Heimbichner (*Blood on the Altar*), Martin P. Starr (*The Unknown God*), and John Carter (*Sex and Rockets*), Dennis Hopper and David’s dad, John Carradine, were both members of the infamous Agape Lodge of the OTO, alongside doomed rocket scientist Jack Parsons, actor Dean Stockwell, and doppelgangers L. Ron Hubbard and Robert Heinlein (who was also, it will be recalled, a Laurel Canyon resident). According to Gregory Mank (*Hollywood’s Hellfire Club*), John Carradine and John Barrymore were also members of the so-called “Bundy Drive Boys,” a group that engaged in such practices as incest, rape and cannibalism. And according to Ed Sanders (*The Family*), among the upscale homes visited by a Process Church work group “was the John Barrymore mansion, located at 1301 Summit Ridge Drive.”

Of course, just because Clark’s inner circle seems to have been drawn from various nefarious occult groups doesn’t mean that we should leap to any conclusions about Gene himself, even if his wife was an avid occultist, and even if he was the product of a multi-generational cult town, and even if his sibling was sacrificed stillborn on a major occult holiday, and even if his first home was right across the street from a body drop funeral home.

Moving on then, the year 1972 saw yet another brief Byrds reunion, with another record released in February of 1973. Gene next began recording sessions for a new solo project, financed by his friend Gary Legon, the husband of porn star and Ivory Soap model Marilyn Chambers. Joining Gene on some of the tracks was Emmylou Harris, whose hubby Tom Slocum – a descendant of famed explorer Joshua Slocum – was a member of Gene’s inner circle.

After relocating to Albion, California for a time with his wife and kids, Clark moved back to Laurel Canyon, where he moved into a home on Stanley Hills with his new girlfriend, Terri Messina. Born into a considerable amount of money, Messina was the daughter of a prominent area physician. In 1963, she had enrolled in theater arts at UCLA, which quite likely would have placed her in the company of a couple of other UCLA theater arts students – Jim Morrison and Ray Manzarek.

She and Gene moved in together in the summer of 1977. According to Einarson, Messina “laterally work[ed] in film editing, [but] she was better known in exclusive circles as a supplier of cocaine.” And heroin. As has been previously discussed, during that time period the “entire Laurel Canyon lifestyle revolved around cocaine,” and “Gene fell into line,

becoming a legendary partier.”

Canyon resident Ken Mansfield recalled those dark years: “That particular point in my life, and most of us, was the craziest time of all, when we were all into drugs the most. Tommy’s (Kaye) house was one of the houses we hung out at a lot. David Carradine was my neighbor in Laurel Canyon. Our two properties were side by side. David had a group called Water. I could tell you some wild canyon stories ... Looking back it’s not a nice memory. Even though we thought we were having a good time, I don’t think we really were. Shortly after Tommy Kaye’s little girl, Eloise, died in an unfortunate accident, it just seemed like everybody’s life got dark and we all kind of lost hope there for a while.”

There seems to have been a little bit of a problem with little kids in the ‘60s and ‘70s dying in “unfortunate accidents” in Laurel Canyon. I wonder if Eloise fell through a skylight?

Circa 1978, Clark teamed with former bandmates Hillman and McGuinn for a contrived reunion tour. An album followed in early 1979, with a second released in early 1980. During that time, according to brother David Clark, Gene “was hanging around with these really gross characters who were just a bunch of burnouts and he wasn’t much better. Cathy Evelyn Smith was there.” Not long after, Smith would attain a certain amount of notoriety for her involvement in the curious death of John Belushi at the Chateau Marmont, at the mouth of Laurel Canyon.

Following the release of the second reunion album, Clark and a close friend, guitarist Jesse Ed Davis, left LA for Oahu, Hawaii, supposedly to get clean. They returned at the end of 1981, with Gene once again settling into his favorite canyon. Among his close friends at that time were former child star Kurt Russell and his then-wife, actress Season Hubley, who had also taken up residence in Laurel Canyon.

Gene’s solo career sputtered on for another decade, though no one really paid much attention. In January 1991, the original members of the Byrds came together for their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Clark died just four months later, reportedly of a heart attack. He was just 46 at the time. Three years earlier, his one-time sidekick Jesse Ed Davis had dropped dead on the summer solstice of 1988. He was only 43.

The circumstances of Clark’s death remain murky to this day. As Einarson has noted, “What transpired over the last three days of Gene’s life remains clouded by controversy ... conspiracy theories abound; accusations have been leveled.” For the most part though, Gene has now been all but forgotten. His vast stockpile of unreleased material, however – much of which mysteriously disappeared after his death – likely lives on, albeit credited to others.

According to Einarson, Clark had been fighting to stay sober, but it “is agreed that he began drinking again on the evening of Wednesday, May 22 ... What happened next depends entirely on who is telling the story. [One witness] claims he searched the house for drugs and did not find any – contrary to claims by others that drugs and drug paraphernalia were present in the house ... there are those conspiracy theorists who continue to insinuate that drugs and certain characters were, indeed, present that night, and that Gene’s death was a result of misadventure, necessitating a panicked clean-up campaign that morning.”

There were apparently numerous people present at Clark’s home on the morning of May 24, 1991, as Gene lay dead on the living room floor. One of those people was Saul Davis, who “took it upon himself to contact the media with the news, another bone of contention with

some, given that Saul was not serving as Gene's manager at the time." Another was the manager of the property, identified as Ray Berry, who had served during World War II in Special Ops. While people milled about the house, "arguing over the spoils ... Gene's body continued to lie on the living room floor, face up."

Days later, David Carradine caused quite a stir at Gene's open-casket memorial service. Former bandmate Pat Robinson remembered it well: "When Carradine came up, he wasn't as much drunk as he was on acid, I think, and his girlfriend and business manager at the time was there with him. And we're standing there and Carradine says, 'You cocksucker ...' and grabs Gene by the lapels. When you pull somebody up from a coffin and they have nothing inside for guts they bend higher up. It was really shocking to see that. And Carradine goes, 'You pissed on my daughter when she was thirteen.' And he said it pretty loud and then he says, 'I saw him snicker, boys, heh heh.' Oh, man, that was weird."

You think so? Perhaps weirder still is that many of those who were in attendance remember hearing something a little different: "You fucked my daughter when she was thirteen." Maybe Carradine had mistaken Clark for Roman Polanski. Or John Phillips. Or maybe that's just what everyone was doing in Laurel Canyon.

In any event, none of the original members of the Byrds bothered to attend the service. When it was over, Gene was laid to rest in tiny Tipton.

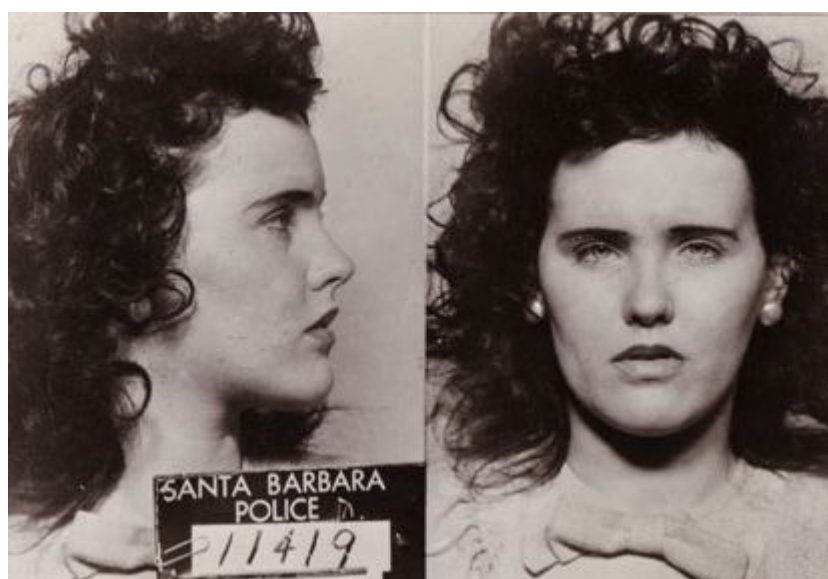
“Our music was far from political or antiwar ... I never felt comfortable with political advocacy.” John Phillips

“There were no political speeches or overt protest songs performed.” John Phillips, discussing the Monterey Pop Festival, of which he was a key organizer

Thus far on this journey, we have seen how what are arguably the two most bloody and notorious mass murders in the history of the City of Angels – the Manson Family murders of the occupants of the home on Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon, and the so-called Four-On-The-Floor bludgeoning murders of four Laurel Canyon drug dealers on Wonderland Avenue – were directly connected to the Laurel Canyon music scene.

But the city of Los Angeles can boast of one other particularly notorious murder, which stands to this day as both the most gruesome single-victim murder and the most famous unsolved murder in the city’s history.

On January 15, 1947, the mutilated body of aspiring actress Elizabeth Short was found posed in a field. The ritualistically butchered body was nude, sliced cleanly in half, and completely drained of blood. Parts of the body had been removed, after which the corpse had been thoroughly sanitized. Bruising clearly indicated that the young girl had been savagely beaten. Forensic evidence suggested that she had been forced to eat feces during her tortuous ordeal. She was quickly dubbed the ‘Black Dahlia,’ and it is by that name that she is known and written about today.



Elizabeth Short arrest photo from 1943 for underage drinking

Much of what has been written about the brief life of Ms. Short is contradictory. Among the facts that seem to be agreed upon is that she had recently worked at a military facility that is now known as Vandenberg Air Force Base, and that she had some kind of close connection to a US Naval hospital in San Diego, where she may have also worked. That is, in any event, what she had indicated in a letter to her mother.

This murder occurred some twenty years before Laurel Canyon’s glory days. It would seem rather foolish then to suggest that all three of Los Angeles’ most notorious murder cases were connected to the peace-and-love scene flowering in Laurel Canyon in the 1960s and 1970s.

But that is, nevertheless, exactly what I am going to do. It is, admittedly, an indirect connection, and, since the case remains officially unsolved, it is a tentative one as well, but it is a connection nonetheless.

For those who are unfamiliar with the Black Dahlia murder, or who have only read about the case and never actually seen the brutality inflicted upon Ms. Short, please be advised that you are about to see for yourself just how barbaric this crime was. The images are absolutely horrifying – but that is, unfortunately, what elite ritualized crime looks like. You have been warned.

“John [Phillips] was the ultimate controller.” Mamas and the Papas producer/manager Lou Adler

“She was practically his slave.” Michelle Phillips, describing John’s third wife, Genevieve Waite

Our story begins on August 30, 1935, with the birth of John Edmund Andrew Phillips to parents Claude and Edna Phillips. Claude was a retired Marine Corps officer and engineer. His father, John Andrew Phillips, a prominent architect, one day “mysteriously fell to his death” on a construction site, according to John Phillips’ autobiography, Papa John. That kind of thing tends to happen to family members of people associated with Laurel Canyon.

John’s mother, Edna, had what most folks would consider a rather unconventional upbringing. Her mother was a psychic/faith healer, and many of her eleven siblings were well known locally as gunfighters and bandits. When Edna was just a year old, she was – and I am neither making this up nor stealing it from the plot of some hack Hollywood film – purportedly kidnapped by Gypsies! Her father allegedly found her a year later down in Mexico. How he would have done so remains something of a mystery (though I’m guessing that maybe he had some help from Albert DeSalvo’s mother, who supposedly likewise tracked down young Albert after his father had sold him to a farmer as a slave; have I mentioned lately, by the way, that to fully understand the Laurel Canyon story, you really need to read Programmed to Kill?).

Edna was just fifteen when she met and began a relationship with Claude Phillips, who according to legend had supposedly won an Oklahoma bar from a fellow serviceman in a poker game on the way home from France at the close of World War II – which seems about as credible as various other aspects of Phillips family history, as told by John. By eighteen, Edna had given birth to the couple’s first child, Rosie Phillips, born on New Year’s Eve, 1922.

Rosie would later become a career employee of the Pentagon, where John’s first wife, the daughter of an intelligence operative, would also find work. Years later, according to John, Rosie’s daughter Patty would be “found dead of an overdose in a girlfriend’s apartment in North Hollywood ... There were mysterious questions surrounding her death.” As I just noted a few paragraphs back, that kind of thing tends to happen.



Lloyd Wright Mayan Revival House

In the late 1920s, Claude Phillips was commissioned to Haiti, where he remained for four years. He was then sent back to Quantico, then shipped off to Managua, Nicaragua, before finally returning to Alexandria, Virginia, where John Phillips, who would grow up to become arguably the most important music figure in the canyon, grew up and went to school.

John attended a series of strict Catholic and military schools and served as an altar boy. According to his own account though, he also had a darker side, which included forays into vandalism, auto theft, breaking and entering, fighting, and other assorted mischief. His mother, meanwhile, routinely cruised for men – when not spending time with a US Army Colonel named George Lacy. John would later be told that his real father was a US Marine Corps doctor named Roland Meeks, who died in a Japanese POW camp during WWII.

Phillips played basketball at George Washington High School, from where he graduated in 1953. He then scored an appointment to Annapolis Naval Academy, but soon dropped out. One of his first paying jobs was working on a fishing charter boat. As John later recalled it, the crew consisted of him, a retired Navy officer, and four retired Army generals. Seems like a perfect fit for one of the future guiding lights of the hippie movement. Phillips also, for a brief time, tried his hand at selling cemetery plots.

As previously noted, John's first wife was the aristocratic Susie Adams, descendent of President John Adams and occasional practitioner of voodoo. Their first son, Jeffrey, was born on Friday the 13th in December of 1957. Shortly after that, John found himself in, of all

places, Havana, Cuba, just as it was about to fall to the revolutionary forces of Fidel Castro. According to Phillips, he and his traveling companions “were once whisked off the street by a director, straight into a TV studio to appear on a live Havana variety show.”

Many of you, I’m sure, have had a similar experience.



Some months later, in late 1958, Phillips flew to Los Angeles and began performing on amateur nights at Pandora’s Box on the legendary Sunset Strip. His first band, The Journeymen, featured Phillips, Scott McKenzie and Dick Weismann. It was while touring with this formation that John Phillips met a very young Holly Michelle Gilliam.

Michelle was born November 10, 1944 in Long Beach, California, to a father variously described as a merchant mariner, a movie production assistant, and a self-taught intellectual. When Michelle’s mother, a Baptist minister’s daughter, reportedly died of a brain aneurysm when Michelle was just five, Gardner “Gil” Gilliam took his daughters and promptly relocated to Mexico, ostensibly to attend college on the GI Bill. They remained there for several years. Upon their return to Southern California, Gil found work as an LA County probation officer. According to John, Gil’s work “often required him to go out of town,” though one would think that that would make it rather difficult for him to keep tabs on his charges.

In 1958, while future-husband John was vacationing in war-torn Cuba, Michelle found a new mother-figure in twenty-three-year-old Tamar Hodel. Tamar’s father, Dr. George Hodel, was described by Vanity Fair in December 2007 as “the most pathologically decadent man in Los Angeles” and “the city’s venereal-disease czar and a fixture in it’s A-list demimonde.” Also noted in the article was that “George Hodel shared with Man Ray a love for the work of the Marquis de Sade and the belief that the pursuit of personal liberty was worth everything.” In other words, Hodel embraced that all-purpose Luciferian creed, “Do what thou wilt.”

Tamar and her siblings had “grown up in her father’s Hollywood house, which resembled a Mayan temple, was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright’s son, and was the site of wild parties, in which Hodel was sometimes joined by director John Huston and photographer Man Ray.” The luxurious home (pictured here as it looks today) reportedly features, among other amenities, a subterranean walk-in vault, which is always a nice thing to have around.



Within the walls of that singularly odd Hollywood Hills home, which lies about three miles due east of the mouth of Laurel Canyon, Tamar talks of how she “often ‘uncomfortably’ posed nude ... for ‘dirty-old-man’ Man Ray and had once wriggled free from a predatory John Huston.” Her own father, not so shockingly, “had committed incest with her. ‘When I was 11, my father taught me to perform oral sex on him.’” Her father also “plied her with erotic books, grooming her for what he touted as their transcendent union,” and freely shared her with his wealthy and influential friends.



Dr. George Hodel

“To the girl’s horror, she became pregnant” at the tender age of fourteen – with her father’s child. “To her greater horror, she says, ‘my father wanted me to have his baby.’” A friend, nevertheless, took her to get an abortion. Dr. George was so incensed that, according to Tamar, he “struck her on the head with his pistol,” prompting her step-mother (who also happened to be John Huston’s ex-wife) to assist her in going into hiding.

Dr. George Hodel was arrested and charged with, among other things, offering his young daughter to several friends at an orgy. The sensational 1949 incest trial featured a witness who took the stand to describe being hypnotized by Hodel at a party; she also claimed that she had witnessed him attempt to hypnotize other young women.

Allegations that the rich and powerful were dabbling in incest, hypnotism/mind control, pedophilic orgies, and Luciferian philosophies must surely have been shocking to Angelenos in the 1940s, as they would still be to most Americans today, but to these jaded eyes and ears, it just sounds like business as usual. Also sounding like business as usual is that Tamar was roundly vilified by both the press and the defense team (led by Jerry Giesler), and Dr. George Hodel was acquitted.



Far more shocking even than all of that is the then-unknown fact that, even while Hodel was standing trial on the sensational charges, he was, and still is today, a prime suspect in the Black Dahlia murder case! There have been, of course, numerous suspects identified in the case, including actor/director Orson Welles. But George Hodel does seem to be a much more likely suspect than most of those who have been identified. And his possible guilt, needless to say, does not exclude others from likely complicity as well. The mistake that virtually all investigators of this case have made is assuming that there is only one culprit.

The most likely scenario is that Hodel committed the crime in conjunction with various others in his pedophilic, Luciferian social circle. Man Ray, for example, is a compelling suspect, given that the posing of Ms. Short's body appears to mimic *The Minotaur*, one of his better-known photographs. Man Ray, by the way, was something of the Robert Mapplethorpe of his era – the same Robert Mapplethorpe, it should be noted, whom investigative journalist Maury Terry has similarly linked to the Son of Sam case and various other ritualized murders (for more on George Hodel, Man Ray and the Black Dahlia murder, see *Black Dahlia Avenger* by Steve Hodel [George's son and a former LAPD homicide detective] and *Exquisite Corpse* by Mark Nelson and Sarah Hudson Bayliss).



Minotaur: Man Ray

How it is that the fourteen-year-old daughter of a lowly probation officer fell into the orbit of the daughter of the wealthy and influential George Hodel (Hodel's former home is currently valued at \$4.2 million) has never been explained, but Tamar, described by Michelle as "the epitome of glamour," quickly took the youngster under her wing, buying her clothes, enrolling her in modeling school, teaching her to drive, and providing her with a fake ID and a steady stream of prescription drugs – obtained, one would presume, from her father.



According to Michelle, "Tamar put on perfect airs around my dad and when it became necessary she would sleep with him." Whatever works, I guess. That perhaps explains why, in early 1961, Gil didn't have a problem with allowing his underage daughter to move to San Francisco with the daughter of a violent pedophile. Soon enough, Tamar found herself in a relationship with Journeyman Scott McKenzie, and bandmate John Phillips began coming by Tamar and Michelle's room on a nightly basis.

It wasn't long before Michelle, still just seventeen, was romantically involved with twenty-six-year-old Phillips, despite the fact that John was still married to Adams, with whom he by then had two children, Laura MacKenzie Phillips having been born on November 10, 1959 in Alexandria. Father Gil, who had himself recently taken a sixteen-year-old bride (one of a string of six wives), still wasn't concerned. And it's probably safe to assume that Phillip's father, who had pursued his bride when she was just fifteen, wouldn't have been too concerned either.

In October 1962, a year or so after meeting Michelle, John curiously found himself in Jacksonville, Florida (alongside Naval Air Station Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport) for “two weeks of rest and rehearsal” during the Cuban Missile Crisis. For a guy who “never felt comfortable with political advocacy,” John seems to have had a keen interest in Cuban affairs. Two months later, on New Years Eve 1962, Holly Michelle Gilliam became John Phillip’s second wife. She also joined his reconfigured band, as did Canadian Denny Doherty, who had formerly been with the Mugwumps alongside Cass Elliot. This new lineup was dubbed the New Journeymen.



The newly-formed trio promptly embarked on a curious Caribbean adventure, arriving first at St. Johns, where John has claimed that they “snorkeled on acid” for several weeks. They next ferried over to St. Thomas, where they set up camp at a dive beachfront boardinghouse known as Duffy’s. Soon enough, Ellen Naomi Cohen, better known as Cass Elliot, showed up with John’s nephew, who was a childhood friend of hers. Cass had been born in Baltimore but had grown up in Alexandria, where, like Phillips, she had attended George Washington High School.

As the legend goes, Cass waited tables at the dive while the trio performed folk songs. What they were really doing there remains something of a mystery, though in Papa John, Phillips did drop a clue: “The town was crawling with drunken Marines and sailors on their way home from Vietnam.”

Moving on from the boardinghouse, the group next took over an unfinished home on Creeque Alley, where, according to John, they were known as “the island’s open house and everyone was welcome to our commune.” At some point though the governor supposedly ordered them

off the island “because he thought his nephew was doing drugs with the crazies at Creeque Alley.” The band had formalized its new lineup of John Phillips, Michelle Phillips, Denny Doherty and Cass Elliot, and they had a whole album’s worth of material written. That first album would feature such enduring classics as California Dreamin’, Monday, Monday, and Go Where You Wanna Go. On none of the bands subsequent albums would they produce anywhere near the level of songwriting that they were allegedly able to achieve on that Caribbean adventure.

Though isolated on that Caribbean island, the songs the group brought back to LA with them just happened to be of the soon-to-emerge folk-rock variety. In Papa John, Phillips quotes Doherty as saying that everyone was “evolving toward the same sound at the same time without really communicating with each other about it.” It was, I suppose, just the way things were fated to be – or it could be that everyone was following the same script, written by unseen others.

Before helping to spearhead the folk-rock movement though, the quartet first had to get off the island, which Phillips presents as a high-risk venture: “We tried to get off the island quietly. We split in groups at the airport to look inconspicuous ... We went at night so there wouldn’t be any credit checks done on me.”



Within a month of arriving in LA, the band had a producer/manager (Lou Adler, a Jewish kid who had grown up in a tough, Hispanic section of East LA) and a record deal, and John and Michelle were at home in a comfortable house on Lookout Mountain in Laurel Canyon. They would soon be able to afford to purchase Jeanette McDonald’s former Bel Air mansion at 783 Bel Air Road, which featured “hand-carved wooden gargoyles” and “a walk-in vault beneath the house,” which, as I already mentioned, is a very handy feature. Sitting on five acres, the

lavish home, with five Rolls Royces in the driveway, was the site of virtually nonstop partying.

The new lineup, of course, needed a name, and John pushed hard for the occult-based Magic Cyrcle, which the band was briefly known as before ultimately settling on The Mamas and the Papas. There would be other indications as well that Phillips had a keen interest in the occult. He would later, for example, start his own label and call it Warlock Records. And his third wife, Genevieve Waite, was an avid follower of Aleister Crowley.

The Mamas and the Papas proved to be a rather short-lived band, recording and performing just from 1965 to 1968 (with a brief reunion in 1971 to satisfy contractual obligations to their record company). During that time, the band produced five albums and eleven top 40 singles. To date, the lineup has sold nearly 100,000,000 albums.

The first single, released in 1965, was Go Where You Wanna Go, which failed to chart. Their next release, California Dreamin', shot up to #4. Their freshman album, If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears, released in early 1966, rose to the very top of the charts, their only album to do so. Their only #1 single, Monday, Monday, followed the release of the album. It was all downhill from there.



While recording their second album in June 1966, Michelle was discharged from the band due to the fact that she was having an affair with Denny Doherty, which was causing severe friction in the group. By August, she was back, though that didn't prevent the group's second album from performing rather poorly. The third, recorded in 1967 and ironically entitled Deliver, failed to live up to its name. Then in June of that year, The Mamas and the Papas delivered a closing set at the Monterey Pop Festival that almost everyone agrees sucked ass.

It wasn't hard though for the band to score that coveted closing slot, given that Phillips had played a key role in organizing the event. Monterey proved to be, according to Barney

Hoskyns, the “moment when the underground went mainstream.” As Rolling Stone noted in its Fortieth Anniversary Edition, “The plan for a new kind of festival was spearheaded by John Phillips, the leader of the Mamas and the Papas, and Lou Adler, an influential producer and the band’s manager.” Also noted was that the “road to Monterey began with Alan Pariser, a young heir to a paper-manufacturing fortune,” just as the road to Woodstock began with John Roberts, a young heir to a pharmaceutical manufacturing fortune, but that’s another story entirely.

Two months after Monterey, the band made their final television appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show. Two months after that, the quartet headed off to Europe while recording their fourth album, *The Papas and the Mamas*. That album’s first single was the Laurel Canyon-inspired 12:30 (Young Girls are Coming to the Canyon). Shortly thereafter, the band broke up. John tried his hand at a solo career with the wildly unsuccessful result being the release of *The Wolf King of LA*. To satisfy record label demands, the group briefly reformed for their fourth album, *People Like Us*.

Following that unsuccessful venture, the band once again dissolved.

“This is going to break your heart, but much of the music you heard in the ‘60s and early ‘70s wasn’t recorded by the people you saw on the album covers. It was done by me and the musicians you see on these walls ... Many of these kids didn’t have the chops and were little more than garage bands ... At concerts, people hear with their eyes. Teens cut groups slack in concert, but not when they bought their records.” Hal Blaine, longtime drummer for the Wrecking Crew, quoted in the Wall Street Journal on March 23, 2011

Before moving ahead with the John Phillips saga, I first need to pose an extremely important question to all my readers: is anyone out there in the market for a slightly used, covert film studio? If so, then all you need do is pull about \$6.2 million out of your penny jar (though in today’s housing market, you might be able to cut a better deal) and Lookout Mountain Laboratory can be yours! And if you act fast, you might be able to get a package deal on the lab and the Hodel house! (the photos in this post are of the lab as it looks today as a converted residential dwelling).



Lookout Mountain Laboratory

Another item worth noting: as reported by the San Francisco Chronicle on January 28, 2011, “Ron Patterson, the flamboyant, free-spirited creator of the Renaissance and Dickens fairs, died Jan. 15 at a friend’s house in Sausalito after an illness. He was 80.” As staff writer Carolyn Jones noted, Patterson’s creation “was sort of a medieval precursor to Burning Man.” And Burning Man is, of course, a rather explicitly occult ritual first performed on the Summer Solstice of 1986 and now performed every summer in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert before an audience of 50,000+.



Ron Patterson, Photo: Raymond Van Tassel, via Red Barn Productions

What does any of that though have to do with Laurel Canyon? As we have seen so many times before, all roads on the Conspiracy Superhighway seem to lead to Laurel Canyon: “In the beginning, the Renaissance Faire was an experiment in Mr. Patterson’s backyard. In the early 1960s, Mr. Patterson and his wife, Phyllis, who were both interested in theater and art, began hosting children’s improvisational theater workshops at their Laurel Canyon (Los Angeles County) home.”

One naturally wonders whether aspiring thespian and golden child Godo Paulekas (originally cast, it will be recalled, to play Satan in Kenneth Anger’s *Lucifer Rising*) was involved in those workshops. In any event, there is certainly nothing creepy about children’s workshops being hosted in a small, tight-knit community that was home to more than its fair share of pedophiles, so let’s just move along.

One last item of note, this one from, of all places, the pages of *Sports Illustrated* circa June 29, 1981. The following excerpt is from a short piece written by publisher Philip Howlett to introduce readers to writer Bjarne Rostaing: “Born in Lincoln, N.Y., Rostaing grew up in various places in Connecticut, where he attended what he recalls as an even dozen schools. ‘I got my B.A. and master’s in English from the University of Connecticut,’ he says. ‘Then I did part of a Ph.D. at the University of Washington before going into the Army Intelligence Corps in 1959. We had Paul Rothchild, who later became producer for The Doors and Janis Joplin, to give you some idea of what the unit was like.’”

I’m guessing that it was like countless other intelligence units designed to churn out shapers of public opinion, whether actors, novelists, newsmen, or, in this case, sportswriters and producers of popular music. It is quite shocking, of course, to learn that the handler of two of Laurel Canyon’s most influential and groundbreaking bands (Love and the Doors) had an intel background. Apparently the search is still on for anyone of any prominence in the Laurel Canyon scene who didn’t have direct connections to the intelligence community.

Anyway ... during the heyday of the Mamas and the Papas, John and Michelle Phillips knew, and regularly played host to, virtually everyone of importance in the canyons. In addition to all the singers and musicians living in Laurel Canyon, the power couple’s circle of friends included Warren Beatty, Peter and Jane Fonda, Jack Nicholson, Terry Melcher and girlfriend Candace Bergen, Marlon Brando, Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate, Abigail Folger and Voytek Frykowski, soon-to-be-dead gossip columnist Steve Brandt, Larry Hagman, presidential brother-in-law Peter Lawford (fresh from his probable involvement in the murder of Marilyn Monroe), Dennis Hopper, Ryan O’Neal, Mia “Rosemary’s Baby” Farrow, ethereal Freemason Peter Sellers, and Zsa Zsa Gabor.

And a short, scraggly singer/songwriter by the name of Charlie Manson.



Lookout Mountain Laboratory

There were, to be sure, numerous ties between John Phillips, the ‘Wolf King of LA,’ and Charles Manson. And ties as well between bandmate Cass Elliott and Manson. And between Phillips and Cass and the Cielo Drive victims. John Phillips, for example, had invested \$10,000 in Jay Sebring’s business venture, Sebring International (rumored to have been a front for various illegal activities, including drug trafficking). Michelle Phillips had a brief affair with Roman Polanski in London while Polanski was married to the soon-to-be-dead Sharon Tate (during that same sojourn to London, Tate was reportedly initiated into the practice of witchcraft).

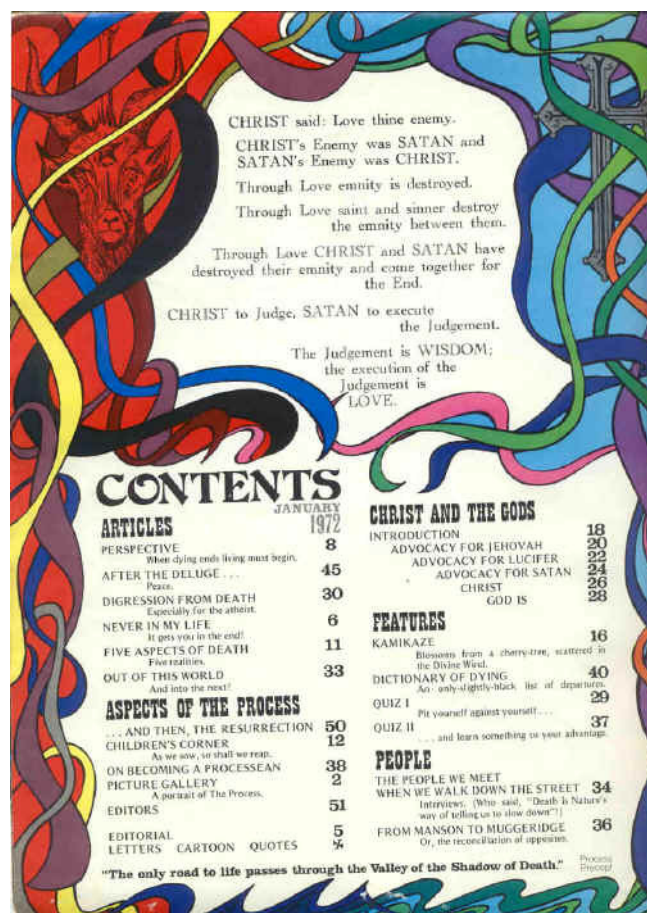
Mama Cass, as previously noted, lived across the street from the house occupied by Folger and Frykowski at 2774 Woodstock Road. Both homes were frequently visited by known drug dealers. Regulars at Cass’s home included Pic Dawson (also a regular at the Frykowski/Folger home and at the Tate/Polanski home), the son of a US State Department official who, according to John Phillips, was suspected by authorities “of using diplomatic pouches to move drugs between countries,” and Billy Doyle, a local dealer who was infamously filmed while being flogged at the Tate/Polanski house just three days before the murders (according to Dennis Hopper). Another regular was Bill Mentzer, later convicted of the brutal murder of Cotton Club producer Roy Radin and labeled ‘Manson II’ by journalist Maury Terry. The LAPD once described Mentzer as a member of “some kind of hit squad.”

So dark was the scene at the home of the ‘Lady of the Canyon’ that, according to Terry, four of the LAPD’s initial prime suspects in the Tate killings were drug dealers associated with Elliott. And yet, curiously enough, all of the canyon’s peace-and-love spewing musicians were regulars at Mama Cass’s home as well. As Rolling Stone noted in its Fortieth Anniversary Edition, “‘Mama’ Cass Elliott’s cozy canyon house functioned as a sort of rock salon.” In a similar vein, Barney Hoskyns wrote in *Hotel California* that “Cass kept

permanent open house.”

Also noted in Hoskyn’s tome was that the Laurel Canyon scene “all spun around him and Cass,” with the “him” in this case being David Van Cortlandt Crosby, who, like Cass, had an insatiable appetite (by his own account) for potent pain killers like Demerol, Dilaudid and Percodan. Crosby was one of many Canyonites who regularly dropped by Cass’s place to hang out and engage in impromptu jam sessions, and to mingle with some seriously disreputable characters.

Also a regular at Cass’s place, by some reports, was Charlie Manson himself. According to Ed Sanders, it was at Cass’s home that Charlie first met her neighbor, coffee heiress Abigail Folger (who helped finance Kenneth Anger’s films, like the one that was supposed to star Godo Paulekas but instead starred Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil). According to Terry, the rather notorious group known as The Process: Church of the Final Judgment – which evidence suggests had deep ties to the Manson, Son of Sam, and Cotton Club murders – actively sought to recruit Mama Cass, as well as John Phillips and Terry Melcher.



CHRIST said: Love thine enemy.
CHRIST's Enemy was SATAN and
SATAN's Enemy was CHRIST.
Through Love enmity is destroyed.
Through Love saint and sinner destroy
the enmity between them.
Through Love CHRIST and SATAN have
destroyed their enmity and come together for
the End.
CHRIST to Judge, SATAN to execute
the Judgement.
The Judgement is WISDOM;
the execution of the
Judgement is
LOVE.

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"The only road to life passes through the Valley of the Shadow of Death."

Process
Process

The Process, Church of the Final Judgment's magazine: Death Issue

A few further bits of Mansonalia: Terry has written that the Family’s iconic bus was seen parked at the home of John and Michelle Phillips in the fall of 1968. Reports also hold that Manson attended a New Year’s Eve party at the couple’s home on December 31, 1968, just months before the murders. So close were the ties between the Mamas and the Papas and the Manson clan that both John Phillips and Mama Cass were slated to appear as witnesses for the defense at the Family’s trial, though not surprisingly, neither was ever called.

For a band that sang about being “safe and warm, if I was in LA,” the members of the Mamas

and the Papas kept some pretty dangerous company in the city of angels ... which reminds me that, not long after the band hit the charts, Tamar Hodel received a postcard from Michelle Phillips asking her to watch their scheduled performance on the Ed Sullivan Show and then meet the group at San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel before a scheduled concert. Tamar showed up with father George at her side, the two apparently still maintaining a close relationship, and Tamar, George, John, Michelle, Denny and Cass embarked on a drug-fueled pre-show odyssey.

By 1970, John and Michelle had divorced. Many years later, Michelle would reveal that their time together had included at least one episode of domestic violence, one that she was still reluctant to discuss: "It was serious. I ended up in the hospital. That's all I'll say about it." The union had yielded John a second daughter, Gilliam Chynna Phillips, born February 12, 1968 in Los Angeles.

On January 31, 1972, John Phillips married for the third time, to actress and Crowley aficionado Genevieve Waite; on the wedding guest list were soon-to-be-governor Jerry Brown and soon-to-be-lieutenant-governor Mike Curb. The couple's time together would be marked by wildly out-of-control drug consumption and the birth of two more offspring: Tamerlane, whose name is presumably in part an homage to Tamar Hodel, and Bijou Lilly, who was taken away and placed in foster care in Bolton Landing, New York after her drug-addled parents were deemed unfit to raise her.

In June 1972, shortly after marrying Waite, Phillips moved into a canyon home at 414 St. Pierre Road that had been built by William Randolph Hearst. The Rolling Stones had just vacated the property, and their trusty sidekick, Gram Parsons, would grow very close to John Phillips. Parsons, of course, would soon turn up dead, while John would head off to London, where he reportedly planned to record a solo album with assistance from Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. That project never got off the ground, however, as Phillip's addictions rendered him impossible to work with, even for a world-class drug abuser like Richards.



Lookout Mountain Laboratory

Cass Elliott turned up in London the very next year, but unlike her former bandmate, her trip abroad was to be one-way; on July 29, 1974, she was found dead in occasional Canyonite Harry Nilsson's London flat. Ms Elliott, it seems safe to say, knew a little too much about the dark side of Laurel Canyon.

Following the dissolution of the Mamas and the Papas, Cass had gone on to a successful solo career and had become a familiar face on American television screens. In addition to hosting two prime-time network specials, she had guest-hosted the Tonight Show and had appeared on such popular early-1970s shows as The Red Skelton Show and Love, American Style.

She had been married twice, first in 1963 to vocalist Jim Hendricks in what was reportedly a platonic arrangement aimed at getting Hendricks a draft deferment. During that first marriage, which was annulled in 1968, Cass had given birth to a daughter, Owen Vanessa Elliott, born on April 26, 1967. Hendricks, however, was reportedly not the father and Cass steadfastly refused to reveal who Owen's true father was. In 1971, following the breakup of the band, Cass married again, this time to Baron Donald von Weidenman, a wealthy Bavarian heir. That marriage collapsed after just a few months though and Cass was single when she died just a few years later. Owen, already fatherless, was just seven.

Denny Doherty, meanwhile, went on to host a popular variety show in Canada, as well as performing in various formations of the New Mamas and the Papas. He passed away on January 19, 2007, reportedly due to kidney failure.

Michelle Phillips released an unsuccessful solo album, but then switched gears and went on to a successful acting career, gracing the small screen in such hit shows as Knot's Landing, Hotel, and Beverly Hills, 90210. She continued to have numerous flings and has married

several more times. At sixty-seven, she is the only living member of the original Mamas and the Papas.



Lookout Mountain Laboratory

Returning now to John Phillips, in 1975 he sobered up enough to put together the soundtrack for the film *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, a surreal venture featuring the talents of fledgling actor David Bowie and director Nicholas Roeg, who had previously collaborated with Crowleyite Donald Cammell on the heavily occult-influenced *Performance*. Roeg's film, curiously enough, includes a cameo appearance by Apollo astronaut Jim Lovell. At that same time, Phillips was working on completing a horrifically bad, Andy Warhol-produced musical entitled *Man on the Moon*, which closed just two days after opening.

As a side note, Phillips at one time had Don "Miami Vice" Johnson in mind to play the lead in his space opera. Like the rest of the Hollywood notables in this story, Johnson was a canyon dweller at the time. His next-door neighbor was a guy by the name of Chuck Wein, an avid occultist and buddy of Warhol who, in addition to managing bizarre nightclub acts, directed the 1972 new age documentary *Rainbow Bridge*, filmed less than two months before star Jimi Hendrix turned up dead. Wein shared a curious nickname with fellow Canyonite Charlie Manson: 'The Wizard.' But I may have drifted a little off-topic here ...

Some of you may have noticed, by the way, that I am all but cured of my former addiction to the word 'digress,' thanks to a twelve-step program I've been working my way through. I can now veer off on wild tangents having little to do with the main topic of discussion – like filling you in, for example, on nonexistent twelve-step programs – and not feel the slightest compulsion to point out the temporary loss of focus.

Anyway ... for the remainder of his career, Phillips' musical output consisted primarily of

occasionally writing songs for and with others, his most well known contribution being his co-writing duties on the wretchedly awful Kokomo, recorded by the Beach Boys.

In 1981, Phillips found himself facing charges of trafficking large volumes of narcotics. By his own account, he had an arrangement with a pharmacy that allowed him to obtain large amounts of narcotics without prescriptions (daughter Bijou would later say that he had actually purchased the pharmacy, guaranteeing virtually unlimited access). The charges were quite serious; in Phillip's own words, he "was looking at forty-five years and got thirty days." He began serving his sentence, appropriately enough, on April 20, and he was released just three-and-a-half weeks later.



He should have gotten at least ninety days just for Kokomo. It never hurts to have friends in high places.

Phillip's circle of friends, in the post-Mamas and Papas years, included J. Paul Getty, Jr., Bobby Kennedy, Jr., and Princess Margaret. Getty and Kennedy, both plagued by demons of their own, were likely being supplied by Phillips. Another name in Phillips' rolodex was Colin Tennant, the wealthy heir of a massive petrochemical conglomerate in the UK. Tennant owned a private island in the British West Indies where wealthy friends like John Phillips and Mick and Bianca Jagger could engage in unknown activities in complete seclusion.

Upon being released from his preposterously short period of confinement, Phillips put together a version of the Mamas and the Papas that included daughter Mackenzie Phillips and original lead vocalist Denny Doherty. Scott McKenzie, who had summoned all the runaways across the country to come to San Francisco with flowers in their hair, later replaced Doherty. Laurie Beebe subsequently replaced Mackenzie Phillips, after which Doherty returned one again to replace John Phillips. The band finally called it quits in 1994.

Phillips had divorced Waite in 1985. In 1992, he received a liver transplant and a new lease

on life. Just months later, he was photographed drinking in a bar in Palm Springs. In 1998, Phillips and the other surviving members of the Mamas and the Papas were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Three years later, on March 18, 2001, Phillips died of heart failure. The saga wasn't quite over, however; Phillips' daughters would carry on with the family tradition – while spilling some dark family secrets along the way.



Oldest daughter Mackenzie began her acting career at the tender age of twelve when she landed a role in what was to be George Lucas' breakthrough film, *American Graffiti*. Just a few years before, it will be recalled, Lucas had been an unknown cameraman at the Rolling Stones' notorious Altamont concert. During filming of *Graffiti* in 1972, John Phillips, who I'm sure had lots of important business to attend to and therefore little time to look after his daughter, signed over legal guardianship of Mackenzie to producer Gary Kurtz.

A few years later, in 1975, Mackenzie landed a role on what would quickly become a hit television series, *One Day at a Time*. During the third season, however, Mackenzie was arrested for public drunkenness and cocaine possession, after which her substance abuse problems continued to spiral out of control, causing frequent problems and considerable tension on the set of her hit show. Providing a template for Charlie Sheen to later follow, she was fired from the production in 1980.

After two nearly fatal overdoses, she was invited back by producers in 1981. The following year though she collapsed on the set and was once again fired. What had once seemed a very promising acting career was over as quickly as it had begun.

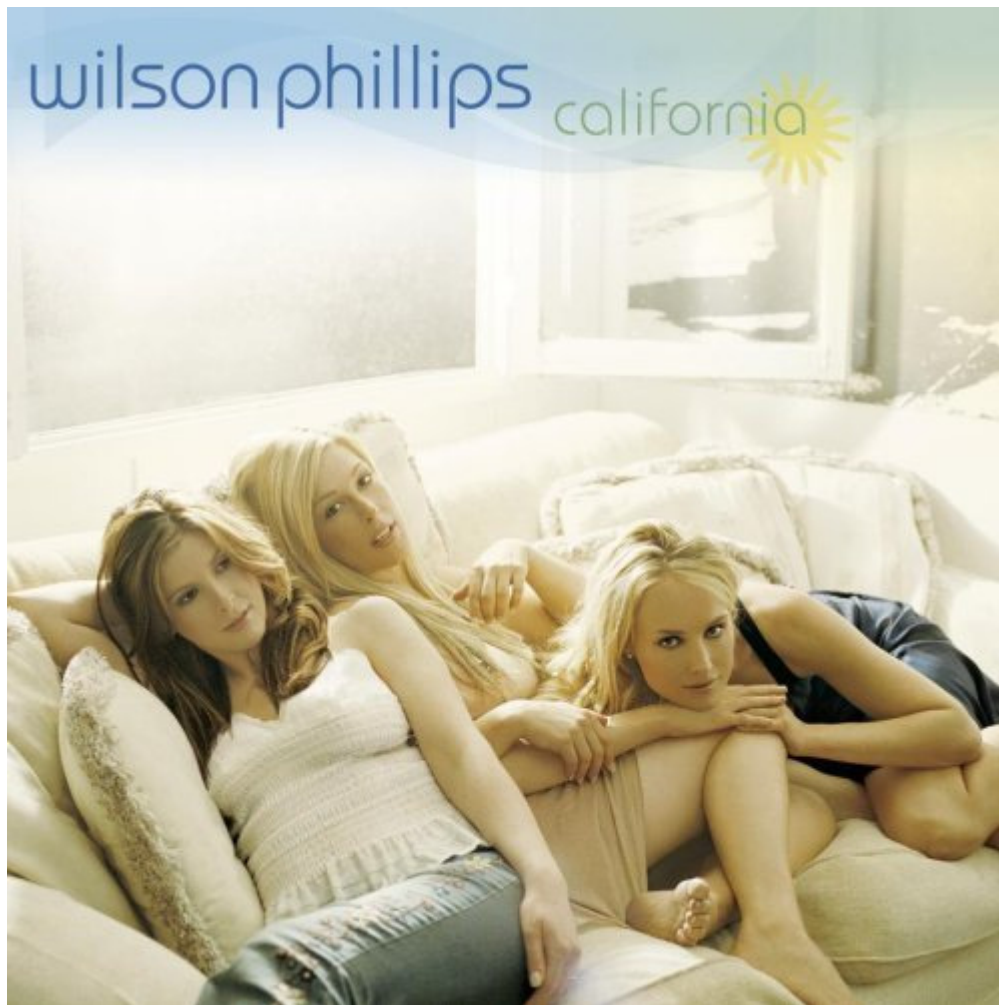
From the late 1980s through the early 1990s, she performed intermittently with the reformed Mamas and Papas. In 1992, she reportedly entered a long-term rehab program that she didn't emerge from for nine months. Following that, she kept a low profile for many years. In August 2008, however, she was arrested at LAX for heroin and cocaine possession and on Halloween day 2008, she entered a guilty plea and was once again sent to rehab.

A year later, in September 2009, Mackenzie released her tell-all memoir, *High on Arrival*, which painted a dark and disturbing picture of her late father. In addition to introducing her to drugs at the age of eleven by injecting her with cocaine, Mackenzie claimed that Papa John had raped her on the eve of her first marriage, and had engaged in an incestuous affair with her that spanned a decade and ended only when she became pregnant and did not know who the father was – a scenario, it should be noted, with remarkable parallels to the ordeal endured by Michelle's surrogate mother, Tamar Hodel.

John Phillips' memoir covering the time period in question makes no mention of the illicit relationship with his daughter. He does claim that Mackenzie was once raped at knifepoint by an unknown assailant. He also notes, shockingly enough, that Mackenzie's "house in Laurel Canyon was destroyed by fire." That, as we all know, hardly ever happens.

The year after dropping her bombshells, Mackenzie appeared on what is arguably the most appalling 'reality' show to ever hit the airwaves, *Celebrity Rehab*, in a role far removed from her glory days on a hit primetime show. That same year, sister Chynna Phillips entered rehab as well, though she was seeking relief from, uhmm, 'anxiety.'

Chynna first captured the spotlight in 1990 as 1/3 of the vocal group Wilson Phillips, alongside of Carnie and Wendy Wilson, offspring of the reclusive Brian Wilson (the only Beach Boy, by the way, to not be involved with the aforementioned Kokomo, and arguably the only really talented Beach Boy). That group though proved to be very short-lived, as did Chynna's musical career.



In 1995, Chynna married actor William Baldwin. In 2003, she became what Vanity Faire described as a “fervent born-again Christian. She was baptized in brother-in-law Stephen Baldwin’s bathtub.” The magazine also quoted Chynna as saying that “being a mom is challenging for me – my perspective is warped.”



Bijou Phillips

Like her older sisters, Bijou Lilly Phillips – born April 1, 1980, just a year before her father was harshly punished for running a major narcotics trafficking operation – merged into the fast lane at a very young age. Her mother was addicted to heroin while carrying her and Bijou has candidly described herself as a “crack baby.” Raised partially in a foster home, she was reunited with her father by the courts when in the third grade. That wasn’t necessarily a good thing.

Described by Index magazine as “a wild child who, through fate and circumstance, was somehow allowed to partake of New York’s nebulous nightlife at an age traditionally more suited to playing with dolls,” she was a cover model from a very young age. She was also, perhaps not surprisingly, the fourteen-year-old star of a Calvin Klein ad campaign that many people (as well as the US Justice Department) considered to be bordering on child pornography, and that Bijou herself has referred to as “the kiddy porn ads.”

Bijou told her interviewer from Index that lurking behind the scenes of that notorious Calvin Klein photo shoot – I’m guessing as a technical adviser – “was this porn guy.” The interviewer identified that “porn guy” as Ron Jeremy, probably the world’s most famous, and arguably the world’s most inexplicable, porn star.



I should, I suppose, qualify that last statement: Ron Jeremy’s fame is inexplicable in the sense that it is hard to imagine that anyone, male or female, really wants to see Ron Jeremy naked. He is not, however, just any ol’ porn star. To the contrary, he is a porn star whose mother was an asset of the OSS, precursor to the CIA, and whose physicist father had probable intel connections as well. And he is a porn star who attended high school with none other than future CIA director George Tenet, and a porn star whose uncle had ties to notorious gangster Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel.

He is, in other words, an extremely well hung connected porn star.

Bijou has alluded to the fact that Mackenzie was not the only Phillips daughter to receive unwanted attention from Papa John. In her music can be found lyrics such as “he touched me wrong.” Asked directly about such references, she told an interviewer that she had “made this decision not to talk to the press about anything that’s gone on in my life, but just to write music about it. They can interpret it themselves,” though she then quickly added, “It’s blatantly obvious.”

The youngest of the Phillips clan also acknowledged that she has a “Daddy” tattoo on her rear. “That was [done] during a time,” she said, “when I was a pretty sick puppy.”

Bijou made her film debut in 1999 and has had a number of low-profile film and television roles since then. Most recently, she had a recurring role on the freshman season of Raising Hope as, of all things, a serial killer. She is currently an avid Scientologist. Many of the problems she has faced, she ultimately realized, stem from the fact that she’d “never been shown respect by [her] parents. [She’d] always been treated like an object, not like a human.”

“What struck both of us was that there were huge gaps in Houdini’s life story and some puzzling inconsistencies. So we embarked on a journey to discover the real man. Early on, we discovered an important connection that most biographers seemed to miss.” From the Introduction to *The Secret Life of Houdini*, by William Kalush and Larry Sloman, 2006

As noted earlier in this series, there is considerable debate over the question of whether Harry Houdini ever lived in the Laurel Canyon home known locally as the “Houdini House” (the History Channel’s Brad Meltzer’s *Decoded* recently aired an episode on Houdini that included a segment filmed at the site, which was unreservedly identified as the former Houdini estate; the series, however, doesn’t appear to be overly concerned with accuracy).

Even if Houdini did live in the home that now lies in ruins, his story would seem to have little relevance here. After all, Harry Houdini, widely considered to be the consummate entertainer of his era, reached the peak of his career long before there was a Laurel Canyon – before there was even that magical place known as Hollywood. What then is there to gain through an examination of the life of Harry Houdini? Quite a bit, as it turns out.

What are generally claimed to be the basic details of Harry Houdini’s life can be found in countless published biographies and web posts. Born Erik Weisz in Budapest, Hungary on March 24, 1874, he was the fourth of seven children born to Rabbi Mayer Samuel Weisz and the former Cecelia Steiner. The family later changed the spelling of their names and Houdini became Ehrich Weiss, known by friends and family as “Ehrie,” which ultimately became “Harry.” His stage surname was an homage to famed French magician Robert Houdin.

In mid-1878, Rabbi Meyer, with his five sons and pregnant wife in tow, set sail for America, arriving on July 3, 1878. The family first put down roots in Appleton, Wisconsin before later moving, in 1887, to New York City. Four years later, Houdini launched his career as a magician, at first performing basic card tricks. He had little success and at times would make ends meet by performing in circus freak shows.

In 1893, he met singer/dancer Wilhelmina Beatrice Rahner, known as “Bess,” who would become both his wife and lifetime stage assistant. The pair though, performing as “The Houdinis,” continued to find success an elusive goal.

To say that Houdini’s fortunes changed in 1899 would be a bit of an understatement. As recounted by Kalush and Sloman, “Within months, he had gone from cheap beer halls and dime museums to the big-time – vaudeville. In one year’s time, he had gone from literally eating rabbits for survival to making what today would equal \$45,000 a week.” After finally hitting it big, however, Houdini then did something rather inexplicable – he abruptly sailed off to England to begin a lengthy European tour.

Kalush and Sloman pose the obvious question: “Why would someone who had finally made it big risk everything and leave behind lucrative contracts to go to England with no real prospects in sight?” Why indeed? Such a move in those days would normally be an act of career suicide, but things worked out a little differently for Houdini; everywhere he went – first in England and then in Scotland, Holland, Germany, France and Russia – he was lauded by the press and quickly catapulted into the national limelight.

After a four-year absence, Houdini returned to the U.S. in 1904 and resumed his lucrative career. For many years, he was the highest-paid performer on the vaudeville circuit and he

would frequently perform publicly to huge crowds in stunts that were sometimes arranged with corporate sponsors to promote their businesses. In 1912, he introduced what would become his most famed escape act, the Chinese Water Torture Cell.

In 1918, Houdini decided to try his luck with the fledgling new entertainment medium known as motion pictures, starring first in a multi-part serial and then in *The Grim Game* (1919) and *Terror Island* (1920). It was during this time that he is said to have taken up residence in Laurel Canyon, at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue. Following that, he moved to New York and started up his own production company, the Houdini Picture Corporation, which released *The Man From Beyond* (1921) and *Haldane of the Secret Service* (1923), after which Houdini gave up his less-than-successful film career.

For the last few years leading up to his death on October 31, 1926, Houdini primarily focused on debunking psychics and mediums, leading some to speculate that the spiritualist movement may have been behind his untimely demise. To this day, séances are regularly held around the world in attempts to contact the famed magician and escape artist.

And that, in a nutshell, is the Harry Houdini story as it is usually told. But telling stories as they are usually told is a rather boring pursuit, so we are, shockingly enough, going to take a slightly different approach to see if maybe there isn't an entirely different story hidden in the obscure details of Houdini's life, beginning with his sudden rise to fame after wallowing in obscurity for years.

As noted by Kalush and Sloman, "The young Houdini ... couldn't make enough money to succeed at magic. Hungry and crestfallen, he was ready to give up his dream, until he walked into a Chicago police station and met a detective who would change his life. Immediately after this fateful encounter, his picture graced the front page of a Chicago newspaper. That picture catapulted him to renown." Within months, Houdini was arguably the most famed entertainer in the country.

That detective was John Wilkie, a major player in the formation of the International Association of Police Chiefs (founded in Chicago in 1893, at the outset of what has been dubbed the Decade of Regicide, which set the stage for World War I) and the ominously titled National Bureau of Identification, and ultimately the chief of the U.S. Secret Service, America's premier intelligence operation during that era. It should probably be noted here that one of Houdini's nephews, Louis Kraus, worked for the Treasury Department, overseer of Wilkie's Secret Service.

Authors Kalush and Sloman are of the opinion that, "It was forward-thinking for the chief of America's only intelligence operation to be using entertainers for covert activities in 1898." Maybe so, but the authors duly note that such actions were not unprecedented; nearly four decades earlier, Abraham Lincoln had recruited an eighteen-year-old magician named Horatio G. Cooke to serve as a Civil War spy. Lincoln and Cooke were close enough that he was reportedly present at the president's deathbed. Later, near the end of his life, Cooke became a close friend of Harry Houdini.

It could also be noted that an entertainer of a different variety, stage actor John Wilkes Booth, also appears to have served as an intelligence operative during the Civil War, so the practice of utilizing entertainers for covert operations clearly didn't begin with Wilkie, who was himself a magician and a disciple of escape artist R. G. Herrmann. In addition to Houdini, Wilkie recruited other magicians as well, including Herrmann, Louis Leon, and heavyweight

prizefighter/magician Bob Fitzsimmons.

Another of Houdini's covert backers was Senator Chauncey Depew, an uncle of magician Ganson Depew and a former mentor to then-Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt (who would soon be catapulted into the presidency by the assassination of William McKinley, one of the final victims of the Decade of Regicide). Houdini would soon gain another hidden backer – William Melville, head of Scotland Yard's Special Branch and the most visible law enforcement official in the UK. Melville would ultimately become the first chief of Britain's MI-5.

As Kalush and Sloman discovered, "Within days of arriving in England, Houdini met with a prominent Scotland Yard inspector and once again, his career took off." That inspector, of course, was Melville, whom Houdini secretly met with on June 14, 1900, five days after arriving on England's shores. He had left the U.S. on May 30 using a passport issued just two days earlier – a passport that contained more than its fair share of anomalies.

The document listed his birthday as April 6, though his actual birthday is said to be March 24. It claimed that he was born in 1873, making him one year older than he actually was. Most curiously of all, the document indicated that Houdini was a native born citizen, though he most assuredly was not. He had been allowed to surrender his previous passport, issued to a naturalized citizen, in exchange for the officially-issued but clearly fraudulent passport that he used to tour Europe.

Given his background as both a magician and a Mason (by his own account), it goes without saying that secrecy, deception, and illusion were second-nature to Houdini. He also, as Sloman and Kalush noted, had the unusual "ability to interact with a country's police officials and do demonstrations inside their jails," and he was known to be rather proficient at the art of breaking-and-entering. Needless to say, these abilities would have served Houdini well in the world of espionage.

So too would many of the devices he boasted of inventing. According to Kalush and Sloman, "[Houdini] told the New York Herald that he invented rubber heels and cameras that work only once. The Boston Transcript reported that he invented 'an envelope which cannot be unsealed by steam without bringing to light the word 'opened' and a wash which will remove printer's ink from paper' ... In his own Conjuror's Monthly, he touted the use of chloride of cobalt for sending invisible messages."

A friend of Houdini's, fellow magician Billy Robinson, was also well-versed in the tradecraft of the intelligence community. In his book *Spirit Slate Writing and Kindred Phenomena*, Robinson "detailed thirty-seven methods for secret writing [which] would play an important part in spy communication during World War I." He also "detailed how to read other people's letters without opening the envelopes by using alcohol to render them temporarily transparent," and offered readers "subtle methods to share information while being closely scrutinized."

Kalush and Sloman share what became of Robinson not long after penning the book: "Then, virtually overnight, he changed his name and appearance, left the country, and broke many of his connections. Years later, his only brother wouldn't even be able to find him." Robinson died in 1918 while performing a bullet catch trick that he had performed many times before. Houdini would write that "it seems as if there were something peculiar [sic] about the whole affair."

In addition to possessing skills and knowledge that were ideally suited to the spook trade, Houdini also ran what could best be described as his own personal spy ring. In addition to an unknown number of fulltime confederates (mostly young women, including one of his nieces), “Houdini employed female operatives on an ad hoc basis when he came to town.” Probably the most important of these operatives was a young fellow magician named Amedeo Vacca, whose relationship with Houdini was unknown to virtually everyone throughout the escape artist’s life. So secret was the close relationship between the two that even Harry’s wife and brother, magician/confederate Hardeen, were unaware of it.

Houdini was a man for whom secrecy seems to have been something of an obsession. His home was said to be laced with secret passageways and hidden rooms, and his desk contained hidden compartments. There are indications that, while on the road, he would frequently maintain, for unknown purposes, a second hotel room in a different hotel. A man named Edward Saint (aka Charles David Myers), who was close to Bess, once claimed that Houdini “had safes and vaults in his home, and vaults in banks that his lawyers had access to; but one secret, now made public for the first time, is the fact that Houdini had one safety deposit vault in a bank or trust company in the East under some familiar name other than Houdini, and of which the secret location rested only in Houdini’s brain. In this vault was kept highly secret papers.” As far as is known, no one – not even Geraldo Rivera – has located that secret vault.

With his espionage tradecraft and dubious passport in tow, Houdini traveled to Germany in September 1900 after taking the British Isles by storm. As was the case in England and Scotland, the press immediately showered the visiting entertainer with accolades. There was one key difference in the press coverage though: “The newspaper accounts of Houdini’s demonstrations at German police stations portray him as a police consultant rather than a mere entertainer ... For a vaudeville performer, Houdini seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time and have unprecedented access at the Berlin police station.”

As he had in the US and the British Isles, Houdini established some unusual connections for a stage performer. One associate of his in Germany was a chemist named Hans Goldschmidt, who a few years earlier had patented a incendiary compound known as thermite. “Houdini noted that he was in Berlin when Goldschmidt performed his first test on a safe. He didn’t explain why a stage escape artist would be at such a demonstration.” For the record, Houdini does not appear to have been in the vicinity of the thermite demonstration given in lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001.

After performing to much acclaim in Germany, Houdini continued his pre-World War I tour by visiting France and Russia (the countries that Houdini visited on this unusual tour – Russia, Germany, France and Britain – had the curious distinction of being the major players in the soon-to-unfold Great War, but I’m sure that’s just a bizarre coincidence).

In Czarist Russia, “the magician had official permission to appear in any city in Russia, an extraordinary set of circumstances that bespeaks the close relationship between Superintendent Melville and the Okhrana, the imperial Russian secret police.” Houdini’s Russian tour was booked by a guy named Harry Day, “a mysterious expatriate American who changed his name and met Houdini in London around the same time as Houdini’s first meeting with Melville ... [Day] eventually became a member of Parliament and did overseas espionage for the British government.” For many years thereafter, the shadowy Day would handle Houdini’s European bookings.

Following the lengthy tour of pre-war Europe, Houdini returned to America with much press fanfare. One of his most high-profile stunts upon his return was escaping from the heavily fortified Cell #2 at the United States Jail in Washington, DC. The cell had famously housed Charles Julius Guiteau, convicted assassin of President James Garfield, prior to Guiteau's hanging at the facility on June 30, 1882. Guiteau, who, like his father, was closely affiliated with a religious cult known as the Oneida Community, shot Garfield on July 2, 1881, after having learned how to use a handgun just a few weeks earlier. He claimed to be acting on orders from God.

The gunshot wounds inflicted by Guiteau were not fatal. Garfield died nearly three months later, on September 19, 1881, from infections resulting from (probably deliberately) poor medical care. According to Wikipedia, "Of the four presidential assassins, Guiteau lived longer than any after his victim's death (nine months)." Given that Lee Harvey Oswald survived JFK by just two days and Leon Czolgosz survived William McKinley by just fifty-three days, this would be a true statement were it not for the fact that there is compelling evidence suggesting that John Wilkes Booth lived for several decades after the death of Abraham Lincoln. And then, of course, there is the question of whether these four men – Booth, Guiteau, Czolgosz and Oswald – were the actual presidential assassins.

But here, I suppose, I have digressed (yes, I am officially bringing that word back out of retirement).

Houdini, needless to say, succeeded in escaping from Guiteau's former cell – and also rearranged all the prisoners residing on the jail's fabled 'murderer's row.' To do so, of course, he would have needed a master key, which someone clearly provided to him. But why? Such were the perks provided an entertainer who appeared to be "working as an agent for U.S. government agencies, international police associations, and a special branch of Scotland Yard."

A couple years after his escape from the US Jail, there was a curious incident at the Houdini household. On October 25, 1907, an intruder made a concerted effort to kill the performer, slashing at the sleeping figure more than 100 times with a razor. Harry Houdini, however, was not home at the time. The victim of the attack was his brother Leopold, who closely resembled Harry. Household servant Frank Thomas was arrested and charged with the attack, though there was scant evidence linking him to the crime and no known motive. Indeed, Thomas had arrived the next morning for work seemingly unaware the attack had taken place.

Had Houdini been home at the time, there might have been a different outcome, given that some reports contend that the escape artist carried a handgun at all times. Remarkably, Houdini was able to keep his name out of all press accounts of the crime and trial despite the fact that the attack occurred at his home, he appears to have been the intended victim, and the alleged assailant was his own servant.

On November 26, 1909, Houdini became the first man to successfully fly a powered craft on the Australian continent. He cheerfully dispatched publicity photos featuring him in a plane surrounded by German soldiers – a move he would soon regret when those German soldiers found themselves on the opposite side of the battlefields of World War I. Following America's entry into the war, Houdini would attempt to destroy all photographs documenting his training of German pilots.

The magician's first flight, and all his subsequent Australian flights, were arranged by

Lieutenant George Taylor of the Australian Intelligence Corps. Curiously, despite Houdini's avid early interest in aviation, he did not, as far as is know, ever fly again after leaving Australia.

* * * * *

In other news, it appears that, while Lookout Mountain Laboratory has been out of business for many years, the spirit of the clandestine film studio is still very much alive and well, as evidenced by the 'Kony 2012' video.

“Why people even said Dr. Crandon committed illegal operations on little children and murdered them.” Mina/Margery Crandon

On April 29, 1911, Houdini debuted his famed Chinese Water Torture Cell escape in Southampton, England, though he had perfected and copyrighted the act well over a year earlier. The inherently dangerous stunt caused quite a sensation: “Just the sight of the apparatus was enough to give you shivers and make you believe, as one critic noted, that you were about to witness a ritual sacrifice.”

Around that same time, Houdini was, for reasons unknown, busily buying mothballed electric chairs at auctions across the country.

In 1913, Houdini’s beloved mother passed away, which apparently resulted in Harry learning some deep family secret. Following her death, Houdini sent the following cryptic note to one of his brothers: “Time heals all wounds, but a long time will have to pass before it will heal the terrible blow which Mother tried to save me from knowing.” The meaning of this rather provocative note remains a mystery. Houdini, by the way, was in Denmark when his mother died, and he requested a delay of her funeral to allow himself time to return to the States. Despite strict prohibitions in Jewish law, the entertainer’s request was, of course, granted.

In December 1914, just a few months after the staged provocation that allegedly triggered World War I, Houdini was summoned to the nation’s capitol for a private audience with then-President Woodrow Wilson. It is anyone’s guess what business the two men discussed, but it probably had little to do with stage tricks.

A year-and-a-half later, on that most notorious of dates, April 20, an estimated 100,000 people gathered in Washington, D.C. to watch Houdini perform a straightjacket escape. Other than for a presidential inauguration, it was said to be the largest crowd ever assembled in downtown Washington. One year later, in April 1917, the US declared war on Germany.

For the duration of the United States’ involvement in the war, Houdini spent a considerable amount of time aiding the war effort, both through fundraising and by frequently visiting the front lines, where he ostensibly went from camp to camp providing entertainment for the troops.

Houdini’s Hollywood career also began just as the US was entering the war. It has often been said that one of his first credits was as a special-effects consultant on the Mysteries of Myra cliffhanger serial, though others have claimed that Houdini had no involvement in the production. Curiously, the real consultant for the project is said to have been occultist/intelligence asset Aleister Crowley.

Houdini’s first feature-length film, *The Grim Game*, opened to rave reviews. Ensclosed in Hollywood, Houdini quickly made friends with mega-stars Charlie Chaplin and Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle, both of whom would soon be caught up in scandals – a career-ending one in Arbuckle’s case. The fledgling actor next began work on *Terror Island*, filmed largely on Catalina Island. Unlike his feature debut, *Island* opened to poor reviews, leading a discouraged Houdini to launch his own production company to create his own starring vehicles.

Just after completing *Terror Island*, in December 1919, Houdini was involved in yet another curious incident. Having injured his ankle performing the water torture escape, he paid a visit

to a doctor who examined the performer and pronounced him in imminent “danger of death.” Houdini nevertheless lived on for several more years; the doctor, meanwhile, turned up dead within two weeks.

By the end of 1921, the Houdini Picture Corporation had two feature-length films in the can – *The Man From Beyond* and *Haldane of the Secret Service*. The first, co-written by Houdini himself and released on April 2, 1922, involved a bizarre plot revolving around a man found frozen in arctic ice and brought back to life, a case of mistaken identity, confinement in a mental institution, escape from that same institution, and an abduction. *Haldane*, released the following year, was Houdini’s first attempt at directing himself. It featured the magician as his real-life alter ego, but its performance at the box office signaled the end of Houdini’s film career.

For the rest of his years, Houdini devoted a considerable amount of time to investigating and debunking the spiritualist movement, which flourished in the post-World War I years as legions of fake ‘mediums’ preyed upon the grief of those who had lost loved one in the war, promising to reconnect them with those in the ‘spirit’ world. By design or otherwise, Houdini’s crusade served primarily to publicize the movement. Houdini’s interest in the movement was said to have been spawned by the death of his beloved mother.

Houdini had a number of friends in the spiritualist movement, most notably and prominently Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of fictional detective Sherlock Holmes and possible perpetrator of the infamous Piltdown Hoax of 1912. Both Doyle and Houdini were also had connections to Le Roi and Margery Crandon, and that is where this story takes a decidedly dark turn.

Margery, born Mina Stinson in Canada in 1888, had moved with her family to Boston, Massachusetts at a young age. As a teenager, she is said to have been a musical prodigy and to have played various musical instruments in local orchestras, and to later have worked as an actress, secretary and ambulance driver. In 1917, the then-married Mina was hospitalized and operated on by Dr. Le Roi Goddard Crandon, a man who occupied a prestigious position in Boston society.

Crandon was a direct descendent of one of the original twenty-three Mayflower passengers and a member of the Boston Yacht Club. He had graduated from Harvard Medical School and had also obtained a Master’s Degree in Philosophy from Harvard, where he also served as an instructor. Just before meeting Mina, he had served as a Naval officer and as head of the surgical staff at a US Naval hospital during WWI.

Shortly after meeting the doctor, Mina divorced her first husband and, in 1918, became the much older Le Roi Crandon’s third wife. The two seemed hopelessly mismatched, she being young, vivacious and, by all accounts, very attractive, while he was said to be rather arrogant, unpleasant and antisocial. Nevertheless, the pair quickly became the talk of Boston’s high society, particularly after the summer of 1923, when they began holding regular ‘séances’ in their home.

One regular member of the couple’s inner circle was a fellow by the name of Joseph DeWyckoff, a wealthy steel tycoon who had been born in Poland and educated in England and Czarist Russia before settling in America to practice law. He was ultimately jailed in Boston on embezzlement charges, then later fled to Chicago after embezzling yet more money. He soon turned up in, of all places, Havana, Cuba, where, according to Kalush and

Sloman, “in 1898 he was recruited by John Wilkie, the Secret Service chief, as a co-optee and was involved in spying for the United States during the Spanish-American War.”

That would be, needless to say, the very same John Wilkie who had kick-started Harry Houdini’s career that very same year. As a reward for his service, DeWyckoff, who “had a history of violence,” “was given the contract to salvage the Battleship Maine in the Havana Harbor.” The Maine had been sunk in what appears to have been a false-flag operation carried out by US intelligence operatives to justify launching a bloody colonial war.

Although fragmentary, there is clear evidence that Le Roi and Mina Crandon, in conjunction with various others (including DeWyckoff), began to ‘adopt,’ sometime soon after getting married, an untold number of children who subsequently went missing. A number of letters that Dr. Crandon penned on the subject and dispatched to his buddy Doyle appear to have gone missing as well. As Kalush and Sloman note, “Strangely, many of the letters regarding the investigation into the boys have been expunged from Crandon’s files.” As faithful readers know, there is nothing strange about that at all; it is pretty much par for the course.

In one surviving letter, sent on August 4, 1925, Crandon notes that “about December first I had Mr. DeWyckoff bring over a boy from a London home for possible adoption ... In April 1925, our Secret Service Department at Washington received a letter saying that I had first and last sixteen boys in my house for ostensible adoption, and that they had all disappeared.” Four years earlier, a Boston newspaper had reported that two boys had been rescued from a raft. One, eight-year-old John Crandon, was Margery/Mina’s son from her previous marriage. The other was a ten-year-old English ‘adoptee’ who was reportedly so unhappy at the Crandon home that he was frantically attempting an escape, with the younger boy in tow (not unlike the Steven Stayner story). “Two years later, when Margery began her mediumship, there was no trace of that boy in the household.”

Perhaps he was the ‘homeless’ boy whose dead body was reportedly found on the outskirts of Joseph DeWyckoff’s large estate in Ramsey, New Jersey during that time period.

By 1924, Dr. Crandon was openly asking his many friends in the British spiritualist movement to “be on the lookout for suitable boys to adopt.” Around that same time, as another associate noted in a letter, Crandon was “being sued for \$40,000 for operating on a woman for cancer, when she was simply pregnant, and destroying the foetus ... A highly incredible story which persists is that a boy who was in his family some weeks mysteriously disappeared. He claims that the boy is now in his home in England, but still official letters of inquiry and demand are received from that country. This is no mere rumor, for I was shown some of the original letters ... The matter has been going on for more than a year. It is very mysterious.”

In response to questions raised about the disappearance of one particular boy, Margery/Mina complained that “people wrote asking his whereabouts, and the prime minister of England cabled to ask where he was and demanded a cable reply. Why people even said Dr. Crandon committed illegal operations on little children and murdered them.” According to Margery, “the poor little fellow had adenoids and had to be circumcised,” so Crandon opted to perform the surgery at home. It was widely rumored that the good doctor had performed another procedure at home as well – surgically altering his wife’s vaginal opening to allow her to ‘magically’ produce various items at séances.

On one occasion, Margery opened a closet in her home and showed an associate a collection

of photos of well over a hundred children, “most of them really lovely.” Margery told the woman that, “Those are Dr. Crandon’s caesareans—aren’t they sweet? All caesareans.” Given that Crandon wasn’t known for delivering babies at all, the notion that he had delivered over a hundred of them via caesarean was an absurdity. Who then were all these children and what became of them?

Such is the fragmentary evidence trail indicating that an untold number of young boys fell into the nefarious hands of a cabal of wealthy individuals with connections to the intelligence community. Nearly a full century ago. Not to worry though – the disappearances were investigated by John Wilkie’s Secret Service and a British MP by the name of, uhmm, Harry Day. And I’m sure they got to the bottom of the sordid affair, just as Louis Freeh is undoubtedly now getting to the truth of the Sandusky case.

Not long before his death, Houdini, who had an extensive library of literature on the occult, began working with horror writer and racist occultist H.P. Lovecraft on various magazine articles. In 1926, he hired Lovecraft (who could, by the way, trace his lineage to the Massachusetts Bay Colony) and Clifford Eddy, Jr. (another occultist and horror writer and one of Houdini’s covert operatives), to co-write a book debunking superstition (despite the fact that wife Bess was known to harbor numerous superstitions, some of them apparently quite bizarre).

According to Kalush and Sloman, “Shortly after meeting with Eddy and Lovecraft, Bess was stricken with a nonspecific form of poisoning.” Indeed, there is evidence suggesting that both Harry and Bess Houdini suffered from some form of poisoning prior to Harry’s death. In addition, Houdini is said to have suffered from severe mood swings and to have had some “aggressive confrontations” in the weeks leading up to his death, both of which were out of character for the illusionist (though Bess is widely reported to have suffered from extreme mood swings throughout her life).

As the story goes, Houdini, who prided himself on being able to take a punch from pretty much anyone, was sucker-punched in his dressing room by a McGill University student, which caused his appendix to burst and ultimately led to his death on October 31, 1926. Houdini’s physicians dutifully swore out affidavits certifying the cause of death to be “traumatic appendicitis,” though the medical community now acknowledges that such a medical condition has never existed. No autopsy was performed.

As previously noted, the house in Laurel Canyon universally known as the ‘Houdini House’ burned to the ground exactly thirty-three years later, on October 31, 1959. Precisely fifty-two years (the magician’s age at the time of his death) after that, the Magic Castle in the Hollywood Hills exploded into flames on October 31, 2011. Built as a Victorian mansion in 1908, the converted structure opened in 1963 as the Magic Castle, a rather creepy members-only club featuring hidden rooms and secret passageways. According to reports, the only room in the building left unscathed by the fire was the Houdini Room.

The mid-1920s were not a good time for the Houdini/Weiss brothers. Brother Gottfried Weiss, born two years before Harry, died in 1925. Harry followed suit the next year. Brother Nathan Weiss, born four years before Harry, died soon after, in 1927. Shit happens, I guess.

On June 22, 1927, Houdini’s European booking agent, Harry Day, reported that his apartment had been ransacked. That day would have also been the Houdini’s wedding anniversary – assuming, that is, that Harry was actually legally married to Bess, which may not have been

the case. Two months after the break-in at Day's apartment, Theodore 'Hardeen,' who had inherited all of brother Harry's props, effects and papers, reported that his home had also been broken into while he had been on the road.

Joscelyn Gordon Whitehead, the guy credited with gut-punching Houdini, was a rather curious gent. Though a college student at the time of the incident, he was already in his thirties. His father was a British diplomat serving in the Orient. After Houdini's death, Whitehead is said to have become a recluse living something of a hermetic existence. He did have at least one close associate though – Lady Beatrice Isabel Marler, a wealthy heiress and the wife of Sir Herbert Meredith Marler, a prominent Canadian politician and diplomat who once served as Canada's ambassador to the US.

After Houdini's death, it was widely rumored that Bess – who in addition to suffering from wild mood swings was also an alcoholic and a drug addict who was occasionally suicidal – ran an illegal speakeasy/brothel in conjunction with a woman named Daisy White, who was said to have been Harry's mistress. Nothing weird about that. White was not, by the way, the only woman who claimed or was rumored to have had an affair with the performer.

In mid-1945, Theodore "Hardeen," one of Houdini's two surviving brothers and the one who had inherited all of his effects, checked into Doctor's Hospital for a scheduled operation. On June 12, 1945, Hardeen left the hospital in a box. It was reported at the time that Hardeen had been planning to pen a book on his brother and had begun work on the project before checking into the hospital.

Nearly two decades later, on October 6, 1962, Leopold Weiss – Harry's last living sibling and the one who had been brutally attacked in his brother's home – is said to have jumped off a ledge and fallen six stories to his death. The last of Houdini's secrets went to the grave with him.

* * * * *

It has often been noted that Houdini took far longer to perform many of his stage escapes than was actually necessary, and that he was frequently out of view of the audience during such times. This has generally been assumed to have been for dramatic effect. Authors Kalush and Sloman though offer a far more compelling possibility: "One explanation is that such challenges gave Houdini both the opportunity and an alibi to conduct a mission while he was performing."

It was, in other words, the perfect cover, for how could a man be responsible for something that occurred elsewhere when he was performing on stage for a captive audience at the time? There are, it should be noted, clear parallels here to the story told by Chuck Barris, who has claimed that he was similarly slipping off to conduct covert missions while performing his duties as a chaperone for the Dating Game.

Of course, no one took Barris seriously because we all know that such things don't really happen in the real world – or at least not in the world that the media present to us as the real world.

It should also be noted here that Houdini possessed, as do most magicians, seemingly superhuman abilities, such as the ability to dislocate his shoulders at will to slip out of straightjackets. He could also regulate his heart rate, respiration rate and other metabolic

functions such that he could survive for extended periods of time with little available oxygen, thus facilitating his escapes.

Such abilities are rather commonplace in the world of magic. One magician was found to be able to identify what card a person was holding by virtue of the fact that he had such extraordinary visual acuity that he could see the reflection of the card in the subject's pupils. Many magicians are able to pick up a stack of cards and know by feel exactly how many cards they are holding, and are able to distinguish individual cards by subtle thickness variations indistinguishable to people with normal abilities.

How do people gain such incredible physical abilities? Probably the best way of understanding such phenomena is as a function of trauma-based, early childhood training.

It appears then that, at the end of the day, the actors populating the Harry Houdini story are the usual cast of characters: intel operatives, Masons, pedophiles, mind-rapists, occultists, and, of course, entertainers. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

* * * * *

I, for one, am pleasantly surprised to see that the hack filmmaker who subjected the world to "Kony 2012" is now appearing in some of the most entertaining videos ever to hit the web.

the Center for an Informed

Inside The LC: The Strange but Mostly True Story of Laurel Canyon and the Birth of the Hippie Generation
Part XXII
September 9, 2013

No, this isn't actually a new installment of the Laurel Canyon series. It is, instead, an explanation of why there haven't been any new chapters posted in quite some time now. There are, I can assure you, a number of new chapters that have been written - one on Frank Zappa and a couple of his more colorful discoveries (Captain Beefheart and Larry "Wild Man" Fischer), one on Arthur Lee and his band Love, one on John Kay and his band Steppenwolf, and one on Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys. There are also a number of new additions to the Laurel Canyon Death List. And some supplemental material concerning the death of young Godo Paulekas.

There is also a new chapter that takes a look at the punk and new wave scene that, in the late 1970s, began replacing the sounds of Laurel Canyon on the radio dial. And a new epilogue that reveals that Charlie Manson wasn't the only serial killer/mass murderer with curious ties to the Laurel Canyon scene. And a new preface that aims to accomplish two things: explain to readers how and why I came to pen this saga, and preemptively respond to potential critics. Also added is a forward written by my esteemed colleague, Nick Bryant, author of *The Franklin Scandal*.

None of that, however, will be making an appearance on this website, or on any other website. Instead, it will be incorporated into - drum roll, please - a Laurel Canyon book! I have been, you see, quietly working for some time now with a publisher in the UK. And what we have put together, I honestly believe, is a vastly improved telling of the Laurel Canyon story. In addition to all the new material that will be exclusive to the book, much of the previously posted material has been reorganized and extensively edited to improve the flow of this rather dark journey through what was supposed to be a hippie utopia. And both an index and a bibliography have been added to make this work a more valuable research tool.

The published version will carry a different title: *Weird Scenes Inside the Canyon: Laurel Canyon, Covert Ops & the Dark Heart of the Hippie Dream*. That's about all I have to report for now. As more information becomes available, such as a release date and a cover price, I will keep this page updated. Though I haven't yet discussed it with my publisher, it is possible that I may make a bulk purchase so that I can sell signed copies through this website. That though will depend on whether there appears to be a sufficient demand, so if you would be interested in obtaining a signed copy, drop me an email.

Update 1 (September 16, 2013): In the Table of Contents below, all chapters/sections that appear in **red** consist of all new, previously unposted material; those in **orange** have been supplemented with varying amounts of new material.

Update 2 (September 23, 2013): Weird Scenes now has its very own Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/WeirdScenesInsideTheCanyon>, with additional information. If you stop by, please be sure to hit the 'like' button.

WEIRD SCENES inside The Canyon



LAUREL CANYON, COVERT OPS
& THE DARK HEART OF THE HIPPIE DREAM

By David McGowan

HEADPRESS

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CNN - The CIA's News Network?

Dave McGowan
May 2000

In February of this year, a story that had appeared in the European press was reported by Alexander Cockburn - co-editor of *Counterpunch* - concerning the employment by CNN of military psychological warfare specialists. Other than Cockburn's piece, and the issuance of an 'Action Alert' by the media-watchdog group *FAIR* (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), the report was ignored by the American press.

As originally reported by Abe de Vries in the Dutch periodical *Trouw*, the story went something like this: "For a short time last year, CNN employed military specialists in 'psychological operations' (psyops). This was confirmed to *Trouw* by a spokesman of the U.S. Army. The military could have influenced CNN's news reports about the crisis in Kosovo."

(1)

Could have? The word 'duh' would seem to apply here. In fact, here's a news flash: the military influenced the news reports of *all* the media outlets that covered the Kosovo bombardment. The *only* news coming from the area was coming from NATO and the Pentagon. When you are the sole source of information, you tend to have a lot of influence.

But that's not the issue here. The concern here is with CNN hiring military personnel to package for viewers the information provided as 'news' by other military personnel. This is said to be a most disturbing development, and I suppose it would be were it not for the fact that the U.S. media - as a whole - is infested with so many intelligence assets that it is hard to see how a few more in the mix could make much of a difference.

Of course, most of them are posing as reporters, editors, news anchors, analysts, producers, publishers, etc. The difference here is that these particular spooks were employed openly at CNN, without journalistic cover. As Major Thomas Collins, of the U.S. Army Information Service acknowledged:

"Psyops personnel, soldiers and officers, have been working in CNN's headquarters in Atlanta through our programme 'Training With Industry'. They worked as regular employees of CNN. Conceivably, they would have worked on stories during the Kosovo war. They helped in the production of news." (1)

The phrase "production of news" is notably ambiguous when used in this context. It could easily be defined as the *manufacture* of news. Manufacturing news is, in fact, exactly what psychological warfare specialists do. As de Vries notes:

"The military CNN personnel belonged to the airmobile Fourth Psychological Operations Group, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One of the main tasks of this group of almost 1200 soldiers and officers is to spread 'selected information'. [We should pause here, briefly,

to note that in this context, the phrase 'selected information' generally means vicious distortions and outright lies.]

"American psyops troops try with a variety of techniques to influence media and public opinion in armed conflicts in which American state interests are said to be at stake. [We need to pause again to note that 'American state interests' generally means the financial interests of U.S. monopoly capitalists.] The propaganda group was involved in the Gulf war, the Bosnian war and the crisis in Kosovo." (1)

In other words, they did during the war in Kosovo what they have always done. This time, however, they did it more openly. This could have proven to be a major blunder for CNN, with scores of competitors airing this story to embarrass and discredit a rival. But that would require that we have some actual semblance of a free press.

Instead, what happened was that the story got a couple of brief mentions in the alternative press that were easily overlooked and ignored. And this was only after the translated article began appearing on internet sites, most notably on the [*Emperor's Clothes*](#). Had this not been the case, the story likely would not have surfaced at all on these shores.

Nor would a follow-up article by de Vries in the same publication a few days later. De Vries refers to the Commander of the Fourth Psychological Operations Group, Colonel Christopher St. John, who described the cooperation with CNN as "a textbook example of the kind of ties the American army wants to have with the media." (2)

The kind of ties that will allow it "to spread handpicked 'information' and keep other news quiet, ... to control the internet, to wage electronic warfare against disobedient media, and to control commercial satellites." (2) Most of which, it should be noted, the intelligence community already does to varying degrees. Still, the control is not yet complete enough.

De Vries reports that the psyops personnel were not completely satisfied with the Kosovo operation: "In their opinion, too much information about the unplanned results of the bombings has come to the surface. [We must pause yet again to note that 'unplanned results of the bombings' refers to the entirely foreseeable civilian carnage.] Rear Admiral Thomas Steffens of the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) reportedly would like to have the capacity to bring down an 'informational cone of silence' over areas where special operations are in place. What that can mean in reality was shown by the bombing of the Serbian state television RTS in Belgrade." (2)

Indeed. And speaking of the bombing of the Serbian television station, there was another story that ran in the European press concerning that particular incident which also happened to cast CNN in a particularly bad light. Considerably more so than the story told in the Dutch publication, in fact.

Significantly, this story was not aired at all in the United States. It did appear, however, in the U.K., in an article by correspondent Robert Fisk in *The Independent*. The report reveals that:

"Two days before NATO bombed the Serb Television headquarters in Belgrade, CNN received a tip from its Atlanta headquarters that the building was to be destroyed. They were told to remove their facilities from the premises at once, which they did." (3)

Apparently it helps to have those psyops specialists on board. Fisk goes on to recount that the next day, Aleksander Vucic, the Serbian Information Minister, received an invitation to appear on the *Larry King Live* show, ostensibly to give Larry's audience the Serbian view of the conflict via satellite.

There were two rather serious problems with this invitation, however. First, the notion that CNN would invite a Serbian official on the air to give the Serb point of view is rather far-fetched, to say the least. More importantly, the studio to which Vucic had been invited was now deserted. Nevertheless, he was asked to arrive for makeup at 2:00AM for a 2:30AM appearance.

"Vucic was late - which was just as well for him since NATO missiles slammed into the

building at six minutes past two. The first one exploded in the make-up room where the young Serb assistant was burned to death. CNN calls this all a coincidence, saying that the Larry King show, put out by the entertainment division, did not know of the news department's instruction to its men to leave the Belgrade building." (3)

CNN's explanation is, of course, preposterous. In fact, the notion that there is some kind of distinction between CNN's 'entertainment division' and its 'news department' is rather preposterous as well. The truth appears to be that CNN was directly complicit in the attempted commission of a war crime.

And this action was, to be sure, a war crime. The deliberate targeting of a foreign dignitary for assassination - even in time of war - is definitely an international war crime. So it appears that our media have crossed the line from complicity in the covering-up of U.S. war crimes - which has been a mainstay of the press for decades - to complicity in the actual commission of war crimes.

A rather serious transgression, one would think, yet one which has been politely overlooked by the rest of the American media outlets. This is quite likely due to the fact that the intelligence community and corporate America pretty much controls all the media.

That is why even when stories such as the CNN/Psyops reports emerge in the 'progressive' media, albeit in a very limited way, they are accompanied by amusing commentary and analysis intended to downplay the significance of the incident.

For example, Cockburn wonders if: "It could be that CNN was the target of a psyops penetration and is still too naïve to figure out what was going on." (4) To the contrary, it appears that CNN was well aware of - and actively participating in - "what was going on."

Similarly, for *FAIR* what is "especially troubling is the fact that the network allowed the Army's covert propagandists to work in its headquarters, where they learned the ins and outs of CNN's operations. Even if the psyops officers working in the newsroom did not influence news reporting, did the network allow the military to conduct an intelligence-gathering mission against CNN itself?" (5)

Or, more likely, is CNN itself an "intelligence gathering mission," and has it been from its inception? It was CNN, it will be recalled, that pioneered the concept of military conflict as mini-series - complete with theme music and title graphics - during the Gulf War. That is, of course, the blueprint that has been followed by the media at large for all coverage of U.S. military actions since then.

One of the specific purposes for which CNN seems to have been born is the packaging of imperialist military conquests as humanitarian missions. In other words, "to spread 'selected information'" in order to "influence media and public opinion in armed conflicts in which American state interests are said to be at stake."

Glorification of U.S. high-tech weaponry, vilification of America's enemy of the moment, canonization of genocidal military leaders and advisers, rote reporting of the NATO/Pentagon/State Department line, deliberate avoidance of reporting clear-cut cases of American brutality and war crimes - all of these are indicative of a psyops program, not an allegedly independent news agency.

As the group *FAIR* noted: "CNN has always maintained a close relationship with the Pentagon. Getting access to top military officials is a necessity for a network that stakes its reputation on being first on the ground during wars and other military operations." (5)

Being first on the ground during military operations is, to be sure, a good place to be if one is a reporter. It is also a good place to be, it should be noted, if one is a member of the spook community.

Whether CNN was born as an intelligence front is probably now largely an irrelevant issue, as the cable titan has since the Kosovo war announced that it is to become a part of the AOL family. And AOL is, as was noted in a recent *Spin Cycle* article (Sony's Magic [Cameras](#)), doing a pretty damn good job of masquerading as an intelligence front itself.

So if CNN was not originally conceived as a psychological warfare entity (which appears to be the case, despite its purported status as the brainchild of Ted Turner, husband of Jane Fonda), it has certainly evolved into one. And by the way, does anyone remember when Jane was supposed to be one of the good guys? Just checking.

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Sony's Magic Cameras

Dave McGowan
June 2000

The American media had a good laugh over a story that was briefly bandied about a couple of years ago. It seems that a certain manufacturer of consumer electronics had inadvertently released a batch of 'defective' video cameras to the public. These cameras had a most unusual feature: when used in a particular manner, they allowed the user to covertly film unsuspecting people *sans* clothing.

The press chuckled over this for a few days, particularly when noting that a recall effort by the company had not resulted in the return of very many of the faulty cameras. This is likely because the cameras were not actually defective, at least not in the normal sense of the word. In fact, they performed the normal home video camera functions quite well.

The problem was that they had an *extra* function. The company explained that this was due to a manufacturing defect - a bad batch of chips - and the story was quickly lost in the shuffle and forgotten. But beneath this seemingly inconsequential story of a company mishap lurked something far more sinister - a brief glimpse into Big Brother's toolbox.

It can be safely concluded that these cameras were not by any stretch of the imagination 'defective.' They actually performed exactly as designed. The problem most likely was that a batch of cameras built for military and/or intelligence purposes found their way onto the consumer market. This obviously presented a bit of a problem for the company. They could not even admit that such technology exists, let alone that they were in the business of developing and manufacturing such devices. The solution? Blame it on a manufacturing defect.

True to form, the media appeared not to notice the patently absurd nature of this pathetic attempt at a cover story. The truth is that the intelligence community has spent decades researching and enormous amounts of cash developing and refining this very type of surveillance technology, and these cameras were one of the end results of that research.

The technology that gives these devices the ability to see through clothes is, needless to say, considerably more advanced than that which is found in your everyday home video camera. You just don't get from one to the other through a manufacturing 'flaw,' just as color television wasn't miraculously born when someone botched a batch of black-and-white picture tubes.

In truth, virtually all consumer electronics - as well as non-consumer technology utilized by business and industry - begins life in the intelligence community, and only after it has outlived its usefulness there does it emerge in the public sphere, often as the newest consumer craze.

The Polaroid camera is a classic example of this. Edwin Land, as has been reported, was

a long time member of the intelligence community, where his area of expertise was electronic surveillance. Among other things, he played a key role on the U-2 spy plane project and presided over the Scientific Engineering Institute, a CIA front. (1) He is of course better known as the inventor of the famed camera.

The Polaroid was actually invented long before its debut on store shelves. It should be readily apparent to readers that this breakthrough technology - at a time when no one knew of its existence - would have been of enormous value to the spy-trade, which is precisely why the spooks utilized it for an untold number of years before it was 'reinvented' as a consumer product.

And so it goes with other high-tech innovations as well, including the nifty new through-the-clothes video cameras. This particular form of invasive technology has already begun to creep into the public sphere. Not long after the camera story aired, a local newscast carried a story about a new type of security system being trialed at a U.S. airport. In place of the standard metal detector that we have all come to know and love was what could best be described as an electronic strip-search machine.

This device utilized what appeared to be the very same technology that made its debut in the 'defective' cameras. As travelers and guests passed through the scanner, the operator was viewing what was described as a very accurate representation of their nude forms. As would be expected, this innovation did not seem to be well received and the limited media coverage was promptly dropped.

The surveillance of America, however, continues. Along with the through-the-clothes technology, we now also have through-the-wall surveillance capabilities. (2) And along with the ability to see through walls comes the ability to *hear* through walls as well. A device known as a laser-guided microphone can be pointed at any pane of glass, allowing the user to eavesdrop upon any conversation emanating from within a windowed structure.

Though a creation of high technology, this device is actually based on a rather low-tech concept: a pane of glass acts as a speaker, of sorts, vibrating in response to the sound waves striking it from inside your home. Any flat, non-rigid, membrane-like surface in a building acts in much the same way.

The drywall that covers the walls of your home, for instance, conducts sound as well. That is how sound travels through a wall. The sound waves strike the drywall on one side of the wall, which acts much like a microphone. Through the studs in the wall (the conduit or speaker wire, so to speak) the sound is transferred to the drywall on the other side, which through vibration then serves as the speaker.

But enough with the physics lessons. The point is that any pane of glass in a building is a potential speaker. And with the use of advanced military technology, it is possible to isolate and amplify the otherwise inaudible sound waves being broadcast from that window pane.

This technology is rapidly being shared with ostensibly civilian law enforcement agencies, so that local law enforcement will soon be able to conduct what amounts to a drive-by search of your home - looking and listening in - without your consent or even your awareness, at any time they should so choose.

Equally alarming is the proliferation of allegedly private firms, dubbed 'data warehouses,' whose sole function is the collection and cataloguing of data about American citizens. The *Washington Post* recently described how the warehouses function: "Twenty-four hours a day, Acxiom electronically gathers and sorts information about 196 million Americans. Credit card transactions and magazine subscriptions. Telephone numbers and real estate records. Car registrations and fishing licenses. Consumer surveys and demographic details." (3)

Also readily available and fair game are medical records, financial and banking information, military records, marital records, and an array of other personal information. All of this information gathering is greatly facilitated by the technological advances that have

been sold to the public as products and services that greatly benefit us as consumers.

For example, the move towards a 'cashless' society has allowed an unprecedented amount of personal data to enter the information marketplace. While it is undoubtedly a convenience to purchase virtually any good or service with an ATM or credit card, it is also quite true that doing so leaves an electronic trail that can and will be followed.

It is not just the types of products you are buying that is tracked, but *where* you are buying them as well. Your daily routines will, over time, show up in the ways in which you use electronic money. By databasing each transaction, your daily travels can be accurately constructed, as well as your shopping habits and various other aspects of your life.

Another great boom to the information gatherers has been the widespread popularity of the internet. I hate to be the one to break the news, but the innovation that allows you to gather information also allows others to gather information *about* you. The internet was, long before Al Gore or anyone else 'invented' it, a military intelligence entity. It was designed, implemented and maintained by the intelligence community to fulfill its needs, not yours. And it continues to be an apparatus of the intelligence infrastructure today.

As the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* tells it: "The Internet had its origin in a U.S. Department of Defense program called ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), established in 1969 to provide a secure and survivable communications network for organizations engaged in defense-related research ... at length the National Science Foundation (NSF), which had created a similar and parallel network called NSFNet, took over much of the TCP/IP technology from ARPANET and established a distributed network of networks capable of handling far greater traffic." (4)

The encyclopedia also notes that, contrary to the current notion that no one controls the internet, "NSF continues to maintain the backbone of the network." The same encyclopedia describes the NSF as "an independent agency of the U.S. government," though what exactly an 'independent' agency of the U.S. government is receives no explanation. Other reports have noted though that the NSF has been heavily involved in funding and conducting MK-ULTRA research. (5)

Britannica explains that the foundation was "inspired by advances in science and technology that occurred as a result of World War II; the NSF was established by the U.S. Congress in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950." What the NSF is, in other words, is one of a blizzard of intelligence fronts that were set up in the immediate aftermath of the forming of the CIA itself in 1947.

Of course, just because the beloved internet was begun as an intelligence entity and is still administered by a government agency doesn't mean that it still functions as an intelligence tool. It is worth noting, however, that the company that was primarily responsible for repackaging the internet into a civilian entity, America Online, is perhaps the most thinly veiled intelligence front ever conceived.

This can be easily verified by a visit to AOL's corporate website, where visitors learn - among other things - that the company is headquartered in [Dulles](#), Virginia. Curious as to where this might be, I attempted to locate the city of Dulles on a couple of maps, to no avail. This, I learned, was because Dulles is actually an offshoot of Langley, Virginia.

Langley is also rather difficult to locate on a map. For the uninitiated, this is because Langley, Virginia is the home of the Central Intelligence Agency. In fact, there isn't much else in Langley, Virginia, which exists almost exclusively to provide residence to the thousands of employees of the CIA's headquarters.

And it is precisely there that you will find the home of AOL. Apparently recognizing the negative connotations of a Langley mailing address, the company essentially created a 'suburb' and named it Dulles. Dulles, by the way, is named in honor of the notorious Dulles siblings, Allen and John Foster, whose names were virtually synonymous with the U.S. intelligence infrastructure through both World Wars and much of the Cold War.

Another fact about AOL that belies its true function is the composition of its [Board of Directors](#). Here you will find such high-level military/intelligence assets as General Colin Powell and General Alexander Haig. All of which gives a whole new meaning to that all-seeing eye that comprises the company's logo.

The ways in which we are encouraged to use the internet also belie an intelligence function. Perhaps the most popular use is for communicating via e-mail, which is rapidly replacing other modes of communication. Not coincidentally, e-mail communications are far easier to intercept than are correspondence by phone or letter, especially given that they are traveling on a network designed by spooks.

Also increasingly popular is on-line shopping, which greatly facilitates the gathering of information about your shopping and spending habits. Yet more disturbing is the push for on-line banking, which is a great idea if you don't mind your banking transactions being added to your information profile. Not that your banker isn't already sharing that information anyway.

(6)

The filing of taxes online is being heavily promoted as well. Anyone who now figures their taxes with a program such as *Turbotax* knows that there will be a steady stream of prompts to file your tax return electronically. Probably the same result could be obtained by sending your return directly to Langley. Of course, belief in the notion that the IRS doesn't share your tax information with any other government agencies has always required a rather large leap of faith.

Perhaps the most alarming use for which the internet is now being promoted is for on-line voting. Though this may sound like an enormous benefit, particularly for those who - due to age or physical infirmity - find it difficult to get to a polling booth, it also means that the notion of secret ballot elections could soon become a distant memory.

There are other ways, as well, in which products hailed as a great boon to consumers are steadily eroding our privacy. These products invariably become ubiquitous virtually overnight, through heavy promotion and advertising coupled with rapidly falling prices. The most obvious example of this is cellular phones.

Cell phones have, of course, tremendously benefited consumers - particularly those arrogant buffoons who feel the need to trumpet their self-importance by making obnoxious calls on elevators. Yet cell phones have a dark side as well: they function as tracking devices, allowing your movements to be precisely monitored. This capacity is an integral feature of the phone: the communications satellite must know where you are in order for you to send and receive your calls.

As was reported in *Rolling Stone*, "In Japan, cell phones are used to track the precise whereabouts of their users (the software lets you punch in someone's phone number and gives back his location, even the floor he's on). A locational capacity is coming soon to American cell phones by order of the Federal Communications Commission." (7)

Similarly, computerized navigational systems featured in new cars serve the same purpose. And again, this is an integral feature of the technology: the precise location of your vehicle *must* be known for the system to work. One report noted that: "Receivers for Global Positioning System satellites will become a feature in every new car's navigational system, perhaps allowing a system 'hacker' to track your whereabouts to a centimeter's accuracy." (8)

It's not likely though that system hackers are what you need be concerned about. The spooks who launched and maintain the GPS satellites through intelligence fronts like ITT should be of some concern, however. As should the law enforcement agencies with whom this information will undoubtedly be shared.

Even without the on-board navigational system, it will soon be possible to track *any* vehicle. One report has noted that "Vehicle Recognition Systems have been developed which can identify a car number plate then track the car around a city using a computerized geographic information system. Such systems are now commercially available." (9)

As are facial recognition systems - powered by software "trained to measure spatial relationships among facial features and to convert that information into a mathematical map of the face." (10) "The revolution in urban surveillance will reach the next generation of control once reliable face recognition comes in. In fact, an American company Software and Systems has trialed a system in London which can scan crowds and match faces against a database of images held in a remote computer." (9)

The database is already being built, by the way. The *Washington Post* has reported that "A small New Hampshire company that wants to build a national database of driver's license photographs received nearly \$1.5 million in federal funds and technical assistance from the U.S. Secret Service last year." (11)

The day is not far off when all of this technology will be combined to erode the last vestiges of privacy rights. As Marc Rottenberg - head of the Electronic Privacy Information Center - has noted: "People don't quite get it yet ... soon there will be computer files of facial images, and when you walk in (a building), your face will be instantly scanned by computer, so you'll be recognized by name." (7)

Picture the day when every store you enter will capture your photo (as is already the case), access a photo database via a high-speed internet connection and identify you by name, Social Security number, etc.. This identification will then be fed into another database from an information warehouse, revealing all the details of your life. Instantly.

Your shopping habits will be examined: do you normally shop in this type of store? If not, then what are you doing there? Your financial status will be examined: can you even afford to shop in this particular store? Your police record will be examined: remember that little shoplifting indiscretion in your youth?

And of course - just to be on the safe side - you might be digitally strip-searched upon entering and leaving the store as well. If you arouse too much suspicion, you might even be tracked after leaving the facility: "All these devices can be linked together and allow police to spy in real time." (6) Then again, you could opt to just stay at home and do all your shopping via the internet. If so, remember to wave to the nice policeman conducting the drive-by search of your home.

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*The Center for an
Informed America*

The Convict and the Guard: A Tale of Two Trials

Dave McGowan

March 2000

(The following article first appeared on the [World Socialist Web Site](http://www.worldsocialist.com))

A very interesting pair of stories appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on March 23. The articles, both very brief *Associated Press* releases, did not appear on the same page and no indication was given that there was any connection between the two. Taken together, however, these two clippings paint a revealing portrait of the American civil and criminal justice system.

The first of the two, appearing on page A29, concerns a civil rights lawsuit brought by an inmate at California's Corcoran State Prison against five of the prison's guards. The inmate, Ronnie Dewberry, had been representing himself in the case, which was dismissed by Judge M.D. Crocker on March 21. To understand the nature of Mr. Dewberry's suit, it is necessary to review the recent history of Corcoran Prison.

Corcoran is probably the most brutal of all of California's prisons, a state that leads the nation in the rush to incarcerate ever greater numbers of people in increasingly harsh conditions. Nowhere in the world is the prison population rising faster than in California. In December of 1998, the *Atlantic Monthly* reported that in just 20 years the inmate population in the state had grown from 19,600 to 159,000 - an eight-fold increase - and that the "state holds more inmates in its jails and prisons than do France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands combined."

These numbers are expected to increase rapidly in the next few years. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on August 16, 1999 that California is in the midst of the nation's largest prison building program. This \$5 billion plan is scheduled to give the state an additional 64,000 prison beds. The key role that the prison system increasingly plays in US social policy, particularly in the state of California, can be judged from a report by the Justice Policy Institute - from October 1996 - which stated: "From 1984 to 1994, California built 21 prisons, and only one state university ... the prison system realized a 209% increase in funding, compared to a 15% increase in state university funding."

And yet even within the vastness of California's penal system, Corcoran State Prison managed to stand out. It first attained notoriety a few years ago when allegations began surfacing that guards at the prison had forced prisoners to stage 'gladiator' fights in the prison yard, and that these same guards had regularly shot those prisoners who did not perform adequately. Amnesty International has reported that at least seven prisoners were shot dead at these fights. *Esquire* magazine added, in September of 1999, that "forty three more Corcoran prisoners were shot and seriously wounded, some paralyzed."

Other reports on Corcoran tell of the prison's so-called 'Booty Bandit,' a very large and

sadistically violent inmate. There have been repeated allegations of guards 'disciplining' other inmates by locking them up for a few nights with the 'Booty Bandit,' with the full knowledge and expectation that the inmate would be repeatedly raped and beaten. Other witnesses have charged that new arrivals at the prison were routinely forced to run a gauntlet of prison guards, who savagely beat, kicked and clubbed the new inmates as an initiation into the prison.

All of this was rather candidly acknowledged in the *Esquire* piece by former Corcoran guard Roscoe Pondexter, the most feared and respected of the prison's guards, nicknamed 'Bonecrusher.' Interviewed for the article, Pondexter candidly admits that all such activities were indeed standard procedure at the prison, and that he was an active participant. The article also notes that "after each killing, an internal review board would determine that the use of force was necessary, that the shooting had been a 'good shoot,' and then things would carry on as usual."

Also included was a rather chilling quote from Pondexter concerning the attitude among the guards and the atmosphere of brutality at the prison: "It didn't matter to us. Who we killed, who was killed. It didn't matter and everybody got cleared." Pondexter was at the time of this article scheduled to appear to offer this testimony in a series of suits brought by Corcoran inmates. Suits very much like that of Ronnie Dewberry, who had alleged that he was wounded when shots were fired after he was placed in the prison yard with his known enemies and a fight ensued.

The *AP* release notes: "The inmate argued his case before a civil jury, but was frustrated in his continued attempts to question correctional officers about how many times weapons were used to break up fights, if rival gang factions were placed together and how many times black inmates were shot at." Though not explicitly stated, the implication is clearly that the judge and/or the state's attorney repeatedly blocked Dewberry's attempts to introduce relevant evidence revealing the barbaric nature of the prison and its guards.

Following Dewberry's attempted presentation of evidence, the state's attorney moved that the charges be dismissed, and the judge concurred, stating: "I just don't think the facts added up to a violation of your civil rights." Interestingly enough, on page A30 of the same edition of the *Times*, another story appeared concerning the conviction of Francisco Gavaldon on charges that he had arranged to have his estranged wife killed. He was also convicted on a conspiracy charge, stemming from a plan of Gavaldon's to "get his son - 14 years old at the time - to hit his wife's daughter - 10 at the time - in the mouth and blame Donna Gavaldon for the injury." The plan was formulated "in an effort to improve his chances for child custody."

And how is this related to Mr. Dewberry's case? By the fact that Francisco Gavaldon is, as is duly noted, "a former Corcoran State Prison guard." Such is the caliber of men chosen to guard California's most notorious prison. But no matter. As Dewberry's case - as well as those of numerous others - amply illustrates, in the nation's courtrooms - as in Corcoran Prison - it doesn't matter and everybody gets cleared.

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Postscript: On June 10, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that: "Eight Corcoran prison guards accused of setting up inmate gladiator fights were acquitted Friday of federal civil rights abuses, a resounding verdict that all but ends one of the most troubled chapters in California prison history." (1)

The eight guards faced a total of over 30 counts in what was "one of the largest

prosecutions ever of state prison guards." (1) The jury took just six hours to clear the men of all charges, based on an anemic prosecution that was obviously intended to throw the case.

Of course, they got some help from the judge in that regard as well. Beginning with jury selection, "Judge Ishii allowed several people to sit on the jury even though they had reason to lean toward the guards' side." (1) One of these was a corrections officer herself, and another had an application pending to become one.

The judge's pretrial ruling that barred any testimony about a 'code of silence' among prison guards didn't help the prosecution's case much either. Such testimony would "have helped the jury understand why at least one former guard called as a government witness backed away from her grand jury testimony. The witness then went out of her way to praise the accused officers in open court." (1)

This was one of only nine prosecution witnesses called, although there were 60 names on the state's witness list. And "in the end, the government called only one of the whistle-blowers during the trial for limited questioning." (1) This was Richard Caruso, one of the guards who initially brought the practices of the prison to the attention of both the FBI and the *Los Angeles Times*.

And how was this star witness handled by the prosecutors? For starters, Caruso complained that he was not adequately prepared by the state's attorneys. And once on the stand, he was handled in a way that seems rather obviously intended to damage his credibility as much as possible.

"One by one, defense attorneys began to question Caruso's motives as a whistle-blower, pointing out that he had signed a recent movie deal potentially worth more than \$500,000. Caruso testified that he didn't care if a movie was made, didn't care if he received the \$500,000.

"Defense attorneys shouted 'liar,' and prosecutors sat in silence as Caruso was left shaking his head in the witness box. When it came time for prosecutors to repair the damage, they never elicited testimony from Caruso that the reason he didn't need the money was that the state recently paid him \$1.7 million to settle his lawsuit alleging retaliation for taking his allegations public.

"It was the largest amount ever given to a whistle-blowing officer in California and the jury never heard about it.

"...Another damaging moment for Caruso was when an FBI agent contradicted his testimony about a high-speed chase. Caruso had testified that the day he turned over documents to the FBI, he and an agent were pursued by state prison investigators. Agent Jennifer Murphy testified that the chase never happened. Caruso said he has a tape-recording in which he and Murphy discussed the chase." (2)

This type of prosecutorial behavior is hard to explain away as mere incompetence. Failure to introduce evidence of this nature is unfathomable. How could the prosecution have allowed their key witness to be destroyed when unimpeachable evidence existed to contradict those who were inflicting the damage?

As Caruso himself told reporters, "The prosecutors did nothing to enhance my credibility to the jury, and they had plenty to work with. I was on the honor guard at Corcoran and my record was outstanding. Instead, they let me twist in the wind while the defense attorneys called me a liar and a cheat." (2)

And how did the prosecutors account for this shabby handling of its main witness? One of them said: "By the time we got around to talking to Caruso, it was too late to pursue some of that stuff. Maybe I would have changed a few things, but we did the best we could." (2)

By the time they got to the key witness it was too late to pursue the main elements of the case? And too late as well to bring in any other whistle-blowers, or any of the other fifty witnesses on the prospective witness list? Even after prosecutors could see that the nine witnesses they had allowed to testify could not garner convictions?

I think it fairly safe to conclude that the prosecutors did not, in fact, do the best they could. And neither did the prosecutors in "another highly publicized trial of Corcoran prison guards. In November (of 1999), four Corcoran guards were acquitted of setting up the rape of an inmate by a notoriously violent prisoner known as the 'Booty Bandit.'" (3)

Despite this pattern of court decisions, the brutality at Corcoran prison has been documented. "State legislative hearings in 1998 confirmed a pattern of brutality at Corcoran, and an independent panel found that nearly 80% of the shootings were unjustified and never fully investigated by the state." (1)

But once again, Roscoe Pondexter's words have proven prophetic: "It didn't matter and everybody got cleared."

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3. Kiley Russell "State Prison Guards Win Acquittal," *Los Angeles Daily News*, June 10, 2000

[HOME](#)



The Terrorists are Coming! The Terrorists are Coming!

***David McGowan
August 2000***

*Note to readers: A few recent visitors to this web site have e-mailed me asking if perhaps this article (previously posted elsewhere on this site) shouldn't be taken down or rewritten in light of the events of September 11, 2001. Having forgotten what the article actually said, I decided to review it for myself. After doing so, I decided that it shouldn't be taken down or rewritten, and is in fact more relevant today than the day it was written. Notice that all of the reactionary 'security' measures now being openly called for by all avenues of the U.S. political and media apparatus were already being quietly called for long before any 'terrorist' attack took place. Of course, a year ago these measures would have met with stiff resistance from the American people. That is decidedly not the case now. It is left to the reader to decide if this represents the prescient wisdom of our fearless leaders, or a self-fulfilling prophecy.
September 19, 2001*

The National Commission on Terrorism, a ten-member panel assembled by the U.S. Congress to deal with supposedly rising levels of international terrorism, released a sixty-four page report this June in which a variety of measures designed to hasten the rise of the overt police state were recommended. According to the panel, these recommendations were based on a conclusion reached after conducting a six-month world-wide investigation.

This investigation led the bipartisan commission to the rather remarkable conclusion that "a well-financed, fanatical and global terrorist network poses exceedingly difficult problems for U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies." Commission chairman L. Paul Bremer III, a former State Department ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism (which is to say, a spook) summed up the problem thusly: "the threat is changing, and it's becoming more deadly." (1)

An adviser to the commission - who also boasts of being a senior adviser to the president of the Rand Corporation, a long-time intelligence front - described the report as "a passionate document determined to bring about a fundamental change in mind-set." He praised the commission for recognizing that "while progress has been made in combating terrorism, the terrorist threat has evolved ... Large scale indiscriminate violence has become the reality of today's terrorism, raising concerns that tomorrow's terrorists will move beyond truck bombs to employ chemical, biological or even nuclear weapons." (2)

Fanatical bands of global terrorists toting nuclear weapons and launching them

indiscriminately? That's pretty scary stuff. The thing that really sucks is that it comes at a time when we thought we had finally made the world safe by eliminating the menace of "international communism." And now this.

It's really a bitch being the world's only superpower. Never a moment's rest. Of course, being that we are - as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has stated - "the indispensable nation," we will do the right thing and make sacrifices at home and abroad to deal with this new global threat. Luckily, the commission has given us a blueprint for what we need to do.

First, the good news: the aforementioned commission chairman was quick to clarify that the report is "not recommending martial law." (3) Whew! That sure is a relief (of course, it would be even more of a relief if the good chairman had not even felt the need to bring up the subject of martial law). There are a few changes we're going to have to make though.

For starters, we need "more wiretaps on Americans." That will show those fanatical bastards that we are getting serious about fighting a war on terrorism. We also need to start "using the Army to replace civilian law enforcement" (though how you tell the difference anymore between 'civilian' law enforcement and military personnel is beyond me). And even more importantly, we need to start "stigmatizing foreign students who switch their majors to science," (4) lest they scurry back to the terrorist-harboring rogue state that they call home and start building nuclear warheads.

It's also high time that we begin "loosening restrictions on the Central Intelligence Agency." (1) Enough with the incredible restraint the agency has shown for the last fifty-three years - let's put some real teeth into the CIA. For one thing, let's "drop the guidelines that restrict the recruitment of unsavory informants who have committed human right abuses." (2)

This is, of course, an age-old problem for the agency. In the past, guidelines have been so restrictive that mass murderers like Klaus Barbie were barely able to slip in the door. Rumor has it that Salvadoran death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson had to lie on his application to get on the payroll. It's really rather foolish to think that an intelligence agency can function effectively without a few Nazis, Mafioso, drug lords and assassins on the roster. We're trying to fight a war here.

And let's follow another of the commission's recommendations and begin "threatening sanctions against states normally regarded as friendly to U.S. interests, such as Greece and Pakistan." (1) Why? Because they are "not cooperating fully" in the U.S.-sponsored war on terrorism. And if they don't clean up their act, they may just find themselves listed as "a 'state sponsor' of terrorism, a label now officially attached by the State Department to just seven countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba." (1)

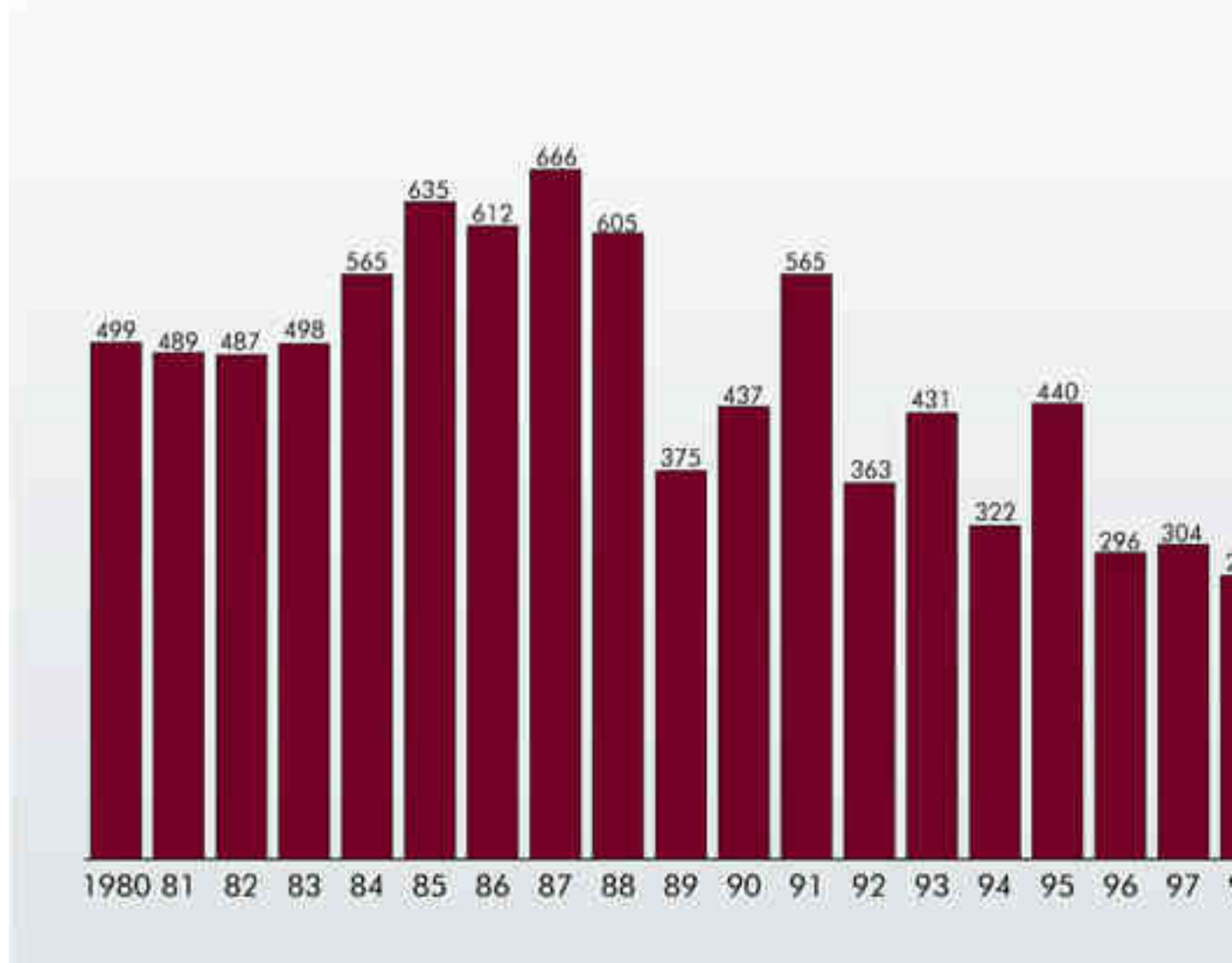
In fact, maybe we should just start issuing threats to any nation at random. You never know where those crafty terrorists could be hiding. As Brian Michael Jenkins - the adviser to the commission - noted: "the new murkier structures are harder to identify, more difficult to penetrate." (2) Almost, in fact, as if they don't even exist at all.

Finally, let's definitely implement the commission's recommendation that "in the case of a catastrophic terrorist attack ... the Department of Defense be designated the lead federal agency, instead of the FBI or the Federal Emergency Management Agency." (2) I can't speak for anyone else, but it certainly makes *me* feel safer knowing that the agency in charge will be one that admits to being a military entity, rather than one that pretends not to be.

Perhaps it is time to pause here for a reality check - the cold, hard reality being that *there is no international terrorist threat* to the United States. It simply does not exist. But you don't have to take my word for it - the U.S. State Department itself has graphically illustrated this fact in their annual report entitled "Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999." A few of the charts included in this report will suffice to show that the State Department is well aware of the fact that there is no terrorist threat to the United States, even as this same government agency attempts to exploit the wholly manufactured fear of this non-existent threat to further curtail the few civil liberties still remaining in this country.

Appendix C Statistical Review

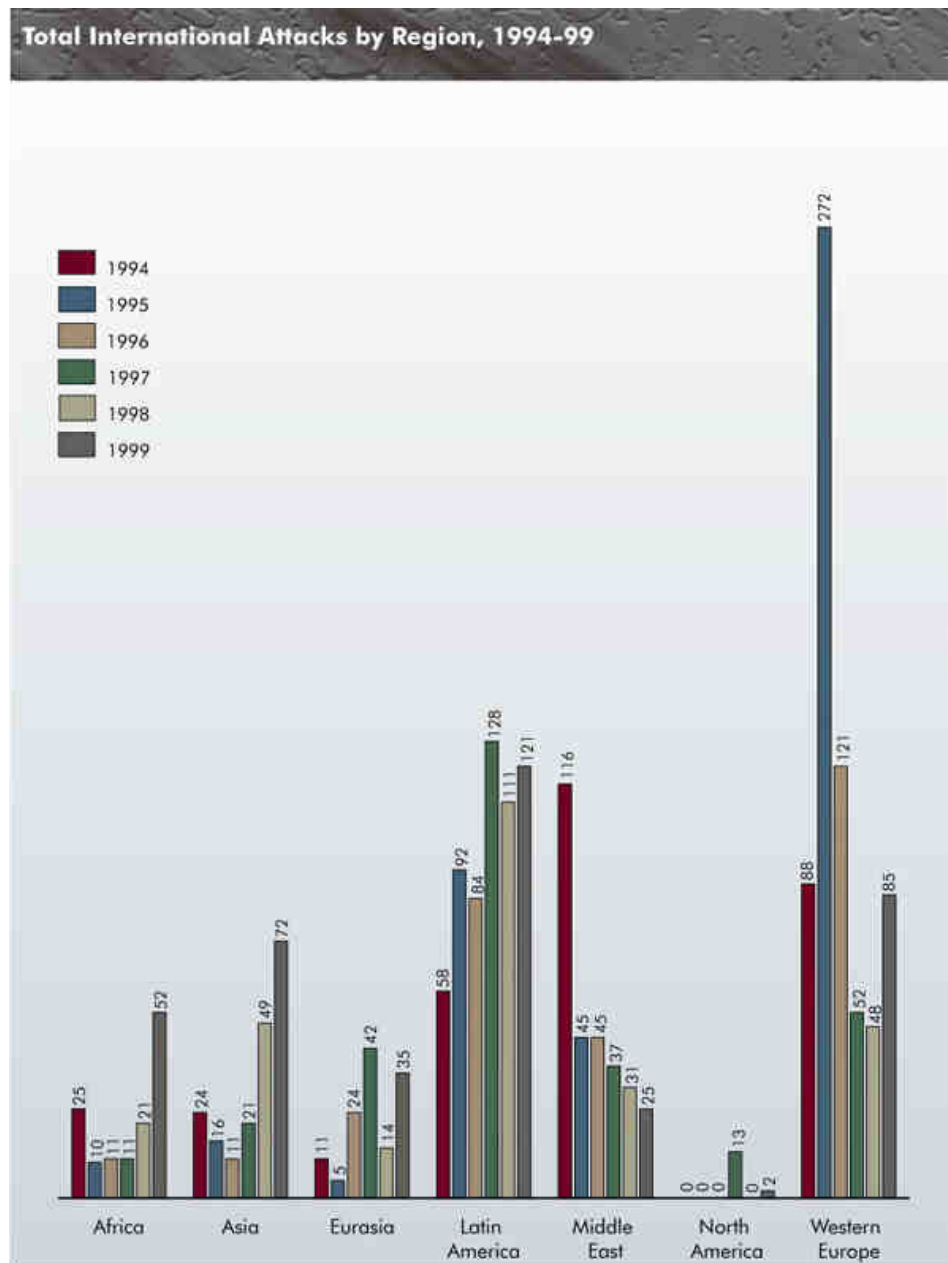
Total International Terrorist Attacks, 1980-99

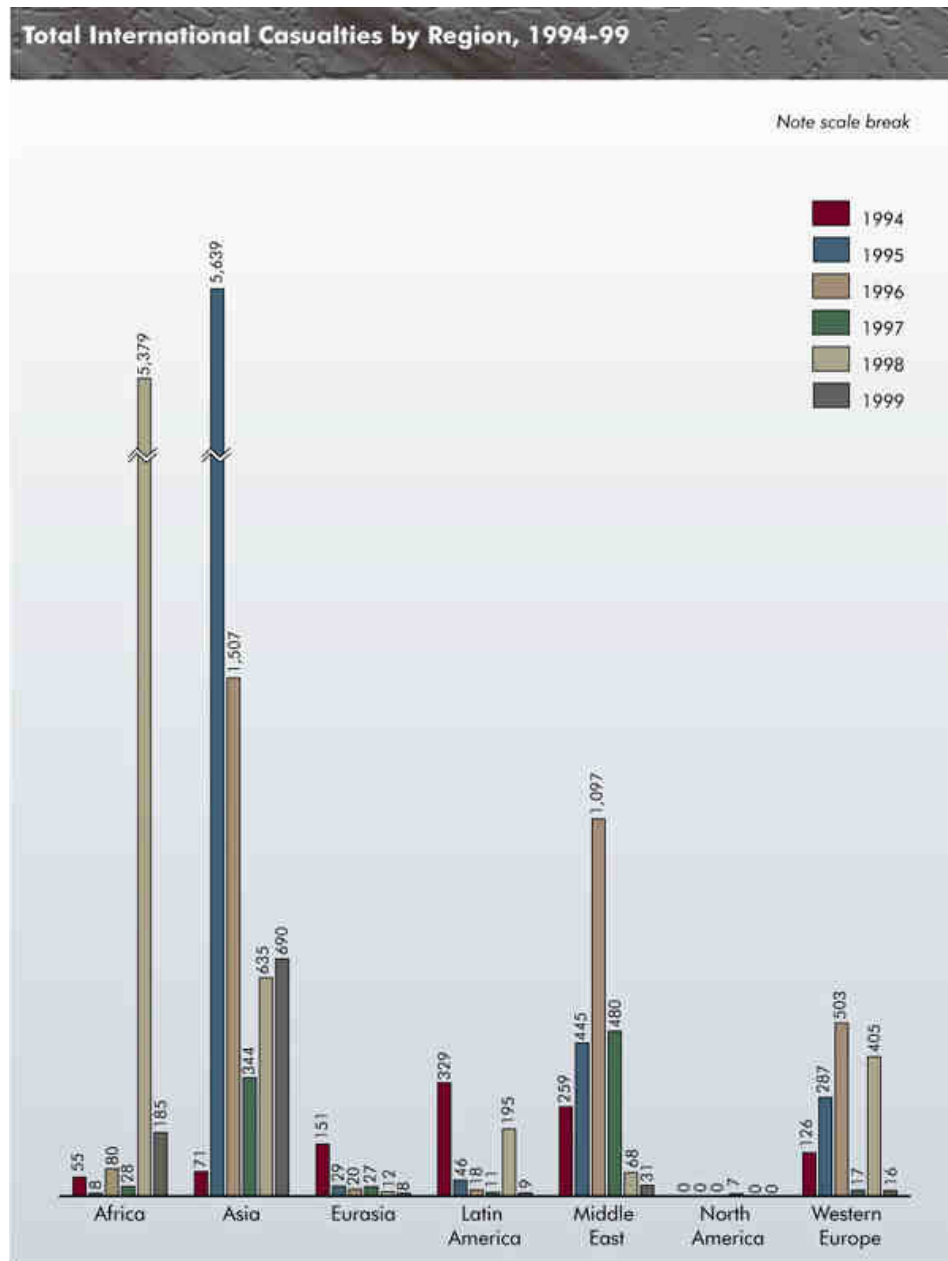


The first thing that should be immediately apparent is that terrorist attacks - or at least what the U.S. government considers terrorist attacks, which obviously does not include the acts committed *by* America or its various surrogates around the world - have shown an overall *decline* since reaching a peak in 1987. In fact, the years 1996-1998 showed the lowest levels of terrorist activity since the U.S. government started keeping records of such things. While there was a slight increase in the past year, the truth is that this increase was not by any means due to what any rational-minded person would consider 'terrorist' activity.

As the report acknowledges, the increase was due to three factors: "In Europe individuals mounted dozens of attacks to protest the NATO bombing campaign in Serbia and the Turkish authorities' capture of Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan" and "radical youth gangs in Nigeria abducted and held for ransom more than three dozen foreign oil workers. The gangs held most of the hostages for a few days before releasing them unharmed." In other words, in some parts of the world there was active resistance to flagrantly illegal acts committed by the United States, which included: the destruction of the

infrastructure of a sovereign nation and the deliberate infliction of massive environmental damage on that same nation, all in violation of any number of international laws; the direct complicity in the kidnapping of the leader of a resistance movement leading a struggle against a corrupt U.S.-backed government whose 'ethnic cleansing' of Turkish and Iraqi Kurds has already claimed tens of thousands of lives, by the State Department's own figures; and the century-long exploitation of the planet by U.S. oil interests. The next two charts illustrate the gravity of the risk that we here in America face from terrorist attacks.





It would appear that the fear that we are encouraged to feel towards terrorist attacks may be just a little, shall we say, out of proportion to the actual risks. There have been exactly fifteen terrorist attacks in North America in the last six years resulting in exactly seven casualties. That's barely over one person per year killed or injured by a terrorist attack in *all* of North America. The reality is that the odds of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack in the United States are so slight as to be statistically insignificant. Perhaps the most amazing thing is that - given that the United States has been complicit in some of the most barbaric crimes against humanity of the past century, through the exercise of a foreign policy described by one former U.S. Attorney General as "the greatest crime since World War II" - there haven't been more attacks launched against the U.S.

But what, you may ask, about those 'rogue states,' designated by the State Department as "state sponsors of terrorism"? Surely they pose a threat, right? In truth, the seven nations listed as sponsors of terrorism - Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria - do not even pose a regional threat, let alone a threat to the United States. And all of them have been the *victims* of illegal and unconscionable acts of terrorism by the United States.

Cuba has suffered through forty years of U.S.-imposed sanctions and every manner of

covert operation imaginable, including repeated assassination attempts, biological warfare attacks directed against food crops and livestock, industrial and economic sabotage, and that nasty little Bay of Pigs affair. All of this aggression towards the tiny island is of course to punish the Cuban people for having the gall to overthrow the rule of the criminally corrupt Fulgencio Batista, after the U.S. went to all the trouble to install him in power.

Iran was the victim of a bloody coup in 1953 - directed by Kermit Roosevelt (grandson of Teddy and cousin of FDR) and approved by John Foster Dulles - that resulted in the imposition of fascist rule by the U.S.-controlled Shah, who maintained power by means of SAVAK - the gestapo-like security force that resulted from the reorganization of the Iranian National Police by Brigadier General H. Norman Schwarzkopf (haven't I heard that name somewhere before?). In 1976, Amnesty International reported that SAVAK had the worst human rights record on the planet. The U.S. has continued to meddle in the affairs of the nation of Iran to the present day.

Iraq, for those with very short memories, has been the victim of a combination of bombings and sanctions for nearly ten years now. The infrastructure of the country is in a shambles, food and medical supplies are in short supply, sanitation is poor and disease runs rampant. Estimates of the death toll in the last decade run as high as two million - with 60% or more being children. Any purported terrorist acts committed by the nation of Iraq pale in comparison to the genocidal crimes being perpetrated against the Iraqi people by the United States.

Libya was the victim of an illegal and cowardly, unannounced, night-time bombing raid against a civilian population center ordered by President Reagan that resulted in numerous deaths. North Korea buried more than a million of its citizens in the 1950's due to U.S. military actions ordered by President Truman, and has endured sanctions and continual covert military operations ever since. The Sudan was the victim of an unprovoked cruise missile strike ordered by President Clinton that wiped out a pharmaceutical plant supplying the majority of antibiotics and other drugs to the region - resulting in countless thousands of deaths. Syria was the victim of a failed coup approved by the ubiquitous Dulles brothers and orchestrated by Kermit and Archibald Roosevelt (another of Teddy's grandsons).

Any alleged terrorist acts by these nations against U.S. interests are then - if not entirely justified - certainly understandable. But the truth is that most of them have not actually sponsored any terrorist acts for many years, even by the State Department's self-serving definition of what constitutes a terrorist act. Though the 1999 report goes to great lengths to conceal that fact, the prior year's report noted that: "there is no evidence of Libyan involvement in recent acts of international terrorism"; "there is no evidence of direct Syrian involvement in acts of international terrorism since 1986"; "Cuba no longer supports armed struggle in Latin America or elsewhere"; and "North Korea has not been linked definitively to any act of international terrorism since 1987." (5)

The report does note though that North Korea "continues to provide safehaven to terrorists who hijacked a Japanese airliner to North Korea in 1970." (5) And don't think that we've forgotten about that either. No, according to the more recent report: "The United States is committed to holding terrorists and those who harbor them accountable for past attacks, regardless of when the acts occurred. The United States has a long memory ..." (6) And we really know how to hold a grudge. Which is why we must track down these terrorists wherever they may lurk. According to the State Department, they can usually be found "seek(ing) refuge in 'swamps'." (6) If this is true, then U.S. intelligence forces should feel right at home wading in after them.

On a more serious note, it is abundantly clear that the call for yet more repressive police state measures has absolutely nothing to do with protecting the American people from international terrorism. The true agenda - the further repression of democratic rights in this country - couldn't be any more clear. And neither could the task before the American people

be any more clear. It's up to us to rid the world of the primary sponsor of international terrorism, and we'd better get started pretty goddamn soon.

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4. Hussein Ibish and Salam Al-Marayati "Should the Army Keep Terrorists at Bay?," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2000
5. "Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1998," United States Department of State, April 1999, <http://www.usemb.se/terror/rpt1998/index.html>
6. "Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999," United States Department of State, April 2000, <http://www.usemb.se/terror/rpt1999/index.html>

See also *Killing Hope*, by William Blum, for a more complete accounting of covert and overt military operations directed against Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Syria and a few dozen other countries.

[HOME](#)



The LAPD Rages Against Democracy

Dave McGowan
August 2000

The name of the game was psychological warfare. The target was the American people, particularly those residing in or visiting Los Angeles. The goals were at least threefold: demonize the demonstrators long before they ever began assembling on the streets of L.A., intimidate as many of them as possible into not showing up or into leaving early, and justify the use of appalling levels of police state repression.

The plan began at least two years ago as "officers were assigned as early as 1998 to begin plans for crowd control and riot suppression." (1) The media was an eager participant, running such provocatively headlined articles as "Coroners Office Plans to Be Fully Staffed Through Convention," as the *L.A. Times* did on June 23rd. The not so subtle message? Exercising your constitutional right to free speech may very well cost you your life, which seems like a rather strange way to run a 'democracy.'

Another aspect of the plan apparently involved the staging of a 'riot' outside of the Staples Center following the L.A. Laker's recent championship win, and the subsequent staging of a non-response by the LAPD. That this was a wholly manufactured event should be abundantly clear to anyone critically examining what occurred. The notion that the heavily militarized and ridiculously over-equipped LAPD was unable - or too timid - to respond to this disturbance has no connection to reality.

Without doubt, the purpose of this fiasco was to elicit calls from the media for more decisive action to quell such unrest, and to thereby manufacture the appearance of a public outcry for *more aggressive policing* (and this from a department that had already given us the hyper-aggressive and feloniously corrupt CRASH units). And this is indeed precisely what happened. Of course, never did the media take notice of the fact that there is a considerable difference between a group of unruly sports fans on a drunken rampage and a group of peacefully and lawfully assembled political protesters. To equate the two - as the press and city officials have done repeatedly - is indicative of the mind-set of the LAPD and its media allies.

Allegedly tarnished and embarrassed by its feeble response to the Laker's melee - and properly chastised by the media - the department was now determined to respond in force to the slightest provocation - real or imagined. So when it was "faced with large street demonstrations and scattered acts of physical provocation, the LAPD was swift and punishing, a far cry from the department that allowed rambunctious Laker fans to burn cars after the team's recent championship victory." (3) Of course, the street demonstrations were actually fairly small, and the vast majority of the provoking was being done *by* the LAPD.

But never mind that; the department was now able to portray itself as being the whipping-boy no matter what its response. LAPD spokesman David Kalish was quick to do exactly that when he said that the department was in "almost a no-win situation. Some will view it as we waited too long, some will view it as moving too quickly," (4) which is both a little too predictable and a little too convenient.

We are now expected to feel sorry for the scandal-wracked department. Whether they're standing-by with their thumbs up their asses while rampaging sports fans fueled by drunken bravado run amok, or whether they're firing indiscriminately into a caged-in crowd of unarmed demonstrators working peacefully to save the last vestiges of democracy in this country, the beleaguered LAPD just can't seem to catch a break.

There is actually a strong possibility that the provocation in both cases was instigated by the LAPD itself. As the *Times* would later report, the department "has a particularly long and pungent history of spying on political dissenters dating to the 'Red Squad' of the 1930s that regularly broke up union and leftist meetings, hustling protesters to jail. Then, in the late 1970s and 1980s, it was learned that officers from the department's Public Disorder Intelligence Division had infiltrated left-wing groups and that others had spied on local politicians and critics of the Police Department." (5)

And the LAPD spooks were out in force in preparation for the DNC: "The Los Angeles Police Department calls them 'scouts,' and they are so good at their job that, during this week's protests, some were shot at and others were arrested - by their own colleagues ... Throughout the week, they have provided a key element in the Police Department's intelligence-gathering network, as they circulated unnoticed within crowds across the city ... the department now uses these officers routinely ... Federal and other local agencies also had undercover officers working inside the demonstrations this week." (5)

Is it really such a stretch to suggest that these agents provocateur were involved with instigating both the Laker's fiasco and the rock-throwing incident that triggered the LAPD rampage in the protest pit? The *L.A. Times* reported tellingly that these spook officers were in the thick of all the major confrontations (which weren't, by the way, very major) that occurred during the week of protests, including being in the line of fire at the now infamous police riot following the Rage Against the Machine concert. And make no mistake about it, a police riot was exactly what it was.

While the local press claimed that what occurred was a "response to a melee at a protest concert," (6) the truth is that there was no melee until the LAPD created one by opening fire and sending in club-wielding storm troopers. And while the *Times* may claim that "a few hundred protesters clashed with an extraordinarily forceful Los Angeles Police Department," (4) the reality is that but a handful of protesters 'clashed' with the police by throwing rocks at them - while the vast majority did nothing more than try to escape the unprovoked police onslaught. (8)

The reality is also that while LAPD mouthpiece Kalish would brazenly state that "Anyone with common sense would have left the area on their own volition when the violence reached such a high level," (7) more honest voices would report that "a commander at the scene ... announced that people would be given a 'reasonable' amount of time to exit ... Less than a minute after the announcement, rubber bullets started flying," and "The vast majority of concertgoers tried to follow the order to leave ... (but) police had closed off other possible exits." (8)

And finally, the truth is that while Kalish would also claim that "police were forced to react to the 'very violent demeanor of the crowd,'" (4) less biased accounts would note that the demeanor of the crowd was in fact overwhelmingly peaceful - even festive - and the police response was "like something out of the Third Reich ... Monday's downtown sweep was overkill by any standard." (1)

Labeling Monday night's actions as a police riot should not be interpreted to mean that

the response by the LAPD was spontaneous or that the officers were 'out of control.' Quite to the contrary, the actions of L.A.'s finest were very carefully planned and executed; it was in fact a very tightly choreographed police riot that followed a time-tested blueprint.

All the basic elements of the plan were in place at least a quarter-century ago, as reported by journalist Peter Watson, who conducted an exhaustive review of the available government research in the area of psychological warfare for his book *War on the Mind* (Hutchinson, 1978). In the chapter "Psychological Aspects of Population Control," Watson summarized the pertinent research in the area of crowd control:

"Far more specific studies have been carried out in respect of the behaviour of crowds. One man who has devoted a great deal of energy to these questions is Colonel Rex Applegate ... According to Applegate, the most frequent mistake which security forces make is not to use force early enough ... Basic psychological riot control measures ... should preferably, but not necessarily, be used in the following order:

Show of force: the surprise appearance of a large unit of specially equipped police in full view of the mob can have a huge psychological impact ...

Orders to disperse: ... They should be clear and fully communicated to the crowd, which usually means a powerful public address system. In large mobs, undercover men in plain clothes should be planted ...

Use of formations: this is the point, Applegate says, where psychological force has to be replaced with physical force ... The main point in training, however, is to instill into the riot squad the value of acting *as a group* and the psychological impact which a block of well-armed men in identical uniforms has on mobs. The men should all be trained so that they always occupy the same position in the unit and therefore know exactly where everybody else is ... Once movement is underway the squad should not stop ... if any single man is attacked his aides should immediately take his place, reinforcing the idea that the mob is dealing with a unit, not with individuals. The forward squads should not weaken themselves by making arrests; this is left to the back-up units in the rear of the patrol. After dispersal, the squads should actively and 'aggressively' patrol the area, picking up any individuals left in the vicinity to prevent the mob regrouping ...

The use of chemical agents and individual fire: if it is not possible to disperse the mob through the use of formations, then, says Applegate, 'chemical agents may be called for or selected fire from marksmen' ... What he recommends is for the police to fire into the ground in front of a marauding mob; this reduces the risk of fatalities, he says, and instead the ricochet bullets hit the lower parts of the body, injuring but not killing ... Upon first confronting a crowd, he writes, steps should be taken to show them that the police are armed *and* that their guns are loaded ...

The police should never be under too specific instructions as to what they can and can not do; the commander on the ground should have discretion ... Local criminals and professional 'fringe operators,' says Applegate, will normally join the riots for personal gain. Police intelligence should aim to stop it by routine road blocks and so forth." (10)

Nowhere will you find a more accurate description of the actions of the LAPD than in those words written more than twenty years ago. The only thing that has changed is that the police now use rubber bullets rather than firing into the ground, and the chemical agents employed today are more sophisticated than in the past. To see just how closely the LAPD adhered to these time-honored psychological warfare techniques, compare the following two passages, the first taken from reporter Charles Rappleye's account of the events following the Monday night concert, and the other taken from Peter Watson's book:

"a squad of 20 motorcycle cops pulled up from the rear. As those on foot made their way, the motorcycle officers rode to the front and fanned out across Figueroa from curb to curb. Then, after another pause, all 20 hit their lights and sirens and began a slow advance. The effect was

... an unnerving assault of light and sound, the piercing racket echoing off the glass walls of the downtown skyscrapers." (1)

"Not only is very loud noise extremely painful, but when it is pulsed at certain frequencies it can make people sick - even, in some cases, induce epilepsy ... in 1973 Allen International publicized a new machine - the 'photic driver' - which not only pulsed out sound that could reverberate off buildings, but also pulsed out flashing lights. This too can be reflected from the walls of public buildings, compounding its effect. The noise and light together are reported to have a marked nauseous effect on crowds and the risk of epilepsy is also said to be greater with this machine." (10)

What then, in the final analysis, are we to make of the LAPD's behavior during the Monday Night Melee? According to the venerable *L.A. Times* - the official voice of L.A. as brought to you by the good people at the Chicago Tribune - "many people, including some of (the LAPD's) most persistent critics, credited it with protecting liberty..." (3) Strangely though, while this article went on at some length, not a single legitimate critic of the department was quoted to support this conclusion. Instead, what was presented were shameless accolades from police-state apologists like Councilwoman Ruth Galanter ("It's a credit to all of us. It's a credit to the city") and the city's Human Relations Commission chairman, Joe Hicks ("What we saw over the last week or so was the epitome of human relations on the streets of L.A."). (3)

Elsewhere, a delegate from Michigan, Bill Hanner, was quoted as saying: "I don't even know what they're demonstrating about. I don't think they're doing a very good job of getting their message out, because we're very willing to listen." (9) Hanner apparently never considered that it is extraordinarily difficult to get your message out when you are busy dodging rubber bullets, choking on tear gas, and being ignored and/or denigrated by the media. And it's doubtful that Hanner - or any of his fellow delegates - bothered to walk over and find out what the demonstrations were about, given that it's very difficult to listen from inside the confines of the Staples Center.

The verdict, at any rate, is in. The LAPD is now basking in the glow of its self-proclaimed victory, and are not in any mood for naysayers. Spokesman Kalish made this clear when he dismissed criticism of his department with the remark: "It is unfortunate that some politicians have escalated the level of the rhetoric and participated in the dissemination of disinformation." (7) The shamelessness of the department's primary disseminator of disinformation apparently knows no bounds.

"As one veteran officer described it, the idea is to control crowds through intimidation. Lethal force is eschewed, but force of any other kind is maximized." (1)

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Postscript: On Thursday, August 24th, with the dust still settling from the DNC protests, forty-one former and current members of the Los Angeles Police Department filed a class action lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court against the department seeking \$100 million in damages. The officers claim that they were retaliated against with punishment and harassment after reporting acts of egregious police misconduct including fraud, perjury, false arrest, false imprisonment, and assorted civil rights violations. The lawsuit is targeted against the city and the LAPD brass, including Chief Bernard Parks, three captains and two lieutenants. At a news conference announcing the suit, some of the officers reported having received thinly veiled death threats. The attorney for the officers announced that he expects the suit to ultimately include from 300-400 plaintiffs, all with similar complaints. The department has always steadfastly maintained that no 'code of silence' exists among its officers, as have departments all across the country. According to an amazing number of its own men, that code of silence not only exists but is enforced with a vengeance. Meanwhile, at least seventy of the department's men remain under investigation in conjunction with the Rampart scandal.

Additional Reading:

Charles Rappleye of the *L.A. Weekly* on what really happened on Monday night:

<http://www.laweeklydaily.com/ink/00/04/news-rappleye.shtml>

Charles Rappleye again, this time on the shameless praise heaped on the LAPD:

<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/00/40/news-rappleye1.shtml>

Howard Blume, also of the *L.A. Weekly*, on the shooting of civil rights attorney Carol Sobel - right between the eyes: <http://www.laweeklydaily.com/ink/00/04/news-blume.shtml>

Ben Ehrenreich of the *L.A. Weekly* catalogues the misdeeds of the LAPD during the DNC:

<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/00/40/news-ehrenreich.shtml>

FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting) on the disinformational reports in the mainstream media of the events of Monday night: <http://www.fair.org/activism/democratic-convention.html>

John Andrews of the *World Socialist Web Site* on the use of spies by the LAPD:

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/aug2000/lapd-a24.shtml>

John Seeley of the *L.A. Weekly* on the seemingly deliberate targeting of reporters by the

LAPD: <http://www.laweekly.com/ink/00/40/news-seeley.shtml>

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Death, Taxes and Education

Dave McGowan
November 2000

October 16th is not, as it turns out, a good day to travel by air if you happen to be a politician who has become, shall we say, troublesome. Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan found that out the hard way this year when he hopped aboard a chartered plane to get to a campaign appearance with less than three weeks to go before the November election. He never made it.

Carnahan had been making a run for a U.S. Senate seat, challenging Republican incumbent John Ashcroft in what the *L.A. Times* described as "one of the tightest, fiercest - and most closely watched - Senate races in the country." (2) Just before his campaign was abruptly ended, "a few recent polls ha[d] showed him with a slight edge," (1) breaking a months long deadlock.

Carnahan had some pretty nutty ideas for a would-be Senator, though. He had doubled funding for public schools during his eight years as governor, and had "championed one of the most generous public health insurance plans in the nation, extending free coverage to all children in families with incomes up to three times the poverty line." (2) Perhaps craziest of all, Carnahan had actually commuted the death sentence of a man scheduled for execution.

There were, inevitably it seems, some curious facts about the crash that took Carnahan's life (attributed by official reports to inclement weather). One initial account, for example, noted that "residents of rural Jefferson County reported hearing a loud explosion ... and at least one reported seeing a fireball against the stormy sky." (1) That would tend to indicate that the plane was destroyed *in the air*, before it 'crashed' to the ground. If so, that would also explain why "NTSB investigators have found a football-sized piece of the plane's engine more than a quarter-mile from most of the plane's wreckage, something agency spokeswoman Carol Carmody called unusual." (3)

It would also explain why authorities had initially said that "they would not identify the wreckage - or any bodies they might recover - until [Tuesday] morning," (1) though by the next day, the story being reported was that "up to 50 investigators from several agencies spent Tuesday combing the rocky gully where the plane crashed. The search for aircraft parts and human remains is expected to continue for several days." (2) You would think that if the plane was intact when it 'crashed,' pretty much all the wreckage and remains would be in one spot, and wouldn't really be all that hard to find. Go figure.

The press noted that Carnahan's death "was an eerie echo for Missouri of a 1976 plane crash that killed Senate hopeful Jerry Litton as he flew to a celebration after winning the Democratic primary." (2) I guess those Republicans in Missouri really play hardball. There

was another eerie echo as well, of another flight that ended tragically on October 16th. That was the day that U.S. Representatives Hale Boggs and Nicholas Begich caught their last plane flight as well, in 1972.

Boggs was, for those who have forgotten, a member of the notorious Warren Committee and later one of the most outspoken critics of the infamous report issued by that committee. Boggs had questioned the preposterous single bullet theory and had openly accused J. Edgar Hoover's FBI of running a massive wiretapping and blackmail operation to pressure Congress into accepting the report's patently bogus findings. His flight allegedly disappeared over Alaska and was, by official reports anyway, never recovered. In an interesting side note, the young man who gave Boggs a lift to the airport that fateful day was none other than William Jefferson Clinton. (4) Small world.

The Carnahan story, by the way, has something of a happy ending (though not for the Carnahan family, which also lost the governor's son in the crash). The people of Missouri, possibly sensing that something wasn't quite right about Carnahan's untimely death, defied expectations and chose to elect the corpse rather than the incumbent. Hats off to the good people of Missouri.

While we're on the subject of untimely deaths, I should probably mention another that occurred just weeks ago. Remember when some guy ran his truck into author Steven King not long ago and banged Spooky Steve up pretty good? And remember how Steve was really pissed off about it, and how he thought that the courts let the guy off way too easy? Damned if that guy didn't turn up dead in his home of unknown causes. Shit happens, I guess.

On a completely different topic, did you see where another blatantly fraudulent Hollywood 'liberal' exposed his true fascist leanings? We're talking here, of course, about Martin "I'm not the president, I just play him on TV, though I was offered the Green Party candidacy before they ended up going with Ralph" Sheen.

Sheen took a lead role in lobbying for the defeat of California's Proposition 36, a perfectly sensible initiative that would put non-violent drug offenders into treatment rather than sending them to prison. Bad idea, said the honorary chairman of the 'No on 36' campaign. No, Sheen thinks we should just keep stuffing bodies into our already grotesquely bloated prisons for the 'crime' of ingesting drugs that do not have state approval, though his own drug ingesting son has received, shall we say, rather lax treatment from the California courts.

Quite a progressive stance the 'liberal' actor has taken. I haven't really seen anything quite like it since Warren "I'm so fucking liberal that I once made a movie about the Russian Revolution" Beatty rose to lead the applause for the repellent Elia Kazan at last year's Oscar ceremony, shortly after his movie *Bulworth* established him as Hollywood's leading 'liberal.' That, of course, came just in time to confirm his credentials in the event he was called upon to campaign for president.

It's good to know there's no shortage of phony liberals to prop up as presidential hopefuls. That way, we don't have to worry about any truly progressive-minded politicians sneaking into office. Before moving on, it should be noted that Sheen's over-hyped television show, *The West Wing*, ranks as some of the most thinly transparent state propaganda to masquerade as entertainment programming since *The FBI* hit the airwaves.

I mean, are we really supposed to believe that the White House is full of decent, caring men and women struggling mightily to do what's right for the country and the people? You mean they're not a bunch of depraved, conscienceless corporate stooges? What the hell was I thinking? And it must be true, since the show employs any number of 'former' White House officials as writers and advisers, to ensure accuracy of course.

But enough about that. What I really wanted to talk about was how badly I've been getting ripped off every time I run to the store for a pack of smokes. That is in part due to the actions of another phony Hollywood 'liberal,' Rob "I'm not really a meathead, I just played

one on TV" Reiner, who lobbied to get a massive tax imposed on cigarettes, allegedly to strike a major blow to the tobacco companies.

Another major contributing factor has been the numerous lawsuits filed by the state against the tobacco lords, leading to massive monetary judgments. All of this is supposed to demonstrate that the government is getting serious about cracking down on the merchants of death, a scenario that would perhaps be a little more credible were it not for the fact that the tobacco giants, along with the country's other corporate cartels, pretty much *are* the government. How then are we to explain the seeming contradiction of the state attacking one of its own?

The answer lies in a basic principle of economics. For those fortunate enough not to have suffered through an economics course, the discipline maintains that the 'free market' will magically determine an equilibrium price for every commodity, based on competition and on relative levels of supply and demand.

If supply exceeds demand, prices will be driven down. When demand exceeds available supplies, prices go up. The market will therefore determine the optimal price of the commodity, preventing - among other things - price gouging by unscrupulous suppliers of goods and services. That is how the magical free market is supposed to work; there are a few problems with the concept, however.

First of all, economics rather piously touts itself as a 'positive' science, to distance itself from the behavioral sciences, which are derisively referred to as 'normative' sciences. Economics is, in other words, supposedly a real science, built on a foundation of irrefutable natural laws, as opposed to those pseudo-sciences based on 'norms' of human behavior.

In truth though, those natural laws - which essentially state that supply will always be finite, while human greed will always be infinite - are not laws at all, but value judgments. Economics is actually not a science at all, but a philosophy, and one based on a decidedly depraved view of human nature.

While it may be true that human greed certainly appears in modern-day America to know no bounds, that is the result of decades of state propaganda and educational and psychological indoctrination. Anthropological evidence (Oops, I forgot - that's one of those bullshit normative sciences, isn't it?) has long suggested that unbridled greed is not in fact a universal feature of humanity.

The 'science' of economics essentially takes a human characteristic that is the result of socialization by the capitalist state, and portrays that as a natural law that justifies the very existence of that state. A pretty ballsy scam actually, but that really has little to do with the main point I was trying to make.

The point here is that even if we accept the pseudo-science of economics at face value, the system does not work if a product has an 'inelastic demand.' What this means is that the demand for that particular product remains relatively constant regardless of price fluctuations. Inelastic demand is a result of, in the simplest possible terms, addiction.

Because we are addicted to the vile products of the tobacco lords, we will buy their goods at virtually any price. The cartel chiefs, of course, know this. That's why they don't really mind raising the price of cigarettes; they just need a justification for doing so, so as not to look like the thieves that they are. That is where their government lackeys come into play.

By posing as the public servants that they are supposed to be, crusading politicians attack the tobacco giants, imposing new taxes and securing enormous legal settlements. The result is a new source of revenue for the state, while the corporations maintain - and in most cases actually increase - their profits. Everyone wins, except of course for the consumers, who once again get fucked.

What is really at play here is a clever form of covert taxation that allows politicians to bask in the populist glow of having won a great victory against the forces of corporate irresponsibility, while at the very same time imposing a decidedly non-populist regressive tax.

And it is, make no mistake about it, a regressive tax.

A regressive tax is, according to the economists, a tax that disproportionately targets the lower income brackets. This is in contrast to a progressive tax, which is supposed to disproportionately target those in the best position to pay. The federal income tax is allegedly such a tax, though phony liberals like Jerry Brown would like to flatten it.

The reason that doubling the price of cigarettes is a regressive tax is not because only poor people smoke, but because wealthy smokers, by and large, don't really give a shit whether they're paying \$2 or \$4 a pack. Either way, it's pocket change. But to someone living paycheck to paycheck, or worse, it makes a hell of a difference.

The rapidly rising cost of cigarettes is not, by a long shot, the only covert regressive tax being foisted on the American people. Soaring gasoline prices fall into that category as well. Like the tobacco lords, the oil cartels have had a cozy relationship with the U.S. ship of state for decades, going back to the days of John D. Rockefeller.

And as with cigarettes, we are addicted to the products offered us by the oil industry, for we are addicted to our cars. This addiction has been actively nurtured by the oil and auto cartels for decades, who have worked diligently to sabotage and propagandize against any meaningful proposals for public transportation systems.

We are also addicted, by our lifestyles, to the electricity and natural gas that heat and power our homes. These are also, strangely enough, beginning to drastically increase in cost. This is yet another emerging regressive tax, and others will no doubt follow.

Let's see now, what else do I have to bitch about? How about our schools? Everybody else seems to be bitching about them, so what the hell. Our educational system is a disgrace, an international embarrassment. But fear not, for Washington has some great ideas on how to fix our schools. The key words seem to be 'testing' and 'vouchers.'

Both of our illustrious presidential candidates have proposed extensive testing of our schools. They have not, mind you, proposed actually providing any funds or resources to improve our schools. No, we can't just keep throwing money at the problem, though in truth precious little money has been thrown that direction for many years now.

What we really need to do, according to our fearless leaders, is to test the schools in their currently grossly under-funded conditions, apparently to verify what is already known - that many of our schools are under-performing. Once they are identified, the solution is to shut them down.

The only difference between the candidates' positions seemed to be the frequency of testing and the speed with which they would shut down 'failing schools.' The Bush boy is for more frequent testing, but the Gore kid has taken a no-nonsense approach to school closures. During the debates, he sounded as though he was ready to assemble a federal goon squad to criss-cross the country to begin padlocking schools.

Not to worry, though. The Washington gang has another plan as well - vouchers. After your kid's school is closed, you might be lucky enough to get a voucher to send them to a private school, where they can allegedly get a good education. The only problem is that the voucher won't even come close to actually paying for a private education, and if you can't make up the difference, you're shit-out-of-luck.

And your elected leaders couldn't care less. In fact, they couldn't care less about your local school's test scores either. The dirty truth is that they never did care. Public education was never about learning the curriculum offered and gaining an informed view of the world.

Nothing, in fact, could pose a greater threat to the state than an informed populace. Luckily then, public schools have never been about imparting knowledge. They have always been about *how* that knowledge is delivered. The process is what was important. (5)

Public schooling did not arise from some benevolent desire by the ruling powers to offer education to the masses. It arose as a necessary outgrowth of the industrial revolution, which was, in essence, a process whereby archaic concepts such as 'skilled labor' and 'craftsmanship'

were discarded in favor of mass production by largely unskilled assembly-line workers.

It required a fundamental change in the American labor pool. What was thenceforth needed were masses of interchangeable laborers willing to perform meaningless, unfulfilling, regimented and repetitive tasks day in and day out, year in and year out. Also required was a mindless obedience to authority, an ingrained awareness of the importance of punctuality, and a thorough socialization of the values of the corporate state.

The way to achieve those goals - to churn out endless numbers of mindless, robotic workers - was through public education. In truth, our public schools have never been 'failing;' they have performed wonderfully at the task for which they were designed. To be sure, they have failed to truly educate, to produce students capable of independent thought, but they were never designed to do that.

Now the concept of public education appears to be headed for the dustbin, and this really shouldn't come as any surprise. I don't know if anyone's noticed, but the industrial age is pretty much over. We are now in what is being heralded as the 'information age,' and the American workforce is once again being transformed. Rapidly disappearing are all those industrial jobs that once needed to be filled with a steady source of bodies.

In other words, in the eyes of our leaders, public schooling has lost its purpose. What this means for future generations of Americans is, to put it bluntly, you are not needed. The state has no desire to impart knowledge to you, and no reason to condition you for jobs that no longer exist.

The good news is that you need not worry about becoming some random, insignificant cog in the wheel. The bad news is that the state has no other use for you either. You have become, in the immortal words of Adolf Hitler, a generation of "useless eaters." Sorry to have to break the news to you.

Moving on then to other areas of interest, I see where Sammy "The Bull" Gravano was arrested recently in Arizona. (6) For those who are unfamiliar with Gravano, he was a prominent member of the John Gotti crime family who turned state's evidence against his former boss. For this, he was given a new identity and placed in the Witness Protection Program. He was also essentially given a free ride on no less than nineteen brutal murders to which he confessed.

Maybe if he had killed twenty people, the authorities would have considered actually prosecuting Gravano. Instead, they set him up with a new name and apparently a little plastic surgery, and he promptly set up shop in Arizona. But I'm sure it was worth the price the state paid to put Gotti away, though he would have been out of commission much earlier if the FBI hadn't protected him and colluded in sabotaging his previous trials. (7)

Gravano was born in 1945, served as a corporal in the U.S. Army for two years, and performed his first contract killing shortly after that -- the shooting of crime boss Joseph Collucci in February of 1970. At one point in his life of crime, Gravano enlisted the services of boxing trainer Teddy Atlas, who sent Sammy to a hypnotist -- a key element of his training regimen. Atlas' past clients included Mike Tyson. (8)

Gravano's killing years came to an end in December of 1990, when he and Gotti were arrested. Sammy was held in an isolation unit for ten months, after which he became extremely cooperative, so he was transferred to Quantico to hang out with his old friends at the FBI. His subsequent testimony put no less than 37 people in prison, including Gotti. (8)

Gravano was set free on April 19, 1995 -- just in time to celebrate Hitler's birthday. After entering the Witness Protection Program, Sammy decided to co-author a book with Peter Maas, which he promoted by making a number of high-profile media and public appearances, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the code of *Omerta* called for his immediate termination. Rather preposterously, he wasn't killed. (8)

Lucky guy that he is, an appellate court in New York ruled that Sammy could keep the nearly one million dollars in profits that he reaped from the book and from a movie

development deal. The state's Crime Victims Board had argued that the 'Son of Sam' law prohibited him from profiting from his crimes, but the court ruled otherwise. (9)

Following that, Gravano quickly busied himself with setting up a massive drug trafficking ring. According to the charges filed against him, Gravano controlled all the Ecstasy traffic in the state of Arizona, a multi-million dollar operation run through Gravano's construction company. Some of the money was allegedly laundered through his ex-wife's Italian restaurant, just like in the movies. (6)

Gravano was also allegedly the head of a white supremacist cult composed primarily of local high school athletes. Calling themselves the 'Devil Dogs,' the group reportedly had a fondness for brutally beating random victims who didn't meet their high Aryan standards. The teenagers also functioned as Gravano's muscle, and as his street level drug distribution network. (6)

Adding to Gravano's legal woes, he and his son were hit with another federal complaint in Brooklyn accusing them of procuring their Ecstasy supply from a New York gang. Additional charges filed in Arizona allege that Sammy also put out a contract on the life of New York defense attorney Ron Kuby, who represents some of the survivors of Gravano's nineteen murder victims. (10)

Of course, the federally protected mass murderer had allegedly built this empire without the knowledge of authorities. Sounds reasonable to me, though you have to wonder why the CIA would miss out on a party that included neo-Nazis, drug traffickers, 'Devil Dogs' and Mafioso.

One final topic needs to be discussed here for the skeptics in the crowd. In my book, *Derailing Democracy*, I wrote that: "Well known among State Department and intelligence personnel, though not among the American people, is the U.S. desire to unleash the power of tactical nuclear weaponry upon the world." Absurd, scoffed the critics.

Eighteen months after those words were written, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that: "For more than 50 years, there has been a taboo against unleashing the terrible power of the atom in war, but some in the U.S. nuclear weapons establishment and their political allies now envision a world where nuclear combat could become almost a commonplace event. Sound crazy? Unfortunately, it's true." (11) I hate to say I told you so, but ...

The *Chronicle* went on to note that: "Top Senate Republicans already have pushed through a measure that will allow U.S. weapons labs to begin studies on a so-called 'mini-nuke,' intended not to deter a potential enemy but for use in small, regional wars ... The aim would be to kill national leaders such as Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic, or to destroy stocks of biological/chemical weapons held by so-called 'rogue states'." (11)

So at least they will be put to good use, though to use a nuclear bomb to assassinate an individual seems like it might border on overkill. You might want to cut back on the coffee there at the war planning room, guys. I suppose I should mention that assassinating a foreign head of state, with a nuke or otherwise, is a rather flagrant violation of international law.

I really like the idea of using the little nukes to blow up chemical/biological weapons caches though. That way, we can disperse the toxic agents *and* throw in a healthy dose of radiation as well. A profoundly depraved idea that could only come from the military leaders of a seriously fucking dangerous and out-of-control country.

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The Unelectable Son

Dave McGowan
November 10, 2000

Those crazy Bush boys really seem to have fucked up this time. If you haven't done so lately, get up from your computer, walk outside and take a few deep breaths. Did you catch a whiff of that stench drifting across the country? If I'm not mistaken, it seems to be coming from the state of Florida. The drive to put chosen son George W. into the White House just might have gotten a little out of control.

It's been pretty clear for some time now that George was the chosen one. The problem was that George is a pretty tough sell as a presidential candidate. He is after all - can we be honest here? - an unfathomably stupid and shallow man. So even with enormous sums of money behind him, and the rather obvious support of the corporate media, it was an uphill battle for the Bush clan.

Winning the primary was easy enough, especially after the only real competitor - John McCain - took a dive by denouncing the Christian Coalition, the kiss of death for a Republican candidate. That left just a bunch of rather comical contenders like Gary Bauer and Alan Keyes to deal with. Keyes, by the way, was apparently supposed to represent the 'diversity' of the Republican Party, which he rather bizarrely did by simultaneously channeling Jesse Jackson and Pat Buchanan.

As for McCain, he had shown that even a hideously fraudulent 'reformer' could kick Bush's ass in the primaries, so he had to bow out. You overplayed your part there a little bit, John. Maybe it was that whole "pity me for the mistreatment I suffered at the hands of my Vietnamese captors after I indiscriminately dumped Napalm on their children" approach. Be that as it may, with the admiral's son out of the race, Bush basically picked up the Republican nomination by default.

The general election was a little tougher though. Senator Bob Smith could have posed a real problem when he denounced the Republican Party as too liberal for his tastes and bolted the party to run as a far-right 'Independent.' Fortunately though, Smith quickly saw the error of his ways and bolted back to the flock, where he was received - not surprisingly - with open arms.

The Reform Party could have posed a real problem as well. Candidate Ross Perot had, after all, siphoned off a considerable number of Republican votes in the last two presidential contests. But not this year. No, this was the year that saw the Reform Party gloriously implode, producing the ludicrously fascistic Pat Buchanan as a candidate, whose campaign commercials were so over-the-top that it's hard to imagine anyone taking his candidacy seriously.

It was also, notably, the year that the Reform Party stopped receiving media exposure and invitations to the debates. But even with no one else in the race to tap conservative votes, Bush was such an absurd candidate that he couldn't hope to defeat even as weak an opponent as Al Gore.

Pollsters struggled mightily to suggest otherwise. For weeks now, while calling the polls 'statistical deadlocks,' Bush has been portrayed as consistently out-polling Gore by a margin of from three to six points. The popular vote count showed this to be complete bullshit, however, and likely an effort to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, as well as to condition the American people to accept a Bush victory.

The truth was that getting George into the White House was not an easy task. The sudden emergence of the Green Party, which had been dormant for ages, certainly helped. Interestingly, Nader's campaign got considerably more, and better, press than did Buchanan's, a major shift from previous years.

But even with a spoiler on the left, and one given at least limited legitimacy, the Bush campaign was in trouble. Even though Gore seemed at times to be working on sabotaging his own campaign - such as distancing himself from Clinton, who is, despite being thoroughly corrupt, unquestionably the most popular politician in the country - Bush remained seemingly unelectable.

Even when George, Sr.'s supposed nemesis, H. Ross Perot, and George Jr.'s purported arch rival, John McCain, jumped on board the Bush team bearing ringing endorsements, the American people appeared unconvinced. Even the endorsements of such notable war criminals as Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf didn't seem to help much.

Apparently though, those Bush boys just don't know when to throw in the towel. The operative principal seems to have been: when all else fails, resort to massive voter fraud. And if you're going to steal an election, where better to do it than in Jeb Bush's Florida, where rabidly fascist anti-Castro Cubans and assorted Mafioso have long specialized in dirty tricks.

Make no mistake about it, the evidence of fraud is overwhelming. Among the numerous voting 'irregularities' reported are:

- Nine ballot boxes were reported missing in Broward County. This was disputed by an election supervisor, who claimed that nothing was missing, though numerous ballot boxes had taken longer to receive than expected. The official conceded though that one box was left behind at a polling station -- by an inexperienced volunteer, naturally. It was later reported that at least four boxes were 'forgotten' overnight in Broward and Miami-Dade counties.
- Thousands of voters have reported being turned away at the polls with claims that ballots had run out, because their names had conveniently disappeared from the lists of registered voters, or because the polling locations had illegally closed with voters still waiting in line to vote; some have alleged willful destruction of ballots from Democratic precincts.
- In at least one precinct, in Leon County, the Florida Highway Patrol set up a police checkpoint near a polling place and, according to angry voters, intimidated blacks attempting to reach the polls.
- Abandoned ballot boxes seem to be popping up more frequently than Elvis sightings. Boxes were found in three different Palm Beach County schools, as well as in an upscale, gated residential community. All were allegedly empty. Another was found in a Miami church. Yet another was discovered on Friday at the Sheraton Hotel and impounded by the Miami Police.
- Also in Palm Beach, calls flooded in complaining of a confusing ballot which caused many voters to mistakenly cast their vote for Pat Buchanan rather than Gore. In the staunchly Democratic county, Buchanan received 3,407 votes, nearly three-and-a-half times his tally in any other Florida county. Given the purported margin of 'victory' in the state's popular vote, these ballots alone would be enough to throw the election to Gore.
- In that same Palm Beach County, another 19,000 ballots were disqualified because voters had punched more than one hole, again due to the deceptive ballot design. These ballots

presumably would have heavily favored Gore.

- Another 1,600 ballots cast primarily for Gore were voided due to what was described as a 'computer glitch.'
- One of the men primarily responsible for getting out the Republican vote, particularly absentee ballots, was previously declared guilty of massive voter fraud in his run for mayor of Miami in 1997. So blatant was the fraud that his election victory was overturned by the courts and a number of officials were convicted.
- In Plantation, a school that was to have served as a polling place was torn down just three weeks before election day, and many voters were not informed of the location of the new polling place.
- London's Independent has reported that a 71-year-old pastor observed two men suspiciously loitering at a polling location bearing armloads of what appeared to be ballots. The pastor told his story to the Independent after local police and reporters refused to report on or investigate his claims.

The problem now is that the fraud is so obvious as to border on the absurd. A large sector of the population has already caught a whiff of the stench wafting in from the country's southeastern appendage, and a slew of lawsuits have already been filed by private citizens and local officials. This surely creates a bit of a problem for the Bush boys. What to do now?

They could choose to stay the course, attempting to perpetuate the fraud and sweep George into the White House, the people be damned. As the sense that something is rotten in Florida grows among the American people though, this could bring a rather hostile reaction from a fairly broad spectrum of the population. Even with Gore playing along and conceding defeat, this might not play too well.

The smarter thing to do, it seems, is to swing the election back to Gore, without of course admitting to massive voter fraud. Perhaps some voting improprieties could be admitted to, while blaming lower level, overzealous staffers. There would naturally be a good deal of hostility to Gore from the other side of the aisle, but that's all a part of the game anyway.

A relentless attack on a Gore presidency would serve the same function as it did with the Clinton presidency - to create the illusion of a liberal administration while a reactionary agenda is pursued, thereby keeping the American 'left' confused and steadfastly behind another false idol. But, like I said, that would be the smart thing to do, and in case I haven't mentioned it yet, George isn't real bright.

That reminds me of a question I've been meaning to ask. The Bush family have long been big fans of eugenics programs, and have themselves been careful not to marry 'outside their class,' so to speak. But doesn't the fact that generations of selective breeding have produced such an extraordinarily stupid man refute the eugenics beliefs of his forbears? Just checking.

Anyway, it seems a near certainty that with the chosen son so close to the White House, the Bush team will push on. The media will gamely play along, portraying Gore as the villain for being a whiny, poor loser. Every effort will be made to turn public opinion against the vice-president, and in favor of the Bush crime family. This is not necessarily a bad thing, however.

Even with a national media consensus for Gore to graciously step aside, a large swath of the American people will view the Bush presidency as fundamentally illegitimate. Adding to the hostility will be the overtly reactionary agenda that the Bush team will pursue, which is not to be confused with the covertly reactionary agenda pursued for the last eight years by Mr. Bill, though the results are largely the same.

Bush will likely go so far as to claim some sort of imaginary mandate from the people. And maybe, just maybe, that will be enough to awake the country from its slumber. Maybe the country needs an embarrassingly dim-witted son of an extraordinarily corrupt political family foisted into power against the will of the people through a transparently fraudulent

election, and committed to pursuing a decidedly anti-democratic agenda. If that isn't enough to get the people up off their asses, then there is little hope that anything will.

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The Unelectable Son, Part II

Dave McGowan
November 15, 2000

"The outcome of this election will not be the result of ... efforts to mold public opinion."
George W. Bush robotically reciting a statement to the press on November 15, 2000

Actually, that is exactly what the outcome will be the result of. While the media continues to make a concerted and absolutely shameless effort to steer public opinion into supporting a Bush presidency, evidence continues to mount of a massive, well-planned (though sloppily executed) operation to steal the vote in the state of Florida, brought to you courtesy of the Bush family.

As details emerge, it is difficult to tell which is more amazing - the brazenness of the fraud perpetrated on the people of this country, or the complete refusal of the media to acknowledge what is painfully obvious. What is also obvious is that the media, and *both* political parties, desperately want the whole thing to go away as soon as possible.

It is not likely that it is Al Gore and his campaign team that are delaying the completion of the Bush coup. More likely, it is public outrage that has forced Gore to put up at least the illusion of a fight. Essentially, he is just buying time until public opinion can be sufficiently brought under control by the all-powerful media.

One of the more telling details to emerge concerns the role played by a *Fox News* official on election night. As readers will recall, the state of Florida was originally called in favor of Gore, based on the results of exit polls (a very reliable indicator assuming that ballots are accurately cast and counted). At that time, the Bush team abandoned their prior plans and retreated to the seclusion of the governor's mansion.

Not long after, the networks took the state back from Gore and declared it "too close to call," offering little in the way of explanation. Still later in the night, the networks gave the state to Bush, and every effort was made to present that as the final, authoritative decision. The earlier call for Gore, purportedly, had been a rush to judgment.

The first network to swing the state to Bush was the *Fox News Channel*, followed (within *four minutes*) by all the usual suspects - *CNN*, *ABC*, *CBS*, *NBC* and *MSNBC*. The call was made, strangely enough, not based on reports from the *Voters News Service*, as would be customary, but on the sole discretion of a *Fox* official.

The fact that such a crucial call was made on the authority of a single news executive - with no supporting documentation - is by itself rather disturbing. Far more disturbing is that the official, John Ellis, is a first cousin of George and Jeb Bush, and he has acknowledged having been in frequent contact with both of the Bush boys on election night.

What we have here then is a presidential election that hinged on a state controlled by a member of the Bush clan, with that state being declared for candidate Bush by yet another member of the Bush clan (who had been hired by *Fox* just a month before the election). The media immediately fell in line behind this scam, prompting Gore to nearly offer a public concession, wrapping things up before anyone realized what the hell had happened.

It's almost too obvious a scandal to even be believed. Is the Bush family really so arrogant as to believe that they can get away with literally anything? *Can they* in fact get away with it? Are Americans so thoroughly conditioned to accepting their media-supplied points of view that they will allow this to stand?

The corruption evident in Volusia County alone is enough to warrant not just a recount, but a *re-vote* and a thorough investigation. At one point on the night of the election, Gore was leading Bush by 21,000 votes in the county. Within a half an hour, Gore's tally had *dropped* by 16,000 votes, while candidate David McReynolds had somehow picked up 10,000 of his own. In the final tally, McReynolds - a Socialist Party candidate - was credited with a grand total of just nine votes.

This discrepancy has yet to be explained. Other irregularities throughout the county were explained away as harmless error and simple misunderstanding. For example, one election worker left the ballot collection area carrying two uninspected bags, prompting a call to the sheriff. The *Washington Post* explained though that the worker was "merely taking home dirty laundry." Say what? For what possible reason would a worker be lugging two bags of dirty laundry around a ballot collection area?

Excuse my frankness here, but reading news accounts such as this should really piss you off. Implicit in such coverage is the message that the media thinks you are stupid - a real fucking idiot. So stupid and gullible, in fact, that you'll go along with wrapping-up this sham election, sweeping all the ugliness under the rug, and propping up George Bush as an illegitimate president.

At any rate, Volusia County experienced other irregularities as well. Six precincts were unable to transfer their results due to the proverbial computer glitch; the county's returns were not received until 3 A.M., leaving a considerable amount of time during which the ballots could have been altered in any number of ways.

On Wednesday, as a recount was underway, a poll worker dropped off a bag of ballots that had allegedly spent the night in his car. Two days later, three more ballot bags were found in a vault, one with a broken seal, one without a seal, and the third lying open with ballots spilling out. All of this nonsense, we are supposed to believe, is a normal part of any election.

Put any election under such scrutiny, the media mantra goes, and you will find such irregularities. This is absolute nonsense. These were not random, motiveless mistakes that were made; this was a concerted effort to disenfranchise targeted sectors of the population.

As the *Palm Beach Post* reported, almost half of the disqualified ballots in Palm Beach County came from predominately black and elderly precincts. Throughout the county, seven percent of ballots were thrown out. In precincts where most residents are over age 65, the figure rose to ten percent, and in black precincts, sixteen percent - one in six ballots - were disqualified.

Similarly, the *Miami Herald* has reported that the same pattern was followed in Miami-Dade County. Countywide, the percentage of voided ballots was 2.7 percent. In some two dozen black precincts, however, the rate was from eight to eleven percent. In the precinct with the highest rate of 'double punching' (10.98%), fully 99 percent of the non-disqualified votes went to Gore.

Duval County followed the same pattern. *Salon*, an on-line magazine, reported that nearly half of the 27,000 disqualified ballots in that county came from just four of its fourteen districts. Those districts' residents are, oddly enough, primarily black and almost all are Democrats.

The propagandists would have you believe that such irregularities are due to the fact that blacks and the elderly are too stupid (yuck, yuck) to understand the ballots, and have therefore essentially forfeited their right to vote. The truth though is that the elderly appear to have been deliberately targeted with deceptive ballots, so that they could then be publicly ridiculed.

And according to *The Times (UK)*, as many as 17,000 ballots given primarily to black voters had already been marked for a rival candidate, automatically disqualifying them when another candidate was selected. In light of the sheer volume of irregularities, and of the tens of thousands of voters who were affected, it is patently absurd to write the Florida vote off as 'business as usual.'

A few irregularities would be understandable, but the reports trickling out from Florida indicate wholesale corruption: ballot boxes going missing, ballot boxes reappearing (which may or may not be the boxes that went missing, and may or may not still contain the original contents), illegal poll closings, deceptively designed ballots, unannounced poll relocations, voter intimidation by the police, unexplained removal of names from voter registration lists, and widespread reports of ballot tampering.

Exactly how many voting 'improprieties' need to be reported, and how many members of the Bush family need to be directly implicated, before the word 'fraud' enters the media's lexicon? To understand just how thoroughly corrupt and co-opted the media is, a story from the *New York Daily News* that ran just before the election is instructive.

Revealed there is the strategy that was being prepared by the Bush team to employ in the event that Bush had taken the popular vote but lost the Electoral College vote - the opposite of the current alleged outcome. The team had prepared 'talking points' on the unfairness of the Electoral College system and planned a massive media assault, fueled by right-wing talk radio demagogues.

The idea was to spark a popular revolt against the College as an institution that was thwarting the free will of the people. The team had intended to enlist Democrats to join in the bipartisan propaganda campaign. Strangely enough, with Bush now the presumed winner, neither political party - nor the media - seems to really give a shit about the will of the people. Strange how that works.

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The Unelectable Son, Part III

Dave McGowan
November 28, 2000

"Group hypnotism, mob leadership, call it what you will, was never more easy than in this day of syndicated press and national hookup. And democracy may find this new world an even more unhealthy place in which to survive than it has been for the last one hundred years."

CIA asset George "Esty" Estabrooks in *Hypnotism*, 1943

On November 26th, James Baker III stood before the television cameras and said: "it is time to honor the will of the people." Well, hallelujah! Finally, a voice of sanity somewhere in the vast wasteland of the American media. At long last, someone with the courage and integrity and basic human decency to stand before the nation and offer a voice of reason.

But wait! It turns out that it was some kind of sick joke. Jimbo was just pulling our leg. What he really wanted was for the will of the people to be flagrantly ignored by granting the presidency to George W. Bush. For if the will of the people were truly respected by the likes of Baker, he would have advised his candidate to step aside long ago.

The will of the people was, without question, that Al Gore should serve as our next president. This is an indisputable fact that cannot be denied and will not go away, no matter how much propaganda is foisted on the American people by the Washington crowd and their fully-owned media subsidiaries.

This is true even if we give the Bush team every possible benefit of the doubt - even if we assume that there was no deliberate fraud in the state of Florida, that the results certified by Katherine "what cabinet post am I getting?" Harris are accurate, and that every qualified ballot cast has been accurately counted and recorded.

Consider the fact that Gore finished with a small, though unmistakable margin of victory in the national popular vote tally, roughly three times Kennedy's margin of victory in the frequently referenced 1960 election. Clearly then, in terms of the popular vote, the will of the people favored a Gore presidency. Of course, in a real democracy, that would be enough to decide the election.

We all know, however, that this is not a real democracy, so mysterious and wise 'electors' - who know far better than we what is best for us - are selected to decide who our president should be. And this, according to the media and the Washington establishment, is a good thing. Why, it's the way we've always done things, and everyone knows that this is the greatest damned democracy in the world.

But, you ask, isn't the Electoral College an archaic, undemocratic institution? That may

be so, they say, but those are the rules that we've always played by and we can't go changing them now. But why, you ask, if we call ourselves a democracy - if we in fact hold ourselves up to the world as an *ideal democracy* - would we not rid ourselves of an undemocratic 'aberration'?

We can't do that, they say, because it's unfair to change the rules just because you don't like the outcome. But, you ask, if it's truly democracy that we aspire to, isn't it our *duty* to change the rules if those rules support an undemocratic outcome? No, they say, the rules must be followed. But, you ask, by saying that the rules are more important than the actual exercise of democracy, aren't you acknowledging that you are a fascist? And they say nothing.

For the sake of argument, though, we will continue to give Bush the benefit of the doubt and entertain the ludicrous fantasy that the Electoral College has a legitimate place in a democracy. What then does the College have to say? Prior to the certification of Florida's votes, Gore held 267 electoral votes out of a possible 538. If you do the math, you'll find that *even without Florida*, Gore was less than 1/2 of 1 percent shy of the electoral majority needed to win.

Even so, 'close' doesn't count, and Florida's electoral votes give Bush a small margin of victory in the Electoral College. There is a catch, though: the improbably narrow margin of victory in the Florida popular vote that gives him the infinitesimal lead in electoral votes is dependent upon several thousand ballots being miscast.

As previously stated, we are giving Bush every benefit of the doubt with regards to voter fraud. What is not in doubt though is that a good number of elderly voters - some of them survivors of the Nazi holocaust - cast their ballots for Hitler apologist Pat Buchanan, which many 'conservatives' seem to find gut-bustingly funny. Even assuming that this was just an honest mistake, the fact remains that the intent of these voters was, by *all accounts*, to cast their ballots for Al Gore.

And the plain fact is that those votes, had they been properly cast, would have given the state to Gore, even before any of the recounts adjusted the supposed margin of victory. The simple truth, then, is that the *intent* of the voters in Florida, and therefore the *will* of the people of that state, was that Gore should accede to the throne.

Even the most die-hard of Bush flacks cannot deny this fact, though the conscienceless Baker turned it on its head in an absolutely craven attempt to justify the spectacle of an arrogant and shameless little man delivering an ersatz acceptance speech after losing the popular vote and achieving the narrowest of electoral victories based on what can - *in the most charitable light* - best be described as a mistake.

What sort of character must a man possess to pompously propel himself to power under such conditions? What kind of man would so presumptuously declare himself the winner with a paper-thin victory based on an admitted mistake, and feel no shame in doing so? And what sort of media would be a party to such a brazen disregard for the will of the people, the same people that candidate Bush claimed to trust?

The most inflammatory and disinformational coverage of this election fiasco has come from, not surprisingly, the foaming-at-the-mouth denizens of talk radio - the mouthpieces of the ultra-right. But can we really expect anything more from the likes of Rush Limbaugh, whose lies are so transparent that he deliberately and consciously avoids any situation where he might have to actually defend his views?

The Limbaugh clones are not alone, however. Coverage from the cable news networks has been only slightly less inflammatory. This really shouldn't surprise anyone, however, save for those Americans who live in some sort of parallel universe wherein the nation is plagued by a 'liberal' press. To see just how preposterous this belief is, consider who controls the flow of information flooding the cable airwaves.

CNN, the reigning king of the cable titans, is soon to be owned by AOL. A quick peek at the Board of Directors of AOL reveals a rather curious fact: it seems to be heavily populated

by such notorious bleeding-heart liberals as General Alexander Haig and General Colin Powell. CNN is, in other words, closely affiliated with a board that includes the designated Secretary of State of the proposed Bush administration, as well as the man who served as Secretary of State in the Reagan/Bush administration.

It's easy to see, then, how CNN could be guilty of harboring a 'liberal' bias. The same could be said of MSNBC, which is co-owned by Bill Gates, a man who has been at war - by outward appearances anyway - with the Clinton/Gore Justice Department for a number of years now. Then there is the third major cable news entity, Fox News, owned by one of the most openly fascistic players in the business world, Rupert Murdoch.

Assisting Murdoch in putting a 'liberal' slant on this year's election coverage was none other than John Ellis, kissing cousin to George, Jeb (*aka* John Ellis Bush), Marvin and Neil. All three of the cable networks, to put it bluntly, have a vested interest in propelling Bush into power, and none of them can by any stretch of the imagination be considered an objective source of news, 'liberal' or otherwise.

Even these thoroughly corrupt propaganda fronts, though, seemed a bit disturbed when the Bush team sent in a band of hired thugs - taking orders from a mobile command post - to physically disrupt the court-ordered recounting of ballots. Some in the political and media establishment seemed to be a little concerned that deciding an election by threats of mob violence might have been stepping over the line.

Not too concerned though to expose the fact that the grab for power by Sir George is increasingly resembling an unabashedly fascist coup. The print media has been just as shameless as the broadcast media in covering up this fact, and in struggling to legitimize the 'victory' of the Bush team.

The *Los Angeles Times*, long alleged to be a pillar of the 'liberal' media, is fairly typical of the hideously biased print coverage of the fraudulent election. Since election day, two categories of images have dominated the pages of the venerable *Times*.

The first is flattering, presidential looking photos of George Bush, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by a much smaller, and generally less flattering, photo of Al Gore. The intent is clearly to psychologically manipulate the people into accepting a Bush presidency, while relegating Gore to also-ran status.

The other dominant image, presented incessantly, is that of bug-eyed and confused looking local officials and precinct workers staring incoherently up at contested ballots as if trying to somehow divine the intentions of voters. The effect is to make a mockery of the hand recounts, despite the fact that hand counting ballots has been the universally accepted method of resolving election disputes for the entire history of this country.

The depths of depravity to which the print and broadcast media are willing to stoop is breathtaking. What though of the 'real' voices of liberalism in this country? What of the so-called alternative media? And what of the 'liberal' and 'progressive' editorialists, columnists and pundits?

Those who have not come out of the fascist closet to endorse an illegitimate presidency have largely remained silent. Some have meekly protested the actions of the Bush operatives, while generally ignoring their more flagrantly undemocratic shenanigans, such as allowing two Republican Party hacks unrestricted and unsupervised access to Republican absentee ballot applications in Seminole County, in flagrant violation of a Florida law drafted specifically to prevent voter fraud.

And where, for that matter, are the country's 'liberal' politicians? Why has Paul Wellstone not denounced the jack-boot tactics of the Bush team? Where are Ted Kennedy, Barney Frank and Tom Harkin? And what of the Great Green One? Why has the self-proclaimed candidate of the people had exactly nothing to say about the thwarting of the will of the people?

The silence of the frauds is truly stunning. Apparently their 'liberal' role-playing does not

include denouncing the wholesale theft of an American presidential election. Such denunciations are best left, apparently, to the wild-eyed conspiracy crowd, even when the evidence is staring them directly in the face.

As for Al Gore and his 'Democratic' cohorts, they continue to walk the tightrope. Their Republican partners-in-crime have placed them in a very difficult position. In order to maintain the legitimacy of the 'Democratic Party,' they must continue to put up a reasonable semblance of a fight.

In order, though, to maintain the legitimacy of the political system as a whole, they must do so without exposing the fundamentally corrupt nature of the Bush grab for power. In that regard, the media will be a trusted ally; for in the final analysis, the media is really serving the interests of 'both' political parties.

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A Supreme Injustice

*Dave McGowan
December 4, 2000*

Since the 'historic' Supreme Court session held on December 1st was not televised, many of you who didn't have time to plod through the transcript of the 'trial' may have missed out on what transpired. As a public service to those readers, here are some of the highlights of that morning's events. And for those who lack the legal expertise to grasp what was being said, italicized translations accompany all of the excerpted remarks:

Marshal of the court, Dale Bosley: The honorable, the chief justice and the associate justices of the Supreme Court of the United States ... God save the United States and this honorable court.

Bosley: The Supreme Court of the United States, the most openly fascistic entity of the U.S. government, is now in session. God save the people of the United States from this dishonorable court, since they don't seem willing or able to save themselves.

Justice John Paul Stevens: Under any circumstances, it was not "must"?

Bush attorney Theodore Olson: Under no circumstances was it "must accept." Now the second--

Stevens: Even an act of God or fraud?

Olson: I don't believe so.

Stevens: Are you actually suggesting, Mr. Olson, that there were absolutely no circumstances under which the secretary of state would have been required, legally and morally, to accept the revised ballot counts?

Olson: That's what we're saying. Now, if I could get on to the next absurd point I wanted to make--

Stevens: Hold on a goddamned minute there, Olson. Are you saying that even if the recounts were correcting massive voter fraud, she still was not required to accept them?

Olson: That's our story, and we're sticking with it.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: And I do not know of any case where we have impugned a state supreme court the way you are doing in this case.

Ginsburg: Olson, you fascist piece of shit. Do you have no shame at all, bringing this dung heap of a case before this court? And does your shrill-voiced hag of a wife have no shame either? If I have to see her spouting fascist propaganda on the cable airwaves one more time, I think I'm going to puke. And by the way, what do you think of a 'news' channel, such as

MSNBC, parading her sorry ass out on a daily basis to comment on the impeachment marathon, without ever once identifying her as a major player, along with yourself, in that whole sordid affair?

Olson: I'd like to finish that one point, that the Florida Supreme Court said, "We are not going to be bound by technical statutory requirements," or what the supreme court called hyper-technical statutory requirements. "Instead, we are going to resort to the will of the people, the will of the electorate, the will of the voters," so to speak ...

Olson: The main point that we're arguing here is that the Florida Supreme Court had the gall to actually render a decision that attempted to honor the will of the people, as though they thought this was some sort of democracy we're trying to run here. I can't imagine what the hell they were thinking ...

Justice Clarence Thomas:

Thomas: (I don't know why I have to be here listening to this shit. I have no idea what the fuck these people are talking about. I hope Rehnquist and Scalia are going to explain all this shit to me later.)

Olson: And what the court was bound and determined to do was to get to a consequence that the court determined was consistent with the will of the people, irrespective of what the statute said.

Olson: Like I was saying, the Florida court insisted on issuing a ruling consistent with democratic rights, something that I, and I'm sure many of you fascists on the bench, find offensive and completely contradictory to the 'rule of law.'

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor: And are you relying in that regard on Title II - I mean, would you like to - Article II - would you like to characterize the federal issue--

Olson: Well--

O'Connor: Did you ever see those old "Saturday Night Live" skits where Kevin Nealon - Article II - used to insert subliminal messages - Article II - into his speech? Am I getting through to you, Mr. Olson? Do you understand - hot sex - what I am trying to say?

Olson: Huh?

Justice Stephen Breyer: And therefore, I guess, whether we win - whether your side, the side you're supporting, wins or loses, it doesn't change that.

Breyer: Holy Shit, Olson! Did you just hear that Freudian slip? What I meant to say was that if your side, you know, the side you're on, which doesn't include us here on the bench, who are of course neutral - but if your side wins - that's what I meant to say. It almost sounded like we were on your side, which of course we're not.

O'Connor: I guess Article II permits the legislature, in general, to make the choice it could itself select the electors.

O'Connor: Olson, you're still not getting it, you dumb ass, so here it is plain and simple: Article II basically says "fuck the voters." Why don't you try arguing that?

Justice Antonin Scalia: And that is a real problem, it seems to me, under Article II, because, in fact, there is no right of suffrage under Article II. There's a right of suffrage in voting for the legislature, but Article II makes it very clear that the legislature can, itself, appoint the electors.

Scalia: O'Connor's quite right; I don't know why no one thought of that sooner. Article II

does in fact say that Bush can be installed in power despite losing the vote. The legislature does indeed have the right to say "fuck the voters."

Thomas:

Thomas: (I suppose as the only African American on the bench, and likely in the entire courtroom - unless you count Bob Barr - I should probably say something about the disenfranchisement of tens of thousands of black voters, rather than sitting here mute. Unfortunately, I'm a reprehensible piece of shit who is only concerned with wrapping this up in time to get home and watch "Back Door Girls" one more time before I have to return it.)

Gore attorney Laurence Tribe: The disenfranchising of people, which is what this is all about, disenfranchising people isn't very nice.

Tribe: Saying "fuck the voters," which is the sole basis for the Bush team's abhorrent lawsuit, is a vile, unconscionable act that should be denounced in the harshest possible terms, but I'm such a craven douche bag that all I can come up with is to say that it isn't very nice.

Olson: The second paragraph of the conclusion says, "Because the right to vote is the preeminent right in the declaration of rights of the Florida Constitution" and so forth. The opinion is full of language--

Olson: The Florida court's decision is full of mumbo-jumbo about the people having a right to vote, or some kind of crazy shit like that. Frankly, this document reads like it was written by schoolchildren who had just been brainwashed into believing that they live in a democracy. This decision is a joke--

Olson: I think that the only reasonable, fair reading of the decision is that the Florida Supreme Court felt that - and it says it over and over again - that we are going to attempt to discern the will of the people, the will of the electorate, and discern and enhance in whatever way we possibly can the right to vote.

Olson: I can't remember that Article you guys keep referring to, but like you said, the legislature doesn't have to respect the results of the election anyway. That's where the Florida court really screwed up, because they thought that it was actually important to get an accurate count of the ballots in order to determine the will of the people. But, like you guys keep saying, the legislature can do whatever it damn well pleases, so why all the fuss over getting an accurate count of the ballots? Even if Gore won the election by thousands of votes, as everyone in this room knows he did, who cares? Florida's Secretary of State has already certified our boy as the winner, and the legislature can now select the state's electors. I don't know, to be honest with you, why we even bothered to hold the election in the first place. It seems like a big waste of time and money to me.

On December 4th, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of - big fucking surprise - George W. Bush (five of the nine Injustices were appointed by the Bush and Reagan administrations, and two others by Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford). The blatantly fascistic decision was strangely unsigned, demonstrating that while the court is in fact filled with spawns of Satan, none of them has the integrity to own up to their fascist leanings. A couple of highlights of the decision, with the requisite translations, are reproduced here:

There are expressions in the opinion of the Supreme Court of Florida that may be read to indicate that it construed the Florida Election Code without regard to the extent to which the Florida Constitution could, consistent with Art. II, Sec. 1, cl. 2, "circumscribe the legislative power." The opinion states, for example, that "[t]o the extent that the Legislature may enact

laws regulating the electoral process, those laws are valid only if they impose no 'unreasonable or unnecessary' restraints on the right of suffrage" guaranteed by the state constitution. App. to Pet. for Cert. 30a. The opinion also states that "[b]ecause election laws are intended to facilitate the right of suffrage, such laws must be liberally construed in favor of the citizens' right to vote ..."

We strongly object to the decision rendered by the Florida Supreme Court, in that the lower court based its decision on the misguided notion that the president of the United States should be elected by the people, at least indirectly. The Florida court showed a contempt for the 'rule of law' that is exceeded only by our own complete contempt for the American people, especially all those elderly and minority voters who we didn't expect to turn out to vote on election day. This court wishes to affirm that the Florida Legislature, and, quite frankly, the legislatures of any other states, need not pay any attention to the wishes of the voters ...

Specifically, we are unclear as to the extent to which the Florida Supreme Court saw the Florida Constitution as circumscribing the legislature's authority under Article II, Sec. 1, cl. 2. We are also unclear as to the consideration the Florida Supreme Court accorded to 3 U.S.C. Sec. 5. The judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida is therefore vacated, and the case is remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.

It is so ordered.

Though the attorney for Bush was unable to actually make this argument in court, perhaps not being as openly fascist as those of us on the bench, we have nevertheless ruled in favor of the Bush team based on our own disagreements with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court. This we can do because we are appointed for life and can therefore do any goddamned thing we please. We have no qualms with saying "fuck the voters," because, quite frankly, none of them ever cast a vote for any of us to be sitting up here. We hereby order the Florida Supreme Court to abide by our ruling and to likewise say "fuck the voters."

It is so ordered.

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A Supreme Injustice, Part II

*Dave McGowan
December 12, 2000*

Once again the U.S. Supreme Court, universally hailed by the press and pundits as an unimpeachably honorable body that is above politics, has wallowed into the election muck. And once again the court has opted not to have its proceedings televised, a suitably anti-democratic stance for the reactionary court. So once again, as a public service to readers, here are some of the highlights of the morning's events. And once again, for those who lack the legal expertise to grasp what was being said, italicized translations accompany all of the excerpted remarks:

Bush attorney Theodore Olson: All of the limitations on the remand process that existed during the protest phase, where the standard should be lower because it's earlier in the process, are thrown out the window. The timetables are thrown out the window. The process that exists are there ...

Justice David Souter: What's the timetable in 168?

Olson: There's no timetable ...

Souter: That's right, there is no timetable there, so that seems to undercut your timetable argument once you get into the contest phase from the protest phase.

Olson: Since our strategy primarily involves stalling the accurate counting of votes until we can run out the clock, we object to the fact that we can't artificially impose deadlines ...

Souter: What are the deadlines imposed under the Florida statute covering the contesting of certified election results?

Olson: Well, all the propaganda put out by our side to the contrary, there actually aren't any ...

Souter: No shit, Sherlock. Now, do you have any valid arguments to make?

Olson: It is, we submit, an utter revision of the timetables, the allocation of ...

Souter: But, Mr. Olson, we're back to the--there is no timetable in 166.

Olson: That's correct.

Olson: As I was saying earlier, they're trying to change the deadlines ...

Souter: Yo, Olson! Didn't we just cover that a few minutes ago? Read my lips, "There are no fucking deadlines."

Olson: I didn't know you were still here.

Souter: Well, if your concern was with impossibility, why didn't you let the process run instead of asking for a stay?

Olson: Well, because we said ...

Souter: You'd find out.

Olson: Because we argued, and I believe, that there's a very firm basis that that process already had violated Article II of the Constitution. It was also already throwing in jeopardy compliance with Section 5 of Title 3 because the laws had been changed in a number of different respects and we've recited them. The timetables are important.

Justice Anthony Kennedy: I thought your point was that the process is being conducted in violation of the equal protection clause because its standardless.

Olson: And the due process clause. And what we know is now the new system that was set forth and articulated last ...

Souter: If reaching an outcome before a supposed deadline was your chief concern, why did you deliberately delay the proceedings by seeking to stop the vote counting?

Olson: Uhhmm ...

Souter: What's wrong with counting the votes?

Olson: Because the count was being conducted illegally in that Gore was quickly wiping away our bullshit, paper-thin margin of victory. And also because of Article II and Section 5 of Title 3 and subsection C of Section 6 of the Magna Carta and something else that I saw the other day on Judge Wapner's Peoples' Court. And also (is that bastard Souter still here?) because of the deadlines that don't actually exist.

Kennedy: What the hell are you talking about? Do you have a coherent argument?

Olson: Not really. I'm just throwing out every half-baked legal argument I can think of. You guys just pick out the one that you like the best.

Justice Clarence Thomas:

Thomas: (I wonder how much it cost Michael Jackson to bleach his whole body like that. I'm going to have to look into that.)

Justice Stephen Breyer: [I]f it were to start up again, if it were--totally hypothetically--and you were counting just undercounts, I understand that you think that the system that's set up now is very unfair, because it's different standards in different places. But what in your opinion would be a fair standard, on the assumption that it starts up missing the 12th deadline but before the 18th?

Olson: Well, one fair standard--and I don't know the complete answer to that, is that there would be a uniform way of evaluating the manner in which--there's Palm Beach, for example ...

Breyer: If we were running a real democracy here, and I know that that is a purely hypothetical situation, what would be a fair standard to uniformly apply in hand counting ballots?

Olson: For a uniform standard to apply, it must be uniform.

Breyer: No, I'd still like to get your view as to what would be the fair standard.

Olson: Well, certainly one that would--I don't--I haven't crafted it entirely out. That is the job for a legislature.

Breyer: But I'd still like to get your opinion insofar as you could give it.

Olson: I think that part of the standard is that it would have to be applied uniformly.

Breyer: Hey, Einstein! I know that a uniformly applied standard must be uniformly applied. What I'm asking you is what that uniform standard should be.

Olson: We would really prefer that the votes not be counted at all.

Breyer: But if they were, what kind of standard should apply.

Olson: A uniform standard should be uniform.

Souter: OK, but we have--there's no question that the closest we can come now, under Florida law, is an intent of the voter standard. Is it your position that if any official, judicial or executive, at this point were to purport to lay down a statewide standard, which went to a lower level, a more specific level than intent of the voter, and said, for example, "Count dimpled chads," or "Don't count dimpled chads," in your judgment would that be a violation of Article II?

Olson: I don't think it would be a violation of Article II, provided that--I mean, the first part of your question ...

Souter: All right. So if we went from the standard that existed before, the dimpled chads that hadn't--that had not been a standard anywhere in Florida, if that change was made, we would strongly urge that that would be a violation of Article II, a complete change ...

Justice Antonin Scalia: Mr. Olson, it is also part of your case, is it not, that insofar as that language just quoted is concerned, the power of the circuit judge to prevent or correct any alleged wrong? It's part of your submission, I think, that there is no wrong when a machine does not count those ballots that it's not supposed to count.

Olson: That's absolutely correct, Justice Scalia. It would ...

Scalia: The voters who detach the chads entirely, and the machine as predicted does not count those chads, where those instructions are not followed, there isn't any wrong.

Olson: That's correct. This has been euphemistically referred to as legal votes that haven't been counted.

Souter: Now let me see if I've got this straight, Olson. You're saying that the Florida law, which specifies that the 'intent of the voter' shall be ascertained, is too vague to serve as a guideline for counting votes. And you're also saying that any attempt to more clearly define what is meant by 'intent of the voter' constitutes changing the laws after the election. So what you're really saying is that there is no valid way to count the votes in the state of Florida, and so the very act of counting the ballots is unconstitutional.

Olson: Well, that's not exactly what I'm saying, but kind of ...

Souter: Let me attempt to rephrase that before Scalia cuts me off ...

Scalia: Olson, these guys are kicking your ass! Let me get you off the hook here. Isn't it true that the ballots that haven't been counted yet were cast by people that are too stupid to vote?

Olson: Exactly! Finally, someone who gets it ...

Scalia: Is it not the voter's fault if the machines fail to punch the ballots correctly and completely, especially if the voters are Democrats?

Olson: Of course it is. And surely no one thinks that stupid people should decide this election, unless they happen to be wearing judicial robes.

Olson: Many people do not vote in the presidential election, even those that are voting for other offices.

Souter: But as to the undervotes, and as to the undervotes in which there is arguably some expression of intent on the ballot that the machine didn't pick up, the majority of the Florida Supreme Court says you're wrong. They interpreted the statute otherwise. Are you saying here that their interpretation was so far unreasonable in defining legal votes as not to be a judicial act entitled, in effect, to the presumption of reasonable interpretation under Article II?

Olson: Yes, that is our contention.

Olson: The truth is that all of the voters whose ballots were not counted failed to make a selection for president.

Souter: Are you saying that none of those tens of thousands of ballots contain a clear choice for president?

Olson: Well, we haven't actually looked at them, or allowed anyone else to look at them, but that's the story we're trying to sell.

Breyer: And the question on Florida law is simply this, what the statute as I take it, the contest statute, lists grounds for contesting. One of those grounds is rejecting a sufficient number of legal votes, sufficient to place the election in doubt. And then the circuit judge is given the power to investigate that allegation, just to look into it.

Bush attorney Joseph Klock: Yes.

Breyer: So why would it be illegal under Florida law to have a recount just to investigate whether this allegation is or is not so?

Klock: The justice's question assumes that they are legal votes.

Breyer: There might be some in there that are legal under anybody's standard.

Klock: You honor, if they are not properly--if the ballot is not properly executed, it's not a legal vote.

Breyer: Is it not standard procedure in a contested election for the judiciary to investigate claims that legally cast ballots were excluded from the count? How else are we to determine if the claims are valid?

Klock: Well, I suppose so, if you're going to insist on fairness.

Breyer: So why would you characterize as illegal the actions of the Florida Supreme Court in ordering an examination and recount of those ballots?

Klock: The justice's question assumes that they are legal votes.

Breyer: Actually, my question assumed that the votes need to be examined before it can be determined if they are in fact legal votes. Jesus, you people are un-fucking-believable.

Klock: Well, we already know they are illegal.

Justice John Paul Stevens: [W]ould it not make sense to assume that the standard you use for damaged ballots would be the same standard you use in that situation?

Klock: I don't think so, sir.

Stevens: What standard would you use ...

Klock: Well ...

Stevens: ... in the situation I proposed then?

Klock: Justice Brennan, the difficulty is that under--I'm sorry.

Stevens: Now Mr. Klock, damaged ballots are counted, are they not? Can we not use the same standard for hand counting the undervotes that we use to hand count damaged ballots?

Klock: I must reiterate here that our position is that there are no circumstances under which those votes should be counted, or even looked at. As far as we're concerned, they don't exist.

Stevens: But if they did, what standard would you use to count undervotes ...

Klock: What undervotes?

Stevens: The ones we've been discussing here.

Klock: Oh shit. I thought I was talking to that dead guy who stepped down from the bench a decade ago. Can we start over?

Scalia: But what the Florida Supreme Court said is that there shall be added to the certification these additional numbers.

Gore attorney David Boies: But that's true in any contest. Every single contest ...

Scalia: It's not added to the certification.

Boies: Yes, of course it is, your honor.

Scalia: You may do a review of the ballots and add more numbers, but as I read the Florida Supreme Court opinion, it said the secretary of state will certify these additional ...

Boies: Yes, because the contest procedure is a procedure to contest the certification.

Scalia: The certification, as rendered by the secretary of state, did not include those additional ballots for your client, and the Supreme Court directed that the certification would be changed to include those.

Boies: But, your honor, that is what happens every time there is a successful contest. The

contest is a contest of the certification. You have the certification results ...

Thomas:

Scalia: It doesn't make any sense to me.

Scalia: The Florida Supreme Court had the nerve to order that additional legally cast and counted votes be added to Al Gore's certified vote tally. What's up with that?

Boies: The original certification was bogus, and we successfully contested it in court. The legal remedy was to adjust the certified vote totals to more accurately reflect the results of the election. That's pretty much standard procedure in a contest ...

Scalia: They can change the certification?

Boies: Duh.

Scalia: You mean they can overrule Katherine Harris?

Boies: Duh.

Scalia: But they changed the bogus numbers that Harris had already certified.

Boies: Duh.

Thomas: (Even I understand what he's saying. I thought Scalia was supposed to be the smart one.)

Scalia: You Democrats speak in tongues.

Breyer: They gave an example. The example they gave in their brief was, there's a punch for Governor Bush and there's a punch for "write-in" and the write-in says, "I want Governor Bush." And so I think their implication is that that would have been rejected by the machine, but if you looked at it by hand, the intent of the voter would be clear. I don't know if there are such votes, but they say there might be.

Boies: There's nothing in the record that suggests there are such votes.

Breyer: The Bush team has yet another argument, and it's a real doozy. They're saying that if we hand count the undervotes, we also have to hand count all the overvotes. We all know that they actually don't want to count any of the votes and are just trying to make the recounting task as odious as possible, but they're arguing that some of the overvotes might be multiple votes for Bush. Some people may have crossed all the other names off the ballot, wrote in Bush for all of them, and punched all the chads. They're saying there could be thousands of such ballots.

Boies: And you're buying that? I give up. I'm outta here.

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A Supreme Injustice, Part III

Dave McGowan
December 13, 2000

"The Supreme Court's 5-4 decision to stay all further recounts is nothing short of a judicial coup d'etat."

Loyola Law School professor Theodore P. Seto

The verdict, as they say, is in. The highest court in the land, the ultimate arbiter of the 'rule of law,' has spoken. And in a decision that should have come as a shock only to those who foolishly believe that the U.S. Supreme Court adheres to some kind of lofty legal principles, the unelectable son was essentially appointed as the next president of these United States.

The opinion of the court, which was written and released in a manner which was obviously intended to conceal the fact that the decision was concurred with by the narrowest of majorities, was released just after 10:00 PM on Tuesday night. Though cloaked in pseudo-legal jargon, the majority opinion is clearly not based on any known legal principles, and certainly not the principles the Court has touted in the past.

A thoughtful reading of the decision leads one to the inescapable conclusion that the Justices were desperately seeking any flimsy pretext with which to justify what was obviously a pre-ordained verdict. The document is, to put it bluntly, built on a bed of lies and constructed of the most transparently fraudulent legal arguments imaginable.

The stench emanating from the pen of Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the presumed author of the unsigned majority opinion, was so extreme that all four of the dissenting Justices took the highly unusual step of issuing their own separate dissents, to be sure that their legal and moral outrage was clearly expressed. It should be noted here that two of those four were appointed by conservative Republican presidents, and can hardly be considered 'liberals.'

In fact, persistent press reports to the contrary, there are no actual liberals on the U.S. Supreme Court. They are all 'conservatives.' Of course, alongside such overt fascists as Rehnquist and Scalia, some of them appear to have 'liberal' leanings, just as Bill Press and Paul Begala appear to be liberal when paired with the likes of Pat Buchanan and Oliver North on the cable 'news' talkathons. How liberal do you really have to be though to stand to the left of Atilla the Hun?

Of the nine, the most reactionary of the bunch are Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, and their silent partner-in-crime, Clarence Thomas. Only slightly less fascistic are Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy. These are, naturally enough, the five who issued the majority opinion, as well as the five who ordered the blatantly illegal and patently hypocritical stay of the recount order.

Of these five Justices who would dare to appoint our next president, at least four of them

are seriously compromised. It has been reported that two of Justice Scalia's sons are attorneys working for the formidable Bush legal team, one of them a partner of the reprehensible Ted Olson. It has also been reported that Justice Thomas' wife has been working on the prematurely formed Bush transition team, screening applicants for positions within the illegitimate administration.

That fountain of leftist propaganda, *The Wall Street Journal*, has reported that Rehnquist was strongly bucking for a new Bush administration as well. It seems that the Chief Justice would like to step down, but will do so only with the certainty that his replacement will be suitably reactionary (come to think of it, if a Bush Administration is what it will take to rid the country of the aging fascist, maybe it wouldn't be such a bad thing after all).

The *Journal* also reports that O'Connor would like to either step down herself, or perhaps step up to fill Rehnquist's slot, either of which would be premised on a Bush presidency. It's hardly surprising then that these four, joined by Kennedy, issued an opinion designed to bypass the will of the people and install Bush in the White House.

It's not even surprising that the triumvirate of evil - Rehnquist, Scalia and the seemingly mindless (in a very literal sense) Thomas - issued a separate concurring opinion that expresses the belief of the fascist power trio that the majority opinion did not go far enough in ruling in Bush's favor. What is surprising, however, is that the fraudulence of the majority's opinion is so blatant that the remaining four Justices were moved to issue devastating attacks on the decision and its authors, particularly ringleader Rehnquist.

And deservedly so. The majority opinion expresses in no uncertain terms the Court's contempt for the American people: "The individual citizen has no federal constitutional right to vote for electors for the President of the United States," unless granted that right by the state legislature. Even then, according to the Court, the State "can take back the power to appoint electors ... at any time." In other words, if you don't vote the way the State wants you to, you can simply be overruled.

Furthermore, says the court, "the recount cannot be conducted in compliance with the requirements of equal protection and due process without substantial additional work." It would just be too hard, the Court seems to be saying, to accurately count the votes of the people. And why bother? The people don't have a right to vote anyway (and certainly have no right to vote for Supreme Court Justices).

For these reasons, the Court ordered that "the judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida is reversed, and this case is remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion." The cynical author fails to note, of course, that the opinion is structured to deliberately preclude any further proceedings.

Justice Stevens begins his dissent by stating flatly that there were no substantial federal questions raised in the case. The Supreme Court, in other words, had no business even *hearing* the appeal. Stevens later duly notes that the "intent of the voter" standard is the law of the land in the vast majority of states, has been for decades, and has never been challenged before this election.

Later still, he directly attacks the fundamentally anti-democratic and hypocritical nature of the majority ruling: "As the majority explicitly holds, once a state legislature determines to select electors through a popular vote, the right to have one's vote counted is of constitutional stature. As the majority further acknowledges, Florida law holds that all ballots that reveal the intent of the voter constitute valid votes. Recognizing these principles, the majority nonetheless orders the termination of the contest proceeding before all such votes have been tabulated ... the majority effectively orders the disenfranchisement of an unknown number of voters whose ballots reveal their intent - and are therefore legal votes under state law - but were for some reason rejected by ballot-counting machines."

Saving the best for last, Stevens closes his dissent with the already infamous: "Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's

presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the Nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law."

Justice Souter begins his dissent by directly stating that the Supreme Court had no business hearing either of the appeals of the Florida Supreme Court rulings, and certainly had no business staying the recount order. Having accepted the case, though, "its resolution by the majority is another erroneous decision."

Souter next notes that, while he is in substantial agreement with the other dissenting Justices, he "write(s) separately only to say how straightforward the issues before us really are." In other words, this was not some complex case where legitimate differences of opinion should exist. This was a very clear-cut case, providing *no* justification for the opinion issued by the majority.

The Justice concludes his dissent by noting that fact: "the statewide total of undervotes is about 60,000. To recount these manually would be a tall order, but before this Court stayed the effort to do that the courts of Florida were ready to do their best to get that job done. There is no justification for denying the State the opportunity to try to count all disputed ballots now."

Justice Ginsburg's dissent notes that there is "no cause to upset [the Florida Supreme Court's] reasoned interpretation of Florida law." She also notes that on only three prior occasions in U.S. history has the Supreme Court "rejected outright an interpretation of state law by a state high court." Directly confronting the hypocrisy and complete lack of integrity by the majority (who piously claim to support states' rights), she writes that:

"Were the other members of this Court as mindful as they generally are of our system of dual sovereignty, they would affirm the judgment of the Florida Supreme Court." She further notes that "the Court's conclusion that a constitutionally adequate recount is impractical is a prophecy the Court's own judgment will not allow to be tested. Such an untested prophecy should not decide the Presidency of the United States."

In what could be a telling detail, Justice Ginsburg closes her dissenting opinion with the words: "I dissent." Those who are familiar with the workings of the Supreme Court know that the traditional sign-off for such an opinion is "I respectfully dissent," which was used by the other three dissenting Justices. By flaunting tradition, Ginsburg appears to be signaling, and not too subtly, that she is particularly appalled by the actions of the Court.

The longest and most blistering dissent was written by Justice Breyer. It begins: "The Court was wrong to take this case. It was wrong to grant a stay. It should now vacate that stay and permit the Florida Supreme Court to decide whether the recount should resume." With that, the Justice is just getting started.

He later writes that: "there is no justification for the majority's remedy, which is simply to reverse the lower court and halt the recount entirely," and notes also that: "the majority's reasoning would seem to invalidate any state provision for a manual recount of individual counties in a statewide election."

Still further on, he writes that: "The majority justifies stopping the recount entirely on the ground that there is no more time," while duly noting that: "the majority reaches this conclusion in the absence of *any* record evidence that the recount could not have been completed in the time allowed by the Florida Supreme Court."

Questioning Rehnquist's supposed commitment to states' rights, Breyer writes: "I cannot agree that the Chief Justice's unusual review of state law in this case is justified ... Moreover, even were such review proper, the conclusion that the Florida Supreme Court's decision contravenes federal law is untenable."

Defending the decisions of the Florida Supreme Court, he notes: "Since only a few hundred votes separated the candidates, and since the 'undercounted' ballots numbered tens of thousands, it is difficult to see how anyone could find this conclusion unreasonable - however strict the standard used to measure the voter's 'clear intent'."

In conclusion, Breyer echoes the warnings of Justice Stevens: "But we do risk a self-inflicted wound - a wound that may harm not just the Court, but the Nation ... What it does today, the Court should have left undone. I would repair the damage done as best we now can, by permitting the Florida recount to continue under uniform standards."

As previously noted, Rehnquist, Scalia and Thomas submitted an additional concurring opinion, which appears to be the decision that the trio first tried to sell to the other Justices as a proposed majority opinion. It explicitly reiterates the notion that the people have no right to vote. It also notes that "Florida statutory law cannot reasonably be thought to *require* the counting of improperly marked ballots," a rather remarkable statement.

The most memorable passage claims that: "the Supreme Court of Florida ordered recounts of tens of thousands of so-called 'undervotes' spread through 64 of the State's 67 counties. This was done in a search for elusive - perhaps delusive - certainty as to the exact count of 6 million votes. But no one claims that these ballots have not previously been tabulated; they were initially read by voting machines at the time of the election, and thereafter reread by virtue of Florida's automatic recount provision. No one claims there was any fraud in this election."

This is an absolutely stunning collection of lies and distortions. The plain and simple fact is that the Justices, and everybody else involved with the case, are fully aware that the "so-called" undervotes have *never* been counted. That is an indisputable fact. And while it may be true that the media and Washington have bent over backwards to avoid making any claims of fraud, a broad spectrum of the American people know better.

As I was finishing up this article, the surreal spectacle of a smiling Al Gore delivering his 'concession' speech began. Not surprisingly, Big Al made every conceivable effort to legitimize the U.S. political system and the presidency of George Bush, cloaking his entire speech in God, Democracy and Country, as though what has occurred in the last five weeks has anything to do with God or democracy.

Following closely on the heels of the pathetic performance by Gore was George W. himself, our new duly appointed head-of-state. Bush wanted to make sure we all knew that he "was not elected to serve one party, but to serve one nation." That's funny, because the last time I checked, he hadn't been *elected* to serve jack-shit.

Postscript: The day after Bush officially became the president-elect, he and his wife attended a private service at the Tarrytown United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas, along with a few hundred friends and staffers. During the sermon, the Reverend Mark Craig told Bush that: "You have been chosen by God to lead the people." Prior to hearing this, I had assumed that William Rehnquist only thought he was God. My bad.

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America Under a Bush

Dave McGowan
December 2000

Press reports are rife with speculation over what the country can expect from its newly appointed president-elect. Will George, Jr.'s administration mirror that of his father? He does, after all, look and sound just like his pop would if George, Sr. were able to shed about 25 years and roughly the same number of IQ points (and Big George himself was not, it will be recalled, the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree).

Will Bush be weakened by the perceived illegitimacy of his presidency? Will he be stymied by an evenly divided Congress? Will he be able to reach across the aisle to forge a bipartisan consensus? Will he be able to heal the wounds of a fractured nation? Yadda, yadda, yadda.

Despite all the hand wringing by the press and pundits over the obstacles facing the incoming administration, it seems pretty clear that the Bush team has been emboldened by its broad-daylight theft of the election, and by the relative passivity of the American people, and will very likely move quickly and decisively to promote an exceedingly reactionary agenda.

So what specifically should we expect in the coming days and years? What does Team Bush have in store for us? The good news is that Bush's policies won't likely differ dramatically from the policies of Clinton. The bad news is that Clinton's policies basically sucked. Spinning by the press and punditocracy to the contrary, Clinton advanced one of the most reactionary agendas of any U.S. president in modern times.

One of the first things we should look for is that the shortened transition period will be crassly exploited to ram through a number of questionable cabinet appointments, who will of course be perfunctorily confirmed, in the spirit of bipartisanship, by the hideously corrupt United States Congress. These appointments will receive, of course, considerably less press coverage than the early 'diverse' appointments.

Expect also to see Little George reach out to Congressional Democrats, particularly Senators, when passing out Cabinet posts. Besides the all-important illusion of seeking conciliation by 'reaching across the aisle,' which the press just loves to talk about, a much more important purpose is served by doing so: all Democrats siphoned off of Congress can be replaced with Republicans.

By doing so, the Republicans can regain their slim majority hold on both houses, which was largely stripped away by the election. But wait a minute, you say. Wouldn't that be sort of like changing the *rules* after the election, which the Supreme Court just said was a no-no. To the contrary, it would be more like changing the *outcome* of a popular election, which the Court just said was perfectly fine.

The point is that the composition of the Congress can, and likely will, be changed to

some degree through Cabinet appointments. The obvious advantage for the Bush team is that a Republican controlled Congress will facilitate the advancement of the Bush agenda ... though this is not to naively suggest that Congressional Democrats would likely have stood in the way.

It will, however, be easier for the press to justify in the court of public opinion the craven complicity of Congress in green-lighting every reactionary proposal to emerge from the Bush White House. Having filled that house with fraudulent Democrats and overt fascists (and the basement, perhaps, with Ollie North and Co.), the Bush team will be ready to go to work.

Shortly into the new administration, expect a fire to be staged in the Reichstag, providing the pretext to dissolve Congress and usurp legislative powers Oh, wait a minute ... I was thinking of another head of state that 'legally' assumed power. Never mind.

Instead, expect Bush's much ballyhooed tax 'reform' to be prominent on the agenda. Don't worry though; it won't have any effect on you. Capital gains and inheritance taxes will undoubtedly be slashed dramatically, perhaps even eliminated entirely. Income taxes may be lowered as well, though primarily for corporations and those with stratospheric incomes. Some savings might even trickle down to you, but don't count on it.

Expect also a stepped-up 'war on terrorism.' What this really means, of course, is an increased attack on the human and civil rights of Americans. We will naturally be told that our lawmakers are striking a balance between the rights of American citizens, and the need to guard against the nonexistent threat of international and domestic terrorism. In the name of protecting us, a wholesale attack on our few remaining democratic rights will be launched.

This is the kind of program that, we will be assured by the press, enjoys broad bipartisan support. Another bipartisan favorite we are likely to see is a new omnibus crime bill. More police, better equipped police, more prisons, more liberal use of the death penalty, restrictions on appeals, more behaviors criminalized, greater cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies: all of this and more is necessary if we're to get serious about being 'tough on crime.'

Two buzz words to be on the lookout for from Team Bush are 'privatization' and 'deregulation.' For the Bushwhackers, the more of both, the better. Schools, healthcare facilities and prisons are prime candidates for privatization, along with, of course, Social Security and Medicare. Deregulation could strike anywhere, at any time, touted as a way to lower consumer costs by increasing competition. Expect sudden and drastic price increases to follow any act of deregulation.

In the field of foreign policy, look for an increasingly belligerent attitude towards Poppy Bush's old buddy, Saddam Hussein. Never mind that the belligerent attitudes of the two previous administrations have cost as many as two million Iraqis their lives, as a result of the U.S.-imposed sanctions, the still frequent bombings, and the lingering environmental damage caused by the extensive use of radioactive depleted uranium.

It's time now to really get tough with Iraq. Tough enough, perhaps, to take modern warfare into the nuclear era. We may be witness to the world's first deployment of a 'tactical' nuclear weapon. **This would most likely occur under the pretense of destroying alleged Iraqi underground nuclear/biowarfare facilities.**

In other words, we may deploy *our* weapons of mass destruction in order to destroy *their* weapons of mass destruction. What could possibly be wrong with that? After all, everyone knows that *they're* fucking crazy. And who would question the motives of such great Americans as Colin Powell directing and approving such an action?

Elsewhere on the foreign relations front, expect a new mission for our men and women in uniform. Lots of money needs to be funneled into the pockets of Bush, Cheney and Baker's buddies in the 'defense' industry. The best way to do that, of course, is to find some place to dump our existing stockpiles of bombs and missiles.

It's also necessary to repeatedly remind all those 'rogue' nations out there that we are serious about imposing U.S.-approved markets on every corner of the globe. Opposition to manipulation and exploitation by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization has been known to bring on a case of Sudden Aerial Bombardment Syndrome.

Another thing we can expect from the Bush team (and this one is, I think, my personal favorite) is a couple of reactionary Supreme Court appointments. You remember the Supreme Court, don't you? That was the branch of government that appointed Little George to the presidency.

That is, you see, how a 'democracy' works. The Supreme Court appoints the President, and the President in turn appoints the Supreme Court. I think that's what they call the 'separation of powers,' or the 'system of checks and balances,' or something like that. And while we're on the subject of the high court, expect them to immediately resume issuing decisions supportive of 'states' rights,' and to begin once again routinely turning away cases dealing with 'equal protection.'

On the brighter side, one thing we shouldn't expect from the Bush team is a repeal of abortion rights. Contrary to their carefully crafted images, the Bush family, and any number of other 'conservatives' in Washington, aren't really opposed to the practice of abortion. They just pretend that they are to insure the support of the Abortion Clinic Bombers lobby.

The truth is that the majority of women seeking abortions are, and always have been, from the lower echelons of society. Minorities and women from the lower socio-economic classes are grossly over-represented. The rather harsh reality is that, from the point of view of Team Bush, the less 'those people' reproduce, the better off we'll be.

The 'conservative' majority on the Supreme Court has had it within its power to revoke abortion rights for quite some time. It hasn't chosen to do so yet, and isn't likely to in the near future, even with an increased majority. The Court's Justices have, if nothing else, proven themselves quite capable of disregarding their own precedents and abandoning their supposedly firmly-held Constitutional beliefs.

Presented here have been a few things to watch for in the Age of Bush. But what of that other guy, the one that lost (sort of)? What, in the final analysis, are we to say about Bush's erstwhile opponent? What sort of epitaph are we to write for Al Gore?

This writer, along with the majority of the U.S. press, has not been kind to Al Gore. Some, like myself, have derided him as being virtually indistinguishable from Bush. Others have criticized him for squandering Clinton's supposed legacy. Still others, rather bizarrely, have denounced him as being too 'liberal.'

There seems to be a fairly wide consensus that Gore waged a rather lackluster campaign and a noticeably feeble post-election battle. It occurs to me though that, in a sense, perhaps we have been a bit too harsh in our criticism of Clinton's second fiddle.

It appears, in hindsight, that Gore had a tough job to perform. He had to somehow manage to lose to *George Bush*, after all, without appearing to intentionally do so. And he had to do it while representing an administration widely viewed (though falsely) by the American people as bringing an unprecedented peacetime prosperity upon the nation.

That's a pretty tall order for anyone to fill. The closest comparison I can think of would be for, say, Mike Tyson to take a dive in the ring against Pauly Shore, without appearing to intentionally throw the fight. Put in the same difficult position, do you really think you could have lost any better?

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The Bush Coup in Perspective

Dave McGowan
December 18, 2000

It occurs to me that some writers, myself among them, may have gone just a bit overboard in denouncing the illegitimate power grab by the Bush team. While it was undoubtedly a rather nakedly undemocratic seizure of the presidency, is Bush really the *only* illegitimate president, or even the *most* illegitimate president, in modern American history? Not by a long shot.

And while overriding the will of the people by disenfranchising vast numbers of voters is certainly rather dastardly behavior, I would argue that, on the bright side, nobody got assassinated. It was, in other words, a bloodless coup, which can't be said of several other transfers of power that this country has seen in recent times (here defined as the last 100 years). From the very beginning of the so-called American Century, assassination has played a key role in shaping the presidency.

Teddy Roosevelt was propelled into power in 1901 by the assassination of President William McKinley. McKinley was allegedly shot by anarchist Leon Czolgosz in Buffalo, New York. Two bullets struck the president, one in the abdomen and the other a grazing wound to the ribs. Neither was fatal. Nonetheless, McKinley died eight days later, supposedly as a result of gangrene. If at first you don't succeed ...

Teddy was just beginning to serve his first term as vice-president, having replaced McKinley's previous VP, Garret Hobart. After just six months in office, Roosevelt assumed the presidency. Czolgosz, in that fine tradition of American 'lone nut' assassins, was quickly silenced; within two months, he had been indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed.

Facing election on his own for the first time in 1904, Teddy faced a tough challenge from Mark Hanna, a powerful Republican and the primary political and financial backer of the slain McKinley. Luckily though, Hanna sort of died before the Republican National Convention, so Teddy easily clinched the nomination.

In 1923, Calvin Coolidge was thrust into office by the assassination of President Warren G. Harding. What's that, you say? Didn't Harding die of natural causes? Yeah, right. The official cause of death was listed by White House physician General Sawyer - who was at the President's death bed, along with First Lady 'Duchess' Harding - as an embolism.

This is, of course, the official version of history that we all know and love. There are a couple of problems with the story, however. First of all, the good doctor never performed an autopsy on the body, so how he was able to divine the cause of death of the previously healthy President is anyone's guess.

And the doctor, strangely enough, was similarly struck dead just a year later, while being visited by the only other witness to the president's death, serial poisoner Duchess Harding. According to a report in the *New York Times* at the time, Sawyer's death "was almost identical

with the manner of death of the late Warren G. Harding when General Sawyer was with the President in San Francisco."

In 1945, Harry S Truman assumed the presidency upon the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which may or may not have been an assassination. Like Teddy Roosevelt, Truman had just taken office after replacing FDR's previous VP, Henry Wallace. Within just 82 days, Truman was president, just in time to negotiate the final 'peace' terms for the post-war world.

It is said that Roosevelt complained of a headache, lost consciousness, and then just died. Whether this was in fact from natural causes is largely a matter of speculation. Roosevelt had obviously felt well enough to begin an unprecedented fourth presidential term, and did not appear publicly to be in poor health. It is now claimed though that he was indeed ailing, and that that fact was concealed from the American people. How much of that is historical revisionism is anyone's guess.

In 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson took office following the assassination of President John Kennedy, which pretty much everyone agrees was definitely an assassination. The only disagreement seems to be over whether it was done by the CIA, the FBI, the KGB, the Mafia, pro-Castro Cubans, anti-Castro Cubans, expatriate Nazis, Woody Harrelson's dad, or - by some of the more dubious theories - some guy named Lee Harvey Oswald.

Alleged assassin Oswald was, as we all remember, indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed in just two days by a tittie bar owner named Jack Ruby who also happened to have connections to the CIA, the FBI, the KGB, the Mafia, pro-Castro Cubans, anti-Castro Cubans, expatriate Nazis, and Woody Harrelson's dad.

Five years later, the assassination of Robert Kennedy was the key factor in the presidential election victory of Richard Nixon. Like Mark Hanna in 1904, Kennedy was much too strong of an opponent. LBJ, knowing that the big boys play hardball, had wisely but unexpectedly chosen not to seek a second elected term of office. Nixon was, therefore, pretty much given a clear playing field.

He was, however, then himself ousted from power in a coup directed from within. Though masquerading as an impeachment proceeding, evidence clearly suggests that what actually occurred was a CIA-directed coup, albeit a bloodless one, kind of like George W's. Also like the current Bush coup, it resulted in an appointed presidency, that of Gerald Ford.

Say what you will of Bush the Younger, at least he actually got out there and ran for the office before being appointed. He even came pretty close to winning. Ford, on the other hand, just stepped right up from Congress, where his primary duty had been to funnel unaccountable funds to the CIA. Come to think of it, Bush's seizure of the White House wasn't even as objectionable as the one his father appears to have attempted in 1981.

For those who have forgotten, that was when a good friend of the Bush family tried to assassinate President Ronald Reagan. Like Teddy Roosevelt and Harry Truman, Bush the Elder had just begun to serve as vice-president, essentially an unelected position. After just ten weeks, Bush came perilously close to seizing the presidency when that crazed 'lone nut,' John Hinckley, Jr., opened fire on Reagan.

I'm sure that the connections between the Bush and Hinckley families are just a coincidence though, just as I'm sure that there's nothing to the initial press report that spoke of a second gunman on an overpass. Assassinations and assassination attempts on political leaders never have any political meaning in this country; they are always the work of those inexplicable 'lone nut' gunmen.

You know, like that lone nut who shot President Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth. The truth though is that Booth was merely the front man for a much wider conspiracy, a fact that was acknowledged at the time. Four additional co-conspirators, in fact, were sent to the gallows for the crime; two others received life sentences. You would be hard-pressed though to ascertain that fact from most of our written and oral histories.

Interestingly enough, Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, had just taken office weeks before the assassination, replacing Lincoln's first VP, Hannibal Hamlin. As previously noted, such an action has been known to seriously shorten the life expectancy of sitting presidents. The 'lone gunman' Booth, by the way, was quickly silenced when he was allegedly killed in the act of taking him into custody.

Looking back at the American Century, it's hard to agree with those who would claim that the current Bush coup d'etat signals the death toll for democracy in this country. The ugly truth is that democracy died long ago, if it ever in fact existed here at all. The Bush 'transition,' in reality, is just business as usual in this great country of ours.

Coups have always been a prominent part of the American political scene. Teddy Roosevelt, Calvin Coolidge, Lyndon Johnson, Gerald Ford, and possibly Harry Truman all took office as the result of coups just in the last century. Richard Nixon appears to have done so by violently eliminating the competition.

Just because they are not recorded as coups in our history books doesn't mean that they didn't occur. And rest assured that when the official history of the current 'election' is written, the Bush coup will not be recorded for what it was either. As everyone knows, conspiracies don't exist in this country; things just sort of happen.

Like, for instance, in September of 1975, when two assassination attempts were made on President Ford. Had either attempt proven successful, Nelson Rockefeller would have stepped up from his position as the appointed vice-president to become the second consecutive unelected president of these United States.

And like when two men allegedly attempted to assassinate President Truman in November of 1951, as plans were being made for the 1952 presidential election campaign. The attempt of course failed, but Truman did rather unexpectedly opt not to run for a second elected term of office, clearing the way for an Eisenhower presidency.

In fact, every president who has taken office this past century as a direct result of assassination has inexplicably surrendered the job while still eligible for another term of office. As previously noted, Johnson did so in 1968. So did Teddy Roosevelt in 1908, clearing the way for William Taft. And Calvin Coolidge did likewise in 1928, clearing the playing field for Herbert Hoover.

There is one potential bright spot amidst all this discussion of assassination. The twenty year curse is still in effect! For the uninformed, this refers to the fact that, beginning 160 years ago, every president prior to Reagan elected in a twenty year cycle has died in office. These presidents were, in chronological order:

William Henry Harrison - elected in 1840, assassinated (?) in 1841

Abraham Lincoln - elected in 1860, assassinated in 1865

James Garfield - elected in 1880, assassinated in 1881

William McKinley - elected in 1900, assassinated in 1901

Warren Harding - elected in 1920, assassinated in 1923

Franklin Roosevelt - elected in 1940, assassinated (?) in 1945

John Kennedy - elected in 1960, assassinated in 1963

Had Reagan succumbed to his wounds, he would have joined that list. It can still be said though that every president elected on that twenty year cycle (since 1860 at least) has been the victim of a serious assassination *attempt*. This is true even if we assume that FDR's untimely death was by natural causes. On February 15th, 1933, a man named Giuseppe Zangara attempted to assassinate Roosevelt, but failed. He instead shot and killed Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak, who was with the president. Zangara was, of course, indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed in less than five weeks.

Will the twenty year curse hold for the man who is about to take office following the year 2000 election? And if so, will the assassination attempt succeed? Will it be perpetrated by yet another 'lone nut' assassin? Frankly, it doesn't appear very likely. It just wouldn't seem

quite right to have a Bush be the *victim* of an assassination plot, but you never know. I'm thinking of Al Gore as the lone gunman. He could always claim that he shot Bush in a duel. It's a longshot, but it worked once before.

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Would You Mind If We Fingerprint Your Brain?

***By Dave McGowan
February 24, 2001***

Nothing is ever done for the good of the people, even when appearances may indicate otherwise. That is one of the inviolate rules of politics that must be applied when attempting to interpret any significant action, event or trend. A corollary to that rule is: *any new technology will be used to the detriment - and never the benefit - of the people.*

There is a consensus opinion developing though that the routine acceptance of DNA evidence in U.S. courts of law would be an exception to these rules. DNA evidence, we are told, is a way to right egregious miscarriages of justice. Indeed, crusading attorneys like Barry Scheck have built high-profile careers out of freeing the wrongly convicted. It is not likely though that exonerating the innocent is the ultimate goal of the DNA crowd. Emptying out the country's prisons doesn't seem to be real high on the state's priority list.

To the contrary, finding new ways - as well as new reasons - to incarcerate America seems to be the order of the day. The freeing of the falsely convicted makes for a nice way to sell DNA technology to the general public, however. It also makes for a nice way to sell another new technology -- 'Brain Fingerprinting.' In case you haven't heard, Brain Fingerprinting is a way to actually read a suspect's mind and determine whether or not he has committed a crime. No shit.

That is the claim made by the creator and chief proponent of the new technology, anyway. As *60 Minutes* reported on December 12th, 2000, allegedly 'civilian' scientist Larry Farwell "says that by analyzing the brain waves of a criminal suspect, he can tell whether or not that individual has committed a crime."

The eminent scientist explained to correspondent Mike Wallace that: "The fundamental difference between an innocent person and a guilty person is that a guilty person has committed a crime" -- an obviously brilliant observation by Harvard's finest. According to Farwell, this means that "the record is stored in his brain. Now we have a way to measure that scientifically." Also according to Farwell: "The brain never lies."

Guilt or innocence, then, can be determined simply by reading the suspect's mind. This ingenious concept has been embraced by, not surprisingly, all the usual suspects. As Wallace noted: "Dr. Farwell's work has been funded by the CIA," and "the FBI is also interested in Brain Fingerprinting and has allowed Dr. Farwell to test his technology at the Bureau's training academy in Quantico, Virginia." Also on board is Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), who "has asked the General Accounting Office to study Farwell's technology to see if it should be federally funded."

Of course, we all know that the CIA and the FBI - not to mention the Republican-led

Congress - are uncompromising champions of justice, which is why the doctor is "using a 23-year-old murder case in Iowa to try to prove to a judge that his technology works." As with DNA evidence, the reactionary nature of this technology must be concealed in order to sell its merits to the people. Therefore, when Wallace asked the question of whether the technology will "be used more for exoneration than for nailing a suspect," he received the answer: "I think that's probably going to be where its usefulness is going to be most successful."

On Farwell's web site (<http://www.brainwavescience.com>), the doctor boldly proclaims his invention to be "a revolutionary new technology for investigating crimes and exonerating innocent suspects." Closer to the truth though is a statement that Farwell made to a reporter for the *Fairfield Ledger*: "I like catching the bad guys and bringing them to justice. I think that's a very important thing to do."

Assuming then, purely for the sake of argument of course, that the intentions of the CIA and its erstwhile partners are somewhat less than noble - and that freeing those who have unjustly spent a large portion of their lives behind bars is not the ultimate goal - it is not hard to see where such technology is heading. It is not hard, in fact, to envision a major revision in the American criminal justice system.

The propaganda war to gain popular support has already begun. The primary weapon is, of course, television -- perhaps the most powerful psychological warfare device ever created. In addition to providing a conduit for a non-stop barrage of propaganda, television has had a tremendously corrosive effect on American society.

I am told that prior to the advent of TV, families used to actually communicate with one another from time to time. I've also heard that neighborhoods and communities used to congregate in the evenings to socialize and to enjoy the entertainment provided by local artists and performers. Hard to believe, I know, but many an old-timer swears this to be true.

All of that began to change with the advent of radio and, more significantly, television. At first, of course, only a few could afford the luxury of television, leading to large gatherings at the homes of those fortunate enough to own a set. But before long, nearly every home had one, and community bonds began to break -- with each family retreating to its own home to receive its own personal dose of propaganda.

It wouldn't be long before most homes had multiple TV sets, breaking the family up into even smaller units to receive their evening 'entertainment.' Personal computers and the Internet have further atomized U.S. society, drawing each of us into our own private cyber-world. The ultimate goal is, clearly enough, to devolve society into a brutal, impersonal, every-man-for-himself struggle for survival -- a society devoid of empathy or sympathy.

Of course, it is possible that the destruction of societal bonds was just an unintended and entirely unforeseen consequence of the introduction of the new information media. This interpretation of historical events, however, violates yet another of the inviolate rules of political analysis: *almost nothing ever happens by chance, accident or happenstance -- and the consequences of an action are almost always intended.* But here I digress.

The point that I was getting to is that - apart from the negative societal impact that the medium itself has had - there is also the inescapable fact that television is a fantastically effective means of conveying propaganda. And make no mistake about it, *everything* that is beamed at you through your television is propaganda. It should go without saying that this applies to so-called news programming, which is obviously pure propaganda and is recognized as such by most any careful observer.

What is less well understood is that what we refer to as 'entertainment' programming is also largely propaganda, designed to promote a Western view of the world and to create a sort of tunnel-vision that limits our ability to think critically. And why shouldn't that be the case? Such programming is, after all, produced and broadcast by the very same select group of fascist media titans that bring you your news and information.

And, truth be told, much of the current batch of prime time programming is fairly easy to

recognize as propaganda. Some of the standouts are the hopelessly romanticized and sanitized view of Washington presented by *The West Wing*, the openly fascistic 'law-and-order' agenda promoted by *The District*, and that vision of America as a fully devolved surveillance state that we all know and love as *Survivor*.

Of particular interest here though are those shows that focus on the legal profession. There are certainly no shortage of such programs gracing America's airwaves these days, the most popular and critically acclaimed of which is probably David Kelley's *The Practice*. With the recognition that this program - along with countless similar shows - is not merely broadcast for its entertainment value, but as yet another effort by the thought police to shape public opinion, it is instructive to examine what message is being sent out to the viewing public.

The predominate message of *The Practice* - reinforced on a weekly basis - is that the current adversarial system of jurisprudence is seriously lacking in its ability to dispense justice. The guilt or innocence of the accused is consistently shown to have little or no bearing on the disposition of criminal cases. Defense attorneys routinely win acquittals for clients portrayed as being guilty, and regularly lose cases where their clients are perceived to be innocent.

As Richard Posner - law professor, judge, and probable intelligence asset - has stated: "It has become commonplace that an innocent person has a better chance of acquittal in a European than in an American court, and a guilty person, a better chance of acquittal in an American than in a European court."

It is certainly true that the adversarial system does lead to some egregious miscarriages of justice. These are often due to the extreme corruption of attorneys on both sides of the aisle, as well as various other players within the criminal justice system (the incompetence of various agents of the court sometimes plays a part as well). That's not the way that things play on TV though.

On the small screen, advocates for the state and the accused act with the utmost integrity -- and frequently with a healthy dose of moral outrage. Miscarriages of justice are portrayed as being a natural, and exceedingly common, consequence of the very structure of the American system of criminal justice. The system, in other words, is broken, and the integrity of the actors cannot compensate for that.

But is the system broken? There is no question that the win-at-all-costs mentality engendered by the adversarial system leads to false convictions. But that has always been the case - no more so now than at any other time in the nation's history - and the media, entertainment or otherwise, have never much cared before. Yet if the system is indeed broken now, then it has always been broken.

So why portray it as such now? The answer is, quite simply, because now we have an alternative on the horizon. We now have the ability to scientifically determine innocence or guilt, rendered as a purely objective judgment. DNA testing is claimed to be able to positively identify a person to the exclusion of literally billions of other potential suspects.

Likewise, Brain Fingerprinting is rather preposterously claimed by its inventor to have a "99.99% confidence" level. The argument can then be made: if we can determine a person's guilt to a scientific certainty, why bother with the archaic ritual of a trial? Has that not become an outdated concept? It will surely be argued that adversarial trials are a relic of the past -- a necessary evil to protect the rights of the falsely accused in the days of yore, but entirely unnecessary in an era where technology renders objective decisions.

Barry Scheck himself - hailed by pseudo-progressives for his work with the Innocence Project - publicly suggested in the wake of the Louise Woodward trial that a jury of 'experts' should have been convened to adjudicate such a complicated scientific case. And wasn't that, after all, the message sent to the public by the hideous reporting on the OJ trial? Were we not essentially told that the jury was just too stupid to evaluate the significance of the scientific

evidence?

Is this the direction we are headed in the not-too-distant future? Will the convening of 'scientific panels' replace the current juries of our peers? And will this be merely a step towards the elimination of juries altogether, as well as of advocates for the state and the accused? Will justice be dispensed with seeming scientific certainty in the near future? It seems reasonable to assume that this will come to pass.

This won't happen overnight, of course. The restructuring of the criminal justice system will take some time. Every step in the process, of course, will be hailed as a progressive advance. For instance, it will be claimed that no longer will high-dollar lawyers be able to subvert justice for the rich. The playing field will be leveled, with justice no longer for sale; all defendants will be treated equally, with verdicts dependent solely on innocence or guilt. Yeah, right. Nice fairy tale -- but back here on planet Earth, a different reality presents itself.

The most glaring problem with this vision of future justice is that the people who will be analyzing and interpreting the scientific data are the very same people who are currently funding the research -- our good friends at the CIA and various other interwoven intelligence agencies. By fully co-opting all such 'emerging' technology, the national intelligence infrastructure will achieve total control of the dispensation of 'justice.' And that, my friends, is definitely not a good thing.

As *Esquire* magazine reported in January of 2001: "If you're accused of a crime, the last thing you want to see is an FBI forensic expert testifying for the prosecution. With their aura of independence and integrity, these agents exert a powerful sway over juries. But as the cases of Ralph Plotner and others show, these witnesses are too often the purveyors of contaminated evidence and utter falsehood."

The reality is that adversarial trials, however flawed they may be, are all that stand between you and the unfathomable coercive powers of the state. A good defense attorney and a jury of your peers constitute the best - and only - protection you have from indiscriminate persecution. That is why our current system, warts and all, is infinitely better than the brave new world we are heading towards. But then maybe I'm just paranoid.

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It's Beginning to Sound a Lot Like Waco

Dave McGowan
September 4, 2001

When the ATF comes to town, things just seem to have a way of getting out of hand. Consider the shootout that occurred in the exclusive Stevenson Ranch neighborhood in Santa Clarita, California (a northern suburb of Los Angeles) on August 31, 2001.

According to the official story, agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the U.S. Marshal's Service, along with officers from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's office, arrived that morning at the home of James Allen Beck, allegedly to serve a search warrant in conjunction with an investigation into charges that Beck had been impersonating an officer and was in possession of illegal firearms.

As the team of roughly a dozen officers approached the house, Beck reportedly opened fire on them with an automatic weapon, thus beginning a shootout/standoff with the authorities that lasted for several hours, ending when Beck's home burned to the ground after being blasted full of tear gas. By that time, officers from the California Highway Patrol and the Los Angeles Police Department had joined in the siege.

One of the officers involved, Sheriff's Deputy Hagop "Jake" Kuredjian, was killed with a shot purportedly fired by the suspect, who died as well in the fire that consumed his home. No one else was injured in the raid and the various agencies involved patted themselves on the back for another job well done. Unfortunately, there are many unanswered questions.

When and how exactly did Beck 'open fire' on the officers?

According to the initial report in the *Los Angeles Times*, Beck "opened fire through his front door after federal agents and two sheriff's officials tried to serve a search warrant at his home." (1) A spokesman for the U.S. Marshal's office, William Woolsey, claimed that "We were attempting to serve a search warrant ... and the guy opened up on us. He opened fire. Automatic weapon fire." (1)

That very same report though has Woolsey telling a different story: "After Beck fired one round, Woolsey said, the officers backed off and Beck yelled, 'My girlfriend is coming out through the garage, don't hurt her.' An unidentified woman emerged from the home, and sheriff's officials said Friday night that she was being questioned ... With his girlfriend gone, Beck resumed shooting after yelling at the officers not to hurt his dog." (1)

Firing a single round hardly qualifies as "automatic weapon fire," and it hardly seems likely that the officers wouldn't have sought cover and returned fire immediately had a shot been fired. A report in the *Los Angeles Daily News* painted a much different picture of the

initial confrontation: "agents tried to knock down the door, then gunfire erupted as officers tried to go through a window." (5)

That was largely the story being told by CNN as well: "When agents tried to enter the house through a window, authorities said, Beck opened fire on them with an automatic weapon." (11) The CNN report also claimed that Beck "came to the door a couple of times and refused to come out." (11)

A slightly different version of events appeared in an *Associated Press* report: "Authorities said Beck answered his door about 8:30 a.m. Friday but stormed back inside after a few words from officers. Witnesses said he began shooting when they shouted for him to come out and tried to break down the door." (17) The *Daily News* had the gunfight beginning somewhat earlier, at 8:15. (5)

The *Associated Press* carried a report that stated that: "The man fired hundreds of shots at the start of the standoff, when agents tried to arrest him for allegedly impersonating an officer," (16) though an *AP* report just a few days later claimed that: "The total number of rounds fired was unclear and authorities would not give an estimate." (18)

What then really transpired in the initial encounter between the officers and the suspect? Did Beck come to the door or didn't he? Were there words exchanged before shots were fired or weren't there? Did Beck fire a single shot or a volley of automatic weapon fire? Were the officers attempting to gain forced entry into the home or were they still approaching the house? Officials have offered nothing in the way of clarification.

Exactly when, and by whom, was Deputy Kuredjian killed?

The majority of the reports on the shootout implied, or stated outright, that Kuredjian was one of the officers who made the initial approach to the house and was killed in the first exchange of gunfire. A *Times* report, for instance, held that: "Beck ... opened fire on a team of law enforcement agents, killing one of them, as they approached his house to search it for illegal firearms." (3)

The *Daily News* claimed that: "Kuredjian, 40, died in the first moments of the confrontation when he assisted about a dozen U.S. marshals and agents of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in trying to arrest James Allen Beck on charges of impersonating an officer and of being a felon in possession of weapons." (5)

A separate report in the very same edition of the *Daily News* had a much smaller force approaching the house: "Beck shot and killed Los Angeles County sheriff's Deputy Hagop "Jake" Kuredjian on Friday while he and five other officers attempted to search Beck's Stevenson Ranch home, believing Beck had been stockpiling weapons and impersonating an officer." (7)

The version of events presented by CNN.com was that: "Deputy Hagop "Jake" Kuredjian was killed Friday morning as a man suspected of federal weapons violations opened fire on agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and local authorities." (13) ABC said that: "Deputy Jake Kuredjian was shot as he tried to serve Martin (sic) Beck a warrant for his arrest at his Santa Clarita, Calif. home at 8:30 a.m. on Friday." (12)

In fact though, Kuredjian was not on the scene when the first shots rang out, but arrived there, according to the *L.A. Times*, "after responding to a call of shots fired." (1) The same *Times* report explained that: "Kuredjian, on patrol in the area, was shot as he was getting off his motorcycle, which was parked behind a large red sport utility vehicle several houses away from Beck's home, authorities said." (1)

Sheriff's spokesman Lt. Carl H. Deeley echoed that account: "He stopped four doors east of the suspect's house. He took cover behind vehicles and was shot almost immediately after getting here." (1) A follow-up report by the *Times* verified the earlier report: "The deputy arrived a few minutes after the shooting started and was hit almost immediately, as he

crouched behind an SUV four houses down from the Beck home, officials said.” (9)

What we are to believe then, apparently, is that the suspect opened fire on a group of twelve or more agents from close range and yet failed to hit any of them [the *Times* reported that there were “no other injuries,” (1) while the *Daily News* noted that “One ATF agent suffered an injury to his wrist in the battle” (5)], and then proceeded to pick off officer Kuredjian with a single shot to the head from some 150-200 feet away while the officer was *behind an SUV* and, according to the *Times*, “wearing a motorcycle helmet.” (10)

Sounds perfectly reasonable to me. A comment made by Kuredjian’s superior provided further indication that the deputy was not initially a part of the operation. The *Daily News* reported that: “[Santa Clarita Sheriff’s station chief Don] Rodriguez said he was unclear how or why Kuredjian was selected to accompany two U.S. marshals and two agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in the attempted search of Beck’s Brooks Circle home.” (4)

Rodriguez was clearly baffled by the disinformational reports claiming that Kuredjian had joined in the initial assault upon the home. What appears to have happened was that the deputy had the grave misfortune of being on patrol in the immediate vicinity of the siege and responded too quickly to the reports of shots fired, or possibly was even close enough to have heard the shots himself. Arriving at the perimeter of the operation “within minutes,” (10) he was killed almost immediately.

On Sunday evening, September 2, NBC News reported that: “The *Associated Press* reports that an L.A. County Sheriff’s official said that it’s not determined who fired the deadly shot.” (8) The *AP* report in question had begun: “The investigation into a deadly California standoff has raised questions about whether the suspect fired the bullet that killed a deputy or whether the officer was mistakenly hit by a fellow lawman.” (18) Included was the following statement by Sheriff’s Sgt. Paul Patterson: “I am quite sure that is something we’re going to look into, because it’s not clear he was shot by Beck.” (18)

This report was quickly met with a flurry of official denials. A statement issued by the Sheriff’s Department referred to it as: “an unfortunate piece of prevarication that smacks of tabloid journalism.” (13) Deeley stated flatly that “There isn’t even a remote chance that friendly fire was the cause of death of Deputy Kuredjian,” (13) and “Without a doubt, it was Beck who shot him.” (10)

On the NBC News’ broadcast, a stammering Lt. Deeley asserted that: “There is absolutely no doubt that the fatal shot fired at Deputy Jake Kuredjian came from suspect James Beck, and I’ll give you two of the reasons right now. The angle of the shot and where Deputy Kuredjian was hit came from above and the angle proves that the shot did come from suspect Beck and that second story of his house. And also during negotiations ... he apologized for shooting the deputy.” (8)

The media was quick to fall in line with the position of the various police agencies. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that: “Preliminary autopsy and ballistics findings confirm that a Santa Clarita Valley gunman who held officers at bay Friday fired the shot that killed a deputy, Los Angeles County sheriff’s officials said Monday.” (10)

The *Daily News* joined in with: “The Los Angeles County Coroner’s Office found Saturday that based on the trajectory of the bullet, there was no doubt that Kuredjian had been shot from above. That rules out the possibility that surfaced this weekend that the deputy was shot by another law enforcement officer by mistake.” (14)

CNN featured the following quote from Deeley: “The homicide bureau has stated that the trajectory of the bullet and the wound, where it was, proved that the bullet came from the second floor of the house, fired by suspect Beck,” and also repeated the claim that Beck had acknowledged and apologized for the shooting of Kuredjian. (13)

Both of these claims though are transparently fraudulent, though they went unchallenged by the various media representatives. The very same Lt. Deeley had been quoted just the day

before as saying that “No one saw Beck shoot Jake. People right next to him just saw him go down. There were so many shots going off; it’s hard to tell where they [we]re coming from.” (9)

Hard to tell where they were coming from? How many possibilities are there? Considering that there was only one suspect, and he was said to have been in the house throughout the siege, that sort of limits the possibilities. All the other shots, one would assume, would be directed *toward* the house.

As for the claim that the angle of the shot proved that it was fired from the house, there would be no way of determining that fact since, as Deeley had already acknowledged, no one had seen the officer get shot. Therefore, there was no way of knowing how the officer's head was oriented when the fatal bullet struck him. The path that the bullet traveled through his head was a function of both the angle of the shot and the orientation of the target. Without knowing which direction he was looking, and whether he had his head tilted either up or down or left or right, it is simply not possible to determine where the shot originated from.

That didn't stop the *L.A. Times* from claiming that "A sheriff's investigation found that the bullet that struck Kuredjian in the head traveled in a 'steep downward arc' from the second floor of Beck's home," (10) again according to Lt. Deeley. Lt. Raymond Peavy, of the Sheriff's Homicide Division, added that “No other officers [other than Beck?] were at that high of a level.” (10)

This was, it should be noted, a rather odd choice of words considering that Beck was not, according to official reports, an officer. It should also be noted that even if the shot had been fired from the second-story window of the home, it would have only placed the shooter perhaps 15 feet above the target at a distance of 150 feet or more.

The angle of such a shot would hardly be a "steep downward arc," but would in fact be so slight that it would be negated by even a slight tilt of the head. If, however, Kuredjian had been crouching as some reports maintain, and he had been shot by someone standing nearby, then the bullet would indeed have followed a steep path downward.

As for the claims that the suspect took responsibility before being incinerated, no evidence was produced to support that contention. The suspect, of course, was dead, and so in no position to confirm or deny the claims. As these statements attributed to Beck were made over the phone though, they would undoubtedly have been taped if they had in fact been made. There is little doubt that if the Sheriff's office had such statements on tape, they would have been quickly released to the news media.

The *L.A. Times* attempted to introduce yet one more piece of alleged evidence to support the stance of the authorities: "About the time Kuredjian was shot, authorities also reported hearing a boom louder than any of the previous rounds of gunfire and seeing a puff of smoke coming from the second-floor window." (10) Perhaps that is supposed to explain how the bullet got through a large vehicle and a helmet before ripping into Kuredjian's brain.

As the evidence now stands, all indications are of a death by 'friendly fire' that wasn't all that friendly. All that can be said for sure though at this point is that "Autopsy results Saturday showed that Kuredjian died of a single gunshot wound to the head," and that "Kuredjian arrived a few minutes after the shooting started and was hit almost immediately." (15)

How did the fire start and why did it so quickly devour the house?

Initial reports held that: “sheriff's deputies blasted as many as 15 tear gas canisters into the Beck home. Top-ranking sheriff's officials ordered the tear-gas barrage, aiming it at the home's second story, after Beck allegedly shot Kuredjian from a second-floor window.” (1)

This report is, we should note here, very deceptive. In truth, the barrage didn't come until *several hours* after Kuredjian was shot and killed, as the *Daily News* acknowledged: “After a four-hour standoff, the man's house burst into flames – either from tear gas fired by

officers or because he set fire to it.” (5) Of course, the various department spokesmen denied there was any connection between the firing of the canisters and the fire.

The *Times* noted that “Although the use of tear gas has controversial associations with fires, a sheriff’s spokesman said investigators did not think the canisters had ignited the fire.” (1) Sheriff’s Deputy Harry Drucker added that “They believe that the fire was started by the suspect and wasn’t started by tear gas.” (1) CNN stated flatly that: “James Beck died in the fire he set Friday.” (11)

Indeed, the speed and ferocity with which the fire engulfed the home hinted that perhaps neither the tear gas nor the suspect were to blame – some of the canisters fired at the home could well have been incendiary charges (we are talking about the ATF here). According to the *Daily News*, “The blaze erupted on the second floor of the home at 11:51 a.m. Friday.” (6) Less than an hour later, “By 12:40 p.m., the entire second floor was gutted.” (1)

By 3:00 p.m., the fire was declared to be out, and Beck’s home had been reduced to “a blackened foundation.” (5) The complete destruction of the home was hastened by the fact that “As [the home] burned with an armed man barricaded inside Friday, police and firefighters stood by and just watched.” (6) An *Associated Press* report agreed that “Firefighters stood by as the fire engulfed the house in the upscale neighborhood.” (16)

Firefighters did though, “working from a distance, [protect] the houses on either side while Beck’s house burned to the ground.” (5) The Fire Department didn’t take action, according to the *Times*, until “about 12:30 p.m.,” at which time “sheriff’s and fire officials decided to direct a water-spraying aerial ladder and a hose on Beck’s house.” (9) Prior to that time, Sheriff’s deputies purportedly “would not allow firefighters to come near the house to douse the flames because of safety concerns.” (11)

Strangely though, the department had arrived on the scene in force nearly four hours before that, just after the shooting began and more than three hours before there was any indication that their services would be needed: “County fire officials responded to the incident with four engine companies, a truck company and two paramedic squads at about 8:37 a.m., [Los Angeles County Fire Department spokesman Mike] Brown said.” (9)

Why was this warrant being served? And why was it served in a raid on the home?

As a neighbor pointed out, “No one tells us anything ... We saw [Beck] walking his German shepherd at all hours of the day. Why wouldn’t they serve him [with the warrant] then?” (9) A perfectly valid question, and one that was echoed by other neighbors. Authorities were in fact well aware that Beck was in the habit of taking his dog on frequent walks, during any one of which he could have been served the warrant without incident.

It was claimed that the search warrant arose out of tips from neighbors who had grown suspicious of Beck and reported those suspicions. He had allegedly bragged to them of working for the U.S. Marshal’s Service or for the FBI and also claimed to be stockpiling weapons. When the *L.A. Times* talked to those in the area, they found that “most neighbors said they found nothing sinister about Beck.” (1) An *AP* reporter found that “Some neighbors described him as social and generally nice,” and that “Several residents of the upscale neighborhood said Beck often socialized with them.” (17)

Who then were these neighbors whose fears prompted the search? The answer may well lie in the demographic make-up of the Stevenson Ranch development, and of Santa Clarita in general – it is loaded with cops. As the *Times* reported, “Fully 10% of Los Angeles police officers live in Santa Clarita, more than live in the city they patrol.” (2)

To illustrate the density of the police population, the *Times* told the story of a Beverly Hills publicist who, when he “moved his young family to Stevenson Ranch two years ago, the real estate agent assured them ‘You couldn’t go more than three houses without running into a police officer.’ Sure enough, his neighbors include a sheriff’s deputy and an LAPD officer.”

(2)

Was it local law enforcement personnel who had 'reported' the alleged claims being made by Beck? And if not, then why were they not the ones to whom their fellow neighbors reported their suspicions, rather than improbably phoning them in to the U.S. Marshal's office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms? If you live in a police 'ghetto,' do you really need to place calls to these agencies to report a suspected crime?

A report in the Sunday *Times* noted that: "The specific reasons for the search are laid out in an affidavit by a federal agent that was shown to a federal prosecutor and a federal judge, both of whom approved the search." The same report though added that: "[Southern California head of the ATF Donald] Kincaid said the affidavit was sealed and he would not discuss its specifics." (9)

Was there an arsenal of weapons and ammunition in the suspect's home?

Of primary concern, according to officials, was the alleged arsenal of weapons being assembled by Beck. There are serious doubts, however, about whether such a cache existed. As the *Times* pointed out, the fire that destroyed Beck's home would likely have caused the ammunition to "explode, spraying the area with bullets." (1) Reporters on the scene observed that "There was no indication that any such explosions occurred." (1)

There is also doubt about whether law enforcement officials really believed that such a cache existed. One report held that after the second floor of the house gave way to the fire at 1:15 p.m., "Some of the SWAT team members began taking off their helmets, apparently convinced that Beck could no longer be a threat." (1)

While it may well be true that Beck was no longer a threat at that time, a large cache of ammunition on the ground floor would still have posed a considerable threat, not only to the officers, but to anyone else in the general vicinity of the siege. And the fact that law enforcement personnel had adopted a strategy of igniting the house in the first place strongly suggests that they didn't seriously consider the possibility that the residence was stockpiled with ammunition.

Officials did ultimately claim to have found a number of firearms in the smoldering embers of Beck's home. Included on that list were "three assault rifles ... including an AK-47 and AR-15, as well as a shotgun, a .380-caliber semiautomatic pistol and other handguns." (9) Notably absent from that list was the "automatic weapon" with which Beck had allegedly opened fire to begin the shootout.

Who exactly was James Allen Beck?

One thing that is known is that he was a former police officer himself. In 1987, he had been accepted onto the Arcadia police force. He was let go just over a year later, for reasons that remain unclear. The chief of the Arcadia force, Dave Hinig, provided only vague answers for reporters, citing confidentiality laws.

Approximately two years after leaving the Arcadia force, Beck "began racking up a long string of arrests and convictions." (3) According to the *L.A. Times*, he was "first convicted in 1990 for receiving stolen property—a Remington 870 shotgun and a .25 caliber Baretta. He was also convicted of grand theft, firearms violations and fraudulent use of someone else's credit card, on which he charged more than \$1,300. He was sentenced to two years in state prison." (3)

"In the years that followed, Beck was arrested numerous other times: on suspicion of possession of firearms, receiving stolen property, carrying firearms in public, impersonating a police officer and being a felon in possession of an assault weapon. He was again sentenced to prison, this time for four years, law enforcement and court records show." (3)

The rather obvious question begged here is: how was it possible for him to *again* be arrested, convicted and sentenced to prison when he should have already been in prison, serving the sentence that he had already received? As the story continues, we find that “In late 1992, Beck was convicted again, of first degree residential burglary with the intent to commit larceny. Court documents say he broke into a trailer. That time, he was sentenced to six years in state prison.” (3)

By this time Beck had apparently racked up prison sentences totaling twelve years, and yet had by all appearances not yet served any of that time. He was either a very lucky man, or he had some people in high places looking out for him. Following the 1992 conviction, “It is not known what became of Beck ... or how he was able to afford to move into Stevenson Ranch in November.” (3)

As it turns out though, law enforcement officials were well aware of Beck's whereabouts at least a year before the siege on his home. As ATF chief Kincaid revealed, his “bureau had conducted a similar search a year ago at a different address, which Kincaid could not specify.” (9) This revelation came about as authorities scrambled to explain how the serving of a search warrant had veered so wildly out of control.

Kincaid explained that because of that earlier encounter with the suspect, “the ATF had reason to believe that Beck would be cooperative Friday morning.” (9) Because of this, spokesmen claimed, “The violence that claimed the life of a Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy in the Santa Clarita Valley caught authorities off guard.” (9)

What this report failed to note was that the initial officers on the scene had “arrived about 5 a.m.” (5) What the officers were doing at the location for over three hours before allegedly first approaching the house was not explained. You would think though that that would have provided them with ample opportunity to assess the situation and be prepared for a confrontation with the suspect.

Nevertheless, the scene reportedly quickly degenerated into “such chaos that officers fired not only at the suspect but into homes on both sides of his, officials said Saturday.” (9) According to Sheriff's Captain Ray Leyva: “We did hit the houses on either side. I don't know exactly what was happening at the time, I don't know how well [the deputies'] aim was, but they were returning fire and trying to rescue someone, so I'm sure they were hitting things during the battle.” (9)

Excuse me? He didn't know how well his officers' aim was? You would think that - being that these are men who are trained, authorized and have been qualified to carry and use firearms - they would at the very least be able to, quite literally, hit the broad side of a fucking barn. I would venture to guess that most people, even those who have *never* fired a gun, could hit a large two-story house from across the street.

Nevertheless, “The two houses next door to Beck's ... [were found to be] pocked with numerous bullet marks.” (9) There are three possible explanations for this. The first was already mentioned – that the officers' aim was, shall we say, a little off. That hardly seems likely.

The second is that the various departments involved were so thoroughly incompetent and reckless that they just opened fire without having any idea of what they were supposed to be firing at. If so, that is a most disturbing scenario, especially given that one of the homes being riddled with gunfire was at the time occupied by “a couple and their 30-hour-old newborn.” (15) The baby's father told reporters that “The shots came through our [front] window and into our house.” (9)

The third possibility is perhaps the most disturbing of all – that these homes were deliberately targeted to create the impression that a two-way gun battle was raging, when in fact the only shots being fired were those fired by the officers. Such a strategy would serve to insure that any potential witnesses were forced to take cover or evacuate, and would therefore be unable to observe what was happening around the Beck home.

Authorities in fact made a concerted effort to evacuate the neighborhood, ostensibly for safety reasons, though the only bullets that appear to have entered any of the neighbors' homes were those fired by the officers on the scene. ABC reported that "Law enforcement officials urged several Santa Clarita residents to leave their homes when the standoff began," (12) and the *AP* added that "Authorities evacuated about 100 people from the neighborhood." (17)

Perhaps there is a similar explanation of claims made by the *Times* that Beck had been "allegedly firing not only at police on the ground, but at police and news media helicopters." (1) It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the shots were fired to keep the media at bay during the early stages of the operation, and fired by someone other than Beck.

What we have here then, or so it would appear, is a case of a search warrant that could have been peacefully served but wasn't, thereby leading to a gunfight in which it was unclear how the first shots were fired, and during which an officer was killed by 'friendly fire,' with the standoff ending when the building under siege was completely destroyed by a fire of uncertain origin. Now, where have I heard this story before

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[HOME](#)



Biowarfare: Made in America?

David McGowan
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Despite the best efforts of U.S. officials to cast the nation of Pakistan as a staunch ally in the Orwellian 'War on Terrorism,' the truth is that it is only a handful of illegitimate leaders of that nation that have pledged their support to American military goals. The vast majority of the Pakistani people support neither America's ill-defined war nor their own unelected government.

Some readers will no doubt recall that the current Pakistani head of state, General Pervez Musharraf, took power nearly two years ago in a decidedly undemocratic military coup that toppled the elected government of that country, with the blessings of the United States (undoubtedly as a preliminary chess-move aimed at facilitating the long-planned assault on Afghanistan).

In a move that was likely aimed at garnering the support of the Pakistani people for the illegitimate regime, Musharraf's administration, like those before it, had supported the Taliban in Afghanistan prior to September 11. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has noted, "Successive Pakistani governments and the military have openly backed the Taliban, providing finance, arms and training for its fighters." (1)

Nevertheless, the Afghani people have not been prone to accept the leadership of those thrust into power by undemocratic means. This has become all the more true as Musharraf has openly allied himself with the United States, even going so far as to proclaim that the non-existent 'evidence' put forth by the British government "provides sufficient basis for indictment in a court of law." (2)

That is quite a remarkable interpretation of the 'proof' supplied by Tony Blair and company, given that the drafters of the document themselves acknowledge in the very first sentence that: "This document does not purport to provide a prosecutable case against Osama bin Laden in a court of law." (3) In truth, it doesn't even come close to presenting a prosecutable case, but that's another story entirely.

Musharraf's wholehearted acceptance of the Western-supplied 'evidence' can only serve to further fan the flames of discontent among the Pakistani people. As the *World Socialist Web Site* noted, the General "is facing an increasingly volatile domestic situation, with protests against his support for Washington continuing to mount. On October 2, around 50,000 people took part in a protest organised by the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) party in Quetta." (1)

The *Sidney Morning Herald* added that: "In one of the largest demonstrations so far in support of the Taliban and the accused terrorist Osama bin Laden, Muslim extremists served

notice to Pakistan not to back a United States military strike against Afghanistan. Police armed with semi-automatic weapons confined foreigners to their hotels in the city of Quetta, close to the Afghan border, as an estimated 40,000 protesters armed with sticks moved in a convoy of cars, trucks and buses, and on foot, from the airport to the city centre." (4)

The WWSW report held that Quetta has been described as a "hot bed of Taliban supporters," and that according to a reporter on the scene, "Quetta is already on a war footing." (1) It also happens to be "a destination for hundreds of thousands of Afghans fleeing drought and war," (5) which could easily push the simmering tensions past the boiling point and destabilize all or part of Pakistan, creating serious problems for both the U.S. and the Pakistani ruling junta.

It is interesting then to note that there is an unusual twist to this situation that the American press, and most of the European press, have almost completely ignored. As the *News Telegraph* reported: "The largest outbreak in history of a highly contagious disease that causes patients to bleed to death from every orifice was confirmed yesterday on Pakistan's frontier with Afghanistan. At least 75 people have caught the disease so far and eight have died. An isolation ward screened off by barbed wire has been set up in the Pakistani city of Quetta ...

"Evidence suggests the outbreak of Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever emanates from within Afghanistan, raising fears of an epidemic if millions of refugees flee across the frontier into Pakistan. CCHF has similar effects to the ebola virus. Both viruses damage arteries, veins and other blood vessels and lead to the eventual collapse of major organs. As one doctor put it, a patient suffering from haemorrhagic fever 'literally melts in front of your eyes.'" (6)

The location and the rather curious timing of this outbreak, the largest in history, raise serious questions about its origin. As Dr. Taj Mohammad of the Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital in Quetta told a reporter: "It's unheard of - very unusual. There's a real risk of an epidemic among Afghan refugees." (5)

A fact sheet distributed by the World Health Organization notes that, "Although primarily a zoonosis, sporadic cases and outbreaks of CCHF affecting humans do occur." (7) The report goes on to say that, since the virus primarily affects animals, "The majority of cases (of human infection) have occurred in those involved with the livestock industry, such as agricultural workers, slaughterhouse workers and veterinarians." (7)

There is no indication that the inordinately high number of Afghani victims were employed in such professions. How then did they contract this feared disease? Experts have opined that the most likely culprit is "a species of tick, *Hyalomma marginatum*, common in the [afflicted] areas." (6) The WHO fact sheet notes that a "number of tick genera are capable of becoming infected with CCHF virus ... " (7)

Is this outbreak then a natural occurrence? Not necessarily. A brief review of the use of insects as carriers of biological warfare agents is in order here. According to Robert Harris and Jeremy Paxman's *A Higher Form of Killing*, that history began during World War II, when the Japanese "cultivated the plague-infected flea as a biological weapon. Pingfan [a biowarfare lab] was said to be capable of producing 500 million fleas a year." (8)

Following the war, that technology was warmly embraced by America's biowarfare engineers, who had their Japanese counterparts flown over to the States to share the tricks of the trade. Fort Detrick, the longtime home of American biological warfare research, soon became the world's premier site for developing such weapons of war as the 'flea bomb':

"Among the potential agents studied at Camp Detrick were anthrax, glanders, brucellosis, tularemia, melioidosis, plague, typhus, psittacosis, yellow fever, encephalitis and various forms of rickettsial disease; fowl pest and rinder-pest were among the animal viruses studied; various rice, potato and cereal blights were also investigated." (8)

Evidence clearly suggests that such weapons were utilized by the United States in the war waged against North Korea. American pilots captured during the war confessed to

dropping flea bombs on the people of North Korea, and Chinese officials published photographs of what they claimed to be "American biological bombs." (8) The U.S., of course, dismissed these reports as ludicrous, claiming that the pilots had been 'brainwashed' into offering the confessions.

The Chinese though assembled an international committee of scientists - from the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Sweden, Brazil and the Soviet Union - which in October of 1952 released a 700-page report that concluded that "the peoples of Korea and China did actually serve as targets for bacteriological weapons." (8)

The detailed report listed the techniques that had been deployed in that war, "which ranged from fountain pens filled with infectious ink, to anthrax-laden feathers, and fleas, lice and mosquitoes carrying plague and yellow fever." (8) The U.S., needless to say, continued to deny and/or ignore the evidence indicating the use of biowarfare agents, and continued to research and develop these blatantly illegal and indiscriminate killers:

"In 1956 the army began investigating the feasibility of breeding fifty million fleas a week, presumably to spread plague. By the end of the fifties the Fort Detrick laboratories were said to contain mosquitos infected with yellow fever, malaria and dengue (an acute viral disease also known as Breakbone Fever for which there is no cure); fleas infected with plague; ticks contaminated with tularemia; and flies infected with cholera, anthrax and dysentery." (8)

It would appear then that the United States has a long history of researching and developing infected insects as biological warfare agents, and hasn't been shy about deploying such weapons specifically to inflict massive civilian casualties. Just one week before the September 11 attacks, the *New York Times* reported that U.S. biological weapons research was still very much alive-and-well, though cloaked as always as 'defensive' research:

"Over the past several years, the United States has embarked on a program of secret research on biological weapons that, some officials say, tests the limits of the global treaty banning such weapons ... The projects, which have not been previously disclosed, were begun under President Clinton and have been embraced by the Bush administration, which intends to expand them." (9)

In light of this history, is it really merely a fluke of nature that this outbreak has occurred at this particular time and in this particular place? And is it also just a bizarre coincidence that, as *The Scotsman* has reported, "A spokesman for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees said many children are facing a new threat from a potentially fatal strain of malaria which has appeared in southern Afghanistan in recent months"? (10)

And what are we to make of the fact that the U.S. media, busily promoting fear among the people with constant warnings of an imminent biowarfare attack upon America, have had nothing to say about this impending catastrophe in Afghanistan? And what, for that matter, are we to make of the fact that the World Health Organization quickly moved to downplay and discredit the trickle of reports that surfaced in the European press?

In a report carried by the *BBC*, WHO officials claimed that: "Reports warning of an outbreak of a deadly viral disease similar to Ebola on the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan are 'incorrect and misleading.'" (11) This report was filled with deliberate distortions of fact that were directly contradicted by experts on the scene, as well as by the WHO's own *Fact Sheet* on the virus.

The *BBC*'s Andrew Webb, for instance, claimed that "So far, there has been no official diagnosis." (11) The *News Telegraph*, however, reported that: "A number of blood samples were sent to Pakistan's national virology testing centre in Islamabad. They were then sent to South Africa's National Institute of Virology in Johannesburg for confirmation." (6) The disease was, in fact, confirmed.

The disinformational *BBC* report also claimed that: "WHO says the reports caught the attention of the international media because there are many journalists in the area looking for

stories." (11) This flies in the face of the rather obvious fact that the Western media in general, and the American press in particular, haven't bothered to report on *anything* occurring in the region, especially in regards to the plight of the refugees.

The report goes on to state that: "WHO says there have been only 35 reported cases of the virus in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region this year and only four people are currently being treated." (11) In truth though, "Dr. Taj Mohammad of the Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital in Quetta said his facility had received a total of almost 70 cases this year," (5) all of which are documented in the hospital's case files.

Ian Simpson of the WHO is quoted as saying that "Nothing suggests it will get worse," (11) when in fact many observers have noted that there are clear indications that the situation will almost certainly get worse. David Horrocks, the Afghanistan project manager for Christian Aid, was merely stating the obvious when he said: "The condition of the refugees makes the risk of disease and epidemics rife. They are suffering severe malnutrition and dehydration which has reduced their immune system, and they are a very concentrated group." (10)

Stratfor has noted that: "Pakistan has a serious biohazard problem on its hands given the ease of transmission factored in with the limited sanitation facilities in refugee camps. Unfortunately the situation may grow much worse." (12) And the *BBC* itself had reported that "The horrendous sanitary conditions provide an ideal breeding ground for the virus." (5)

Simpson also attempts in the second *BBC* report to downplay the considerable health risk posed by CCHF, claiming that comparisons to the Ebola virus are unwarranted: "It doesn't spread as quickly, and there is a significantly higher recovery rate." (11) The WHO's own *Fact Sheet* though acknowledges that "CCHF is a severe disease in humans, with a high mortality." (7)

The report in *The Scotsman* described the rapid onset of the disease: "Within three days of infection, victims develop a rash and, after five, they start to bleed from orifices." (10) *Stratfor* added that "About half of those who contract the virus die within two weeks." (12) The WHO handout concurred that death usually occurs "in the second week of illness." (7)

As for the ease with which the disease can spread, the WHO's *Fact Sheet* notes that "When patients with CCHF are admitted to the hospital, there is a risk of nosocomial [hospital-acquired] spread of infection. In the past, serious outbreaks have occurred in this way and it is imperative that adequate infection control measures be observed to prevent this disastrous outcome." (7)

If there is a serious risk of the disease being rapidly spread in a sterile, controlled hospital environment, it should be fairly obvious that that risk is greatly multiplied in the crowded, unsanitary conditions in which the refugees now find themselves.

The *BBC* report ends rather remarkably by stressing that the "WHO says that rumours of CCHF being spread as biological warfare are nonsense," (11) though the plea of innocence is made to a charge that hadn't even been made, or at least not reported. The closest anyone had come was when *Stratfor* mentioned a "concern that the United States might be accused of engaging in biological weapons attacks." (12) Why then issue a preemptive denial through the WHO?

The first confirmed case in the current outbreak was in June of this year, which would seem initially to rule out the possibility of a biological warfare operation, since officially - as we all know - this military action wasn't planned until after September 11. However, there is little doubt that this war was planned long before the events took place that provided the pretext for launching it.

The *BBC* has reported that: "Niaz Naik, a former Pakistani Foreign Secretary, was told by senior American officials in mid-July that military action against Afghanistan would go ahead by the middle of October." (13) Similarly, *Indiareacts.com*, a self-described public affairs portal, reported on June 26 that "India and Iran will 'facilitate' US and Russian plans

for 'limited military action' against the Taliban if the contemplated tough new economic sanctions don't bend Afghanistan's fundamentalist regime ...

"Indian officials say that India and Iran will only play the role of 'facilitator' while the US and Russia will combat the Taliban from the front with the help of two Central Asian countries, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan ... Military action will be the last option though it now seems scarcely avoidable with the UN banned from Taliban-controlled areas." (14)

Assuming then that planning for the current military campaign was already well advanced by June of this year, there is little question that covert operations would have been ongoing at that time. Interestingly enough, *Stratfor* off-handedly mentioned that there was another outbreak of the disease at about that same time – in another part of the world where U.S. covert operations run rampant: "Earlier this summer more than 30 cases surfaced in Kosovo." (12)

As for the situation along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, it is not difficult to see how this scenario could play out. Pakistan has been provided with a convenient excuse to strictly enforce an indefinite closing of its border with Afghanistan. The Afghans fleeing the destruction of their homeland will be trapped between falling bombs and a closed border.

Forced to set up makeshift refugee camps on the Afghan side of the border, an enormous mass of humanity will be ravaged by starvation and disease. The potential loss of human life could be unimaginable. The weakest and most vulnerable of the refugees - which is to say, the children - will make up the majority of the victims.

Their blood will be on the hands of all the politicians, pundits and media flacks who cheerlead the illegal war being waged against the people of Afghanistan. Their legacy will be a new generation of 'terrorists' with a fully-earned hatred of American foreign policy.

UPDATE: Following the time-honored "when all else fails, blame it on the Commies" strategy, *Jane's* posted an article on November 28, 2001 entitled "Have Soviet-era Bio-Weapons Infected Afghan Refugees?" Revealed therein is the unreported fact that the disease is now running rampant along the Iranian border as well:

"Ominous news from Pakistan and Iran indicate that at best a viral pandemic may be brewing among Afghan refugees, at worst that former Soviet biological weapons have possibly made their first appearance.

" ... Ali-Safar Makaanali, head of Iran's Border Quarantines, has confirmed that Iranian health officials are also dealing with an outbreak of the virus, with 100 citizens having been infected. Iranian health authorities have established 40 quarantine bases on the border in an attempt to halt the spread of the disease. In addition, more than 100 mobile quarantine bases have been set up, and 39 hospitals have been prepared to cope with patients.

" ... Are the Iranian and Pakistani outbreaks an unfortunate coincidence or something more sinister?"

Good question. Some of us are still waiting for an answer.

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Cats, Dogs and 'Collateral Damage'

David McGowan
October 16, 2001

"There are not many witnesses to say what happened to Khorum village in eastern Afghanistan last Wednesday night; there are not many survivors. One thing is clear. The simple collection of mud huts and livestock pens in this village, around 38 miles from the east Afghanistan town of Jalalabad, was hit by a devastating firestorm."

Zeeshan Haider "Stench of Death in a Flattened Village," *The Guardian*, October 15, 2001

(The village referred to throughout this article is variously spelled Khorum, Kadam, Karam, and Koram. It is unclear which is the correct spelling.)

"One week after United States-led forces began bombarding Afghanistan, disturbing evidence is emerging of unacceptably high civilian casualties and ill-defined military and political objectives. Afghans reaching the Pakistani city of Peshawar 60 kilometres from the border said the bombing on Friday of Kadam, a small rural community in Surkh Rud district near the eastern city of Jalalabad, had killed scores, possibly hundreds of civilians." (1)

So said the *Sydney Morning Herald* on Monday, October 15. This was just one of many reports filed Sunday and Monday concerning the destruction of an Afghan village. The first of these reports were based on the eyewitness accounts of the survivors of the attack, some seriously wounded, who fled into neighboring Pakistan.

A report in the *Guardian* began: "Serious blunders by American warplanes may have killed at least 100 civilians in Afghanistan, according to eye-witness accounts obtained by the *Observer*. Two U.S. jets, they said, had bombed a village in eastern Afghanistan, killing more than 100 people." (2) According to one witness cited, the jets circled back twice to unload additional ordnance on the village.

The *Guardian* also noted that while "Western politicians have been quick to dismiss the claims as propaganda ... apparent confirmation of serious casualties among non-combatants is beginning to emerge. If the evidence is accurate, an attack on Karam village, 18 miles west of Jalalabad, last Thursday was the most lethal blunder yet by Allied forces." (2)

An article in the *Independent* held that Karam was just one of several villages to be targeted: "Something went terribly wrong at the end of the week. In conversations with refugees, a string of names come up again and again: Darunta, Karam, Torghar, Farmada - insignificant villages where, according to consistent accounts by eyewitnesses, as well as those of the Taliban propaganda machine, hundreds of civilians were killed." (3)

Among the refugees that *Independent* reporter Richard Parry spoke to, he found that

"many have seen at first hand the devastating effects which the attacks have begun to have on civilians. In hospitals, refugee camps and in the homes of friends, they describe how it feels to find yourself directly below one of the most technologically sophisticated bombing campaigns in history." (3)

U.S. officials were quick to deny civilian casualties and denounce the witness accounts as propaganda. Taliban officials countered by allowing Western reporters into the country to view the carnage at Karam first-hand. The journalists, skeptical of what they assumed would be a staged scene, filed reports that revealed their shock and revulsion at what they encountered.

A reporter for *The Times* described the scene at a nearby hospital: "In a gloomy Jalalabad hospital ward Ahmed Zai clings to his one-year-old son as they lie on a dirty sheet. Both have shrapnel wounds ... Across the crowded ward three-year-old Rahmed cries for his mother. Bandages cover his head, arm and legs. Blood is oozing through ... Doctors tell us that both of his parents are dead ... Along with twenty-five others in this hospital Ahmed and Rahmed were in the village of Koram." (4)

In the village itself, the reporters were met with harrowing scenes of carnage and human suffering. First, however, their Taliban escorts had to subdue the wrathful villagers: "As we approached Koram, climbing a rocky hillside, the villagers erupted in fury, charging down the hill with shovels in hand. We had experienced orchestrated protests during our drive from the Pakistan border, but this was altogether different." (4)

An *Associated Press* writer made a similar observation: "Waving shovels and sticks, enraged villagers surged toward foreign journalists brought here Sunday by Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia to see what officials say was the devastation of a U.S. air attack. 'They are coming to kill us! They are coming for information, to tell the planes where to bomb!' angry and terrified villagers shouted as they charged the reporters." (5)

These were, mind you, ordinary Afghan villagers who - after just one week of terror bombing allegedly aimed at eliminating terrorism and keeping the Western world safe for democracy - were so enraged that they were prepared to violently attack the first Westerners they laid eyes on. I don't know about anyone else, but I'm feeling a whole lot safer already.

Ian Williams of *The Times* graphically described the village: "One man said that he was burying his wife bit by bit as he dug her out of the rubble. He put a severed leg into a plastic bag and dropped it into the hole that he had dug. The stench of rotten bodies was overwhelming in places. Dead cows and goats littered the hillside, as did chunks of metal, shrapnel from the bombs. Of around 40 stone houses more than half have been completely destroyed." (4)

Kathy Gannon of the *Associated Press* took in the scene as well: "Villagers pointed out other evidence of an attack: a bloodstained pillowcase by a house, bomb craters and what appeared to be a rotting human limb. Dozens of sheep and goat carcasses were strewn about the mud-hut village, and the air was thick with a rancid stench." (5)

Williams reported seeing "at least thirty fresh graves, villagers praying beside them." (4) Gannon watched as an "old man knelt by one grave, sobbing. He looked up, furiously, at journalists and their cameras and lobbed stones to drive the outsiders away." (5) Witnesses on the scene told the reporters that "more bodies were buried up in the mountains, taken there by residents as they fled the now mostly deserted community." (5)

One villager showed the visitors a piece of bomb shrapnel with English writing on it. His wife and all five of his kids had been killed by the bombs. Another villager demanded answers: "They are innocent people living here. There is no military base. What is it they are looking for in Afghanistan? Where is Osama bin Laden? He is not here. Why did they bomb us?" (5)

Williams ended his report with the following observation: "from the evidence we have seen Koram is no terrorist training camp or military base. There appears to have been a

horrible mistake." (4) Not according to the Pentagon and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who put forth the preposterous story that it was an ammunition dump near the village that had been bombed.

As the *Guardian* reported, Rumsfeld claimed that "US bombs had hit the opening to two nearby tunnels believed to be possible ammunition dumps, causing powerful secondary explosions. People living near the site may have been involved in storing and guarding the ammunition store." (6) The village itself, according to the Pentagon, was not actually bombed at all.

Despite the fact that reporters had seen and photographed bomb craters, and had seen at least one unexploded warhead, the Pentagon "denied there were bomb craters in the village." (6) Left completely unexplained were the bombed-out dwellings, the livestock carcasses strewn about, the abundance of shrapnel, and the scattered body parts.

Rumsfeld washed his hands of the affair with the following shameless lie: "There's no question that people who were in close proximity to these isolated ammunition dumps, who very likely were there for a good reason because they were a part of that activity, may very well have been casualties. They were not cooking cookies inside those tunnels." (6)

No, actually they weren't in any tunnels at all. Some were sleeping. Some had just been called to morning prayer by the village mullah. All were, by any reasonable interpretation of the evidence, civilians.

After reading these reports on Sunday evening - all from British and Australian publications - I decided to catch the 11:00 PM edition of *ABC News* to see what sort of spin the American media would put on these well-documented reports of civilian casualties. No mention was made of them.

They did though manage to squeeze in an important story about some other tragic victims whose plight had previously been shamefully ignored by all avenues of the media. The following exchange between the talking heads 'teased' the story:
Leslie Sykes: "Still ahead - the forgotten victims of September 11th."
Phillip Palmer: "Tonight, a party to raise money for pets who lost their owners. That is coming up."

I didn't wait up to get the details.

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Deconstructing a Bush-League Speech

*David McGowan
November 12, 2001*

Selected excerpts from Bush's November 8 speech in Atlanta, including portions of the original draft (in red italics) that didn't make the final cut.

Tonight, many thousands of children are tragically learning to live without one of their parents.

Soon it will be tens of thousands, and then hundreds of thousands, and then perhaps millions of children who will be learning to live without one or both of their parents. But that's only if we count the Afghani kids.

And the rest of us are learning to live in a world that seems very different than it was on September the 10th.

All of you will be learning to live in a world that looks very much like a police state. Most of you will also be learning to live in a state of denial about how overtly fascist the country has become. Some of you though will have difficulty learning that portion of the program. We have a name for you: "terrorists."

The moment the second plane hit the second building, when we knew it was a terrorist attack, many felt that our lives would never be the same.

My handlers wanted me to emphasize that we had no clue that anything unusual was underway prior to the second plane hitting the second tower. We actually knew that there was some serious shit going down long before that time. The fact that no less than four commercial airliners had been simultaneously hijacked and one of them crashed into New York City's most visible landmark provided pretty good clues that something might be afoot. Nevertheless, it wasn't until the second plane hit the second tower that my aides chose to interrupt my reading time to inform me that there might be a problem. I'm still pissed off about it too, because now I'll never know what happened to that goat.

We have gained new heroes, those who ran into burning buildings to save others: our police and our firefighters.

And just a few short days ago - when we sent Rudy G's Gestapo troops to show them how we deal with those in this country who choose to lawfully assemble to address legitimate grievances - we showed the level of contempt that we have for these heroes. As for the ones still buried in the rubble, we will be skiploading them into trucks to dump at the Fresh Kills

Landfill. As you can well imagine, we are having a good laugh about that at the White House.

(APPLAUSE)

We've seen that type of hate before, and the only possible response is to confront it and to defeat it.

This is the part of the speech where I make the obligatory comparison of our current 'enemy' to Adolf Hitler. My daddy did the same thing with Saddam Hussein, as many of you will recall. In truth though, the only thing that these guys have in common with Hitler is that their rise to power was financed partly by my family, just like the real Hitler's rise was.

(APPLAUSE)

This new enemy seeks to destroy our freedom and impose its views.

This is actually one of the truest statements that I will be making here this evening. What I won't be telling you though is that the new enemy is me and my cabinet.

We value education; the terrorists do not believe women should be educated, or should have health care, or should leave their homes.

Neither, for that matter, do any of the other groups who we are considering propping up as the new Afghani government, but we don't generally like to talk about that.

We value the right to speak our minds;

We may value it, but don't anybody think about trying to actually exercise it. Always keep in mind what my errand-boy Ari Fleischer said about watching what you say and do.

This enemy tries to hide behind a peaceful faith. But those who celebrate the murder of innocent men, women and children have no religion, have no conscience and have no mercy.

That is why I want you all to go out there and wave your flags and sing God Bless America while we continue to actively assist in an impending genocide of some seven-and-a-half million innocent civilians.

(APPLAUSE)

We wage a war to save civilization itself.

That, of course, assumes that we are defining 'civilization' as the right of the select few to exploit the resources and the people of this entire planet.

This is a different war from any our nation has ever faced, a war on many fronts, against terrorists who operate in more than 60 different countries. And this is a war that must be fought not only overseas, but also here at home.

For those who haven't figured it out yet, this is a war against all the people of the world, including all of you.

I recently spoke to high school students in Maryland and realized that for the first time ever these seniors will graduate in the midst of a war in our own country.

I also realized that, in a few years, a lot of them would likely be dead or missing limbs. Many others will likely develop some mysterious ailments as a result of exposure to all the toxic shit we are dumping in the areas where we will be sending in ground troops.

We have entered a new era, and this new era requires new responsibilities, both for the government and for our people.

Our responsibility will be to continue lying to you in the hopes that most of you will continue to support our illegal and unjustified military actions, and to continue doing our very best to scare you into surrendering your few remaining civil liberties. Your responsibility will be to continue being scared and to foolishly continue to trust us here in Washington.

The government has a responsibility to protect our citizens, and that starts with homeland security. The first attack against America came by plane, and we are now making our airports and airplanes safer. We have posted the National Guard in America's airports and placed undercover air marshals on many flights.

This is just a first step aimed at acclimating all of you to the constant presence of armed and uniformed military personnel intruding into your daily lives. And, by the way, don't make the mistake of thinking that all that airport security is ultimately aimed solely at keeping people out of the country.

Four Americans have now died from anthrax out of a total of 17 people who have been infected. The Postal Service has processed more than 30 billion pieces of mail since September the 11th, and so far we've identified three different letters that contained anthrax.

I can't do the math myself, but they tell me that that means that one in every ten billion pieces of mail that was processed during the outrageously overhyped Anthrax scare was tainted. Now I know that I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but even I can figure out that the risk might have been somewhat misrepresented by our subservient media whores.

I'm proud of the way our health care and postal workers and the American people are responding with calm in the face of this deadly new threat.

I'm even more proud of the way our faithful servants in the press have obligingly and rather shamelessly whipped all of you into an Anthrax frenzy.

(APPLAUSE)

To coordinate our efforts, we have created the new Office of Homeland Security. Its director, my good friend and former Governor Tom Ridge, reports directly to me and works with all of our federal agencies, state and local governments and the private sector on a national strategy to strengthen our homeland protections.

I think you are going to like Tom. He's going to help coordinate the creation of a unified, nationwide, highly militarized police force that will operate largely in secrecy. It will look and function very much like the Gestapo. As all you patriotic Americans know, however, Nazi Germany's Gestapo was created for all the wrong reasons, while ours is being created for all the right reasons.

Our enemies have threatened other acts of terror. We take each threat seriously. And when we have evidence of credible threats, we will issue appropriate alerts.

We will continue to do our very best to scare the hell out of all of you and make you feel as vulnerable as we possibly can. Think of how happy you'll then be when we insist on 'protecting' you.

A terrorism alert is not a signal to stop your life. It is a call to be vigilant, to know that your government is on high alert and to add your eyes and ears to our efforts to find and stop those who want to do us harm.

If you've been paying close attention, the issuing of a terrorism alert should signal to you that more of your rights are about to get stripped away.

We are destroying training camps, disrupting communications and dismantling air defenses. We are now bombing Taliban front lines. We are deliberately and systematically hunting down these murderers and we will bring them to justice.

We are carpet bombing with B-52s and making liberal use of cluster bombs, fuel-air bombs and depleted uranium. We have decimated villages, scored direct hits on a hospital, a nursing home and a food distribution center, and have seriously damaged a dam. We have created an unconscionable refugee crisis and have effectively cut off food supplies to millions of starving Afghans. And we've hardly gotten started. Even if we knew where to find those we have branded as the 'murderers' - against whom, by the way, we have no real evidence - it would be impossible to hunt them down from a jet flying at 40,000 feet.

(APPLAUSE)

Throughout this battle, we adhere to our values. Unlike our enemy, we respect life. We do not target innocent civilians.

And if you believe that, then I guess you haven't been paying attention to the situation that we've created in Iraq over the last decade.

We care for the innocent people of Afghanistan, so we continue to provide humanitarian aid, even while their government tries to steal the food we send.

We tell this story so often that it is rather amazing that anyone believes it anymore. This is the standard lie that we use to explain why offering any meaningful humanitarian assistance would be pointless. That is so that all of you don't needlessly burden yourselves with feelings of guilt over the humanitarian crises that we routinely create. In this conflict, we have added a new twist to the purported humanitarian aid being offered – cleverly disguising the food packets to blend in with the cluster bomblets that are already beginning to litter the Afghani landscape.



Food or cluster bomb?

When the terrorists and their supporters are gone, the people of Afghanistan will say with the rest of the world, "Good riddance."

If everything goes as planned, the people of Afghanistan aren't going to be saying much of anything. As a matter of fact, we aren't sure that there will be any people in Afghanistan.

(APPLAUSE)

We are at the beginning of our efforts in Afghanistan, and Afghanistan is only the beginning of our efforts in the world. No group or nation should mistake Americans' (sic) intentions.

Lest anyone has, let me state it as clearly as possible: our intent is specifically to bomb the bejesus out of any and all pockets of resistance to our ultimate goal of global hegemony.

I recently received a letter from a fourth grade girl that seemed to say it all.

Finally my staffers gave me something to read that I can actually understand, unlike all those briefings they are always handing me. Now this person actually makes sense. I'm going to see if I can create a cabinet position for her, so that I have someone on my educational level that I can confer with.

Countless Americans gave blood in the aftermath of the attacks.

Countless more will give blood before this is all over, although it won't necessarily be voluntarily.

Americans have a lot to offer, so I've created a task force to develop additional ways people can get directly involved in this war effort, by making our homes and neighborhoods and schools and workplaces safer.

We want you all to start spying on each other. And please don't hesitate to report anything that you perceive to be 'anti-American' activity, whether the suspect be a neighbor, a co-worker, or even a family member. We already have your employers and your bankers spying on you for us, but we could really use some help from each and every one of you.

Too many have the wrong idea of Americans as shallow, materialist consumers who care only about getting rich or getting ahead.

I wonder if that has anything to do with the fact that that is the precise set of values that is pitched to Americans by our schools and other social institutions, through our media - both 'news' and 'entertainment,' though how you tell the difference is beyond me - and through the icons of popular culture?

Our government has the responsibility to put needless partisanship behind us and meet new challenges:

It is time now to do away with the transparent and rather silly pretense of having a two-party system.

I made some proposals to stimulate economic growth, which will create new jobs and make America less dependent on foreign oil.

That at least is the spin that we have tried to put on our alleged 'stimulus package.' In truth, what we are planning to do is hand out massive tax breaks to the wealthiest individuals and corporations in the country. We don't really expect that this will create any new jobs, but it will further consolidate wealth and power into the hands of an elite few. Meanwhile, jobs will continue to disappear more quickly and more frequently than Dick Cheney.

(APPLAUSE)

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*The center for an
informed America*

On Courage and Patriotism

*David McGowan
December 27, 2001*

Americans of late like to think of themselves as a particularly brave and patriotic breed. But is that really an accurate assessment of the qualities that we, as citizens of this nation, have exhibited since September 11?

By "we," I am referring here to the purported 90% of Americans who think that George Bush is doing a dandy job of waging his 'War on Terrorism.' That, of course, assumes that the results of public opinion polls reported by the U.S. media are any more credible than the rest of the swill that the press tries to pass off as 'news.'

Although the actual percentage is likely considerably lower than 90%, there are without question a sizable number of Americans who have wholeheartedly lined up behind our intellectually challenged commander-in-chief in response to the 'terrorist' attacks. And that, as far as I can see, makes us not a nation of heroes, but a nation of cowards.

We are cowards because we have chosen to follow the path of least resistance – blindly accepting the blatant lies that Washington and the media have disseminated since the September 11 attacks. Following that course requires no independent thought and, more importantly, causes none of what psychologists like to call 'cognitive dissonance.'

Cognitive dissonance occurs when we are unable to integrate a new bit of information into our existing belief structure because the new information challenges or directly contradicts one of our most cherished beliefs. It can be the source of extreme psychological discomfort, for it can force us into the uncomfortable position of having to reevaluate some of our core beliefs about how the world operates and what roles are played by the various actors on the global stage.

It is, of course, far easier to simply discredit the source of the offending information, thereby making it a rather simple task to just toss out the new, incongruous facts and blithely proceed along in a Prozac-aided state of virtual consciousness.

For an American raised on a steady diet of propaganda painting the United States as a benevolent giant - a model to the world of those cherished principles of freedom, equality and justice - confronting evidence that tends to indicate that our esteemed leaders were directly complicit in the slaughter of some 3,000 native sons and daughters as a staged provocation to justify a long-planned war and mount a long-planned frontal assault on civil liberties ... now that's something that would likely evoke a considerable amount of cognitive dissonance.

How then to resolve the mental conflict? A simple task really ... just deny, deny, deny. Deny that the source of the information has any validity whatsoever. Denounce the bearer of the news as a propagandist for the 'enemy.' Better yet, deny yourself the opportunity to even

be exposed to the offending facts, pretending as though they weren't readily available to anyone with an Internet connection and the desire to seek out the truth.

And whatever else you do, don't ask any questions which might yield answers that you don't want to hear. Choose instead to look away, to shield your eyes from the true evil that surrounds you, lest you be forced to reevaluate your basic conception of what America really stands for.

Don't ask, for example, how it is that our intelligence community - far and away the largest and most insidious the world has ever seen - was so thoroughly caught with its pants down. And don't stop to ponder that there were in fact numerous warnings that were received and seemingly deliberately ignored - as has been reported in various avenues of the press, most recently by the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Philip Shenon "FBI Ignored Attack Warning: Flight Instructor Told Agency of Terror Suspect's Plan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 22, 2001).

It is probably best that you also not ask why the nation with the world's most advanced air defense system, with fighter jets on constant alert capable of being scrambled to any sensitive location within the U.S. in minutes, failed to respond in any way throughout the entire time that the attacks were in progress - giving the impression that an order to 'stand down' had been issued at a very high level.

It would likewise be best to disregard and/or deny the validity of the numerous media reports documenting the extensive connections between the Bush family and the bin Laden family. Don't ask about Osama's brother helping to finance George, Jr.'s Arbusto Energy enterprise in Texas (and soon after dying in a private plane crash there), or about George, Sr.'s visits to the bin Laden complex in Saudi Arabia, or his close ties to the family through the Carlyle Group.

And pay no attention to those reports stating that Osama has long served as an asset of our CIA, doing America's bidding against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and later assisting in the recruiting, arming, funding and training of the KLA - whom our State Department can't seem to decide whether to classify as 'terrorists' or 'freedom fighters.' And definitely don't ask why it was that a CIA official visited with bin Laden in a Dubai hospital room in July of 2001, just weeks before the attacks and long after Osama was allegedly considered one of the world's most wanted fugitives.

Also avoid any questions concerning how the liars in Washington can claim that bin Laden has long been estranged from his family and yet simultaneously boast that our illustrious intelligence community has tapes of his private telephone calls to his mother. And, it should go without saying, don't spend any wasted time wondering how it is that while our spooks have the capability to covertly intercept his communications, they nevertheless failed to glean any hint of the alleged planning that bin Laden was doing in preparation for the attacks.

Don't ask how it is that - when imploding a building is such a highly technical process, requiring both extensive planning and knowledge gained through decades of experience to insure that the building is successfully reduced to rubble that all falls precisely into the structure's 'footprint,' that there are only a handful of companies qualified to perform this type of demolition work - a band of 'terrorists' was able to replicate this rather amazing feat not just once, but twice - and simply by having a commercial jet strike the two towers at essentially random points.



A building being professionally imploded

It would also be a good idea to hold off on any inquiries into why our alleged commander-in-chief chose to read to schoolchildren rather than address what had already developed into a full-scale national emergency. And don't ask why our illustrious vice-president, the elusive Dick Cheney, needs to operate in total secrecy, even while his wife works hand-in-hand with her husband's purported rival, Senator Joseph Lieberman, to crack down on political dissent on college and university campuses.

It is also best, so as not to disturb one's mental slumber, if you don't ask why it is that - when almost all of the alleged hijacking suspects were Saudi nationals trained in Germany and the United States - it is the largely defenseless population of Afghanistan that is under siege. Or how it is that a pilot supposedly trained in a third-rate puddle-jumping school was able to, according to eyewitnesses, masterfully perform a complex aeronautic maneuver just before crashing into the Pentagon.

And speaking of the Pentagon, other questions best left unasked include how it is that a plane known to have been hijacked can penetrate the world's most tightly controlled airspace without drawing any hint of anti-aircraft fire, and how it is that a surprise explosion and fire can take out a large portion of the military's nerve center without killing or injuring any military leaders of any consequence.

If confronted with evidence of massive insider trading in the days immediately preceding the attacks on America - trading that clearly indicated advance knowledge of the precise nature of the impending attacks - denounce the publication of such information as indicative of the 'liberal' bias of the media - even if the purveyor of the information was the unabashedly fascistic *Wall Street Journal*.

And, finally, don't ask why it is that even as our fearless leaders scramble about desperately attempting to fabricate evidence to justify the assault on the Afghan people *after the fact* - such as placing an obvious CIA plant, who appears to be the only foreign Taliban POW to miraculously survive the bloodbath at Jala-i-Qanghi prison, among the Taliban prisoners; or presenting a grainy, out-of-focus, and almost completely inaudible videotape of unknown origin as supposedly unimpeachable 'proof' of bin Laden's complicity - there still has not been to this day a single shred of verifiable evidence released to the American people that existed *before* the bombings began.

We shouldn't ask those sorts of questions because we very likely won't like the answers that we get (assuming that we could actually get any straight answers to such questions). And confronting the truth about America's role in the world, and about the true nature of the most fundamentally corrupt government on the face of the earth, requires something that is sadly lacking in this country - real courage.

So instead we choose to live in a state of deep denial, choosing not to rock our little boats - even as they are already rapidly taking on water - and choosing not to face up to the inescapable fact that the problems facing this country are too profound, and too deeply ingrained, to be fixed at the ballot box or through signing petitions or through endless letters written to our elected (and unelected) representatives.

The very real and very urgent problems that we collectively face, as a nation and as a people, did not arrive with the illegitimate Bush administration and won't leave with him when his term expires (assuming, that is, that he plans to leave at some point in the near future). America has been steadily devolving into an overt police state for quite some time now. We have maintained a permanent wartime economy for decades, engaging in illegal and grotesquely immoral acts of war against anyone who stands in the way of U.S. global hegemony.

The assault on civil liberties and human rights may well have been stepped-up a notch or two, but that is, as anyone who has been paying attention is surely aware, simply a natural progression of the policies of Bush's predecessors in the White House – as is the no-longer concealed attack on the rights of immigrants. The institution of an Orwellian surveillance state is also nothing new, but rather has been steadily progressing through several administrations.

The purported loosening of the restraints on the CIA and the FBI are really just a matter of openly acknowledging and codifying what has been U.S. policy since the inception of these abhorrent organizations. The CIA always has, and always will engage in assassinations, the recruitment of criminal elements, and domestic spying operations (not to mention drug trafficking, the violent overthrow of democratically elected governments, and various other nefarious pursuits).

It makes absolutely no difference whether the White House is occupied by an administration identifying itself as Republican or Democrat, or whether the majority party in Congress chooses to place either of those labels on itself – as was evidenced most recently when Senator Jeffords' much-ballyhooed 'defection' resulted in exactly no change in the agenda being pursued. Despite what the Washington propaganda mill would have you believe, it is not simply due to the fact that "everything changed" on September 11 that there has been an overwhelmingly 'bipartisan' consensus to enact the flurry of reactionary legislative measures that we have seen in the last few months.

The truth is that neither 'party' has any legitimacy, and neither of them speak for the people of this country, or even put much effort into pretending to. Our political leaders are merely actors (and not very good ones, in many cases) playing their assigned roles while doing the bidding of the wealthy and powerful. Your opinion means absolutely nothing. You are only allowed to go through the motions of trotting off to your assigned polling place every couple of years to cast your vote for either of the two designated candidates who have already met with the approval of the people whose opinion does matter.

Whether you opt to punch your ballot in the box marked "R" or the box marked "D" makes no difference whatsoever in the grand scheme of things. The policies pursued will be the same, though the propaganda used to sell them may differ slightly.

But we don't want to face up to any of that. Instead, we cowardly avert our eyes, striving not to recognize, or to pretend not to recognize, that the greatest impediment to true freedom, democracy and justice in this world is the United States government. By doing so, we condemn ourselves, our children, and all the people of the world, to the fascist tyranny of a global superpower run amok. To do otherwise, to seek a fundamental change in the American ship of state, is what requires true courage.

But what, you may ask, of our men and women in uniform? Surely they display bravery and courage, do they not? If so, it is certainly not by performing the duties that they have been trained to perform.

America has fought all of its recent wars almost exclusively from the air. Waging war, from 'our' side, means flying high-tech aircraft well beyond the reach of our overwhelmed enemies' defenses and opening the bomb-bay doors. Despite the frequent claims that our men and women have been put "in harm's way," it was claimed after Operation Desert Slaughter that soldiers serving in the Gulf had *less* chance of being injured or killed than their

counterparts stationed elsewhere.

Far more U.S. servicemen are in fact killed every year in training exercises than in armed conflict (though it seems likely that many of those listed as killed in so-called training accidents are actually killed engaging in covert military operations in areas of the world where the American people are not even aware that our troops are engaged).

It wasn't too long ago that waging war from the air was considered a cowardly and morally reprehensible tactic – condemned around the globe, most notably by our own leaders when the bombardment was being directed by the generals of Nazi Germany and Japan. Yet we are to believe that all of that has changed now, purportedly because we now have 'smart bombs,' so aerial warfare no longer means indiscriminately dumping explosive and incendiary devices on vast numbers of innocent civilians.

Nonsense. The only thing that has changed about aerial bombardment is the propaganda that accompanies it. Now we fly "sorties" to launch "surgical strikes" with "laser-guided" munitions that cause little or no "collateral damage." Just as we caused only limited collateral damage in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia - where collectively as many human lives were exterminated as in the Nazi concentration camps.

And just as we strove to minimize civilian casualties in Iraq – by deliberately creating conditions that can only be described as genocidal. The truth is that what we now like to call an "air campaign" is the same thing that it has always been – an effort to inflict death and suffering on a massive scale and break the will of a besieged population. It is a textbook example of the term "terrorist attack." And it is a cowardly way to wage war.

Bill Maher, the marginally talented comedian who fancies himself to be a political analyst, said as much on his television show. It was perhaps the first sign of intelligent life that Maher has exhibited, which is precisely why it almost cost him his job – until he cowardly tucked his tail between his legs and displayed the proper amount of contrition.

Such is the power of propaganda though that when an L.A. street gang performs a drive-by shooting - an inherently cowardly and inefficient means of retribution that invariably results in 'collateral damage' - the American people are appalled, yet when the U.S. military performs a fly-by shooting - an inherently cowardly and inefficient means of retribution that invariably results in 'collateral damage' - the American people applaud.

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Celluloid Heroes: Part I
or: You Can See All the Blood as You Walk Down Hollywood Boulevard
(With apologies to The Kinks)

David McGowan
January 20, 2002

“Radio and television are psychological warfare.”

Herbert Mullin, falsely accused and convicted Santa Cruz serial killer and the son of a highly-decorated WWII Army Captain

I couldn't help noticing that *Black Hawk Down* has now gone into general release. When I first heard about this film, I assumed that it would be a shameless glorification of a reprehensible, imperialist, oil-driven U.S. military operation that was itself shamelessly glorified as a humanitarian mission to feed the hungry.

But I was wrong.

As it turns out, the movie is much more than that. It is also, for instance, a shameless glorification of a convicted child rapist and sodomizer. And, lest we forget, it is one of the most obvious pieces of government-sanctioned, pro-war propaganda to come out of Hollywood since you know, I think we may have to go all the way back to *Behind Enemy Lines* on this one.

But at least that film didn't romanticize the military exploits of a child molester. For the record, the 'hero' of *Black Hawk Down*, Ranger John Grimes, was given a deceptive name-change by the filmmakers following a request from the Pentagon's PR people. It seems the Ranger's real name was John Stebbins – who is currently serving a 30-year-sentence for an attack on a child under the age of 12. Stebbins' ex-wife told the *New York Post*: "They are going to make millions off this film in which my ex-husband is portrayed as an All-American hero when the truth is he is not." (1)

He sure looks like one up there on the silver screen though. How could he not be when he is being brought to screen-life by Hollywood hunk Ewan McGregor? Far be it from me to suggest that the larger-than-life hero up there is actually a convicted pedophile. That would be like, say, suggesting that the hero played by Brad Pitt in that wretched movie about Tibet was actually a Nazi seeking 'proof' of Aryan supremacy.

Of course, using the magic of Hollywood to transform repellent cultural and historical figures into screen heroes is standard operating procedure in Tinseltown. It is something that the film industry really excels at. We are talking here, after all, about an industry that recently gave no less an appalling figure than the Marquis de Sade a Hollywood makeover.

But the point that I started to make before getting sidetracked is that the repugnant piece of celluloid known as *Black Hawk Down* is a painfully transparent piece of propaganda – its

release coming precisely at a time when the Bush team is beginning to drop broad hints that Somalia could be very highly-placed on the list of nations about to suffer from Sudden Aerial Bombardment Syndrome – all in the name of fighting terrorism, of course.

Expansion of the war into Somalia could prove to be a tough sell with the American people though. Despite being conditioned and encouraged to have famously short memories, there is always the danger that some of us might remember those graphic images of a Special Forces operative being drug through the streets of Mogadishu. Good thing then for the Washington crowd that this film came along at such an opportune time – and amid a clamor of cravenly gushing reviews.

What better way to sell a war than on the nation's theater screens? According to an article in the *Online Journal*, "Many who have seen the film report leaving the theater feeling angry, itching to 'kick some ass.'" (2) Nothing like some emotionally-charged propaganda to fire up the people for a war of 'revenge' against a nation of people depicted as barbarians.

But wait a minute, you say. This film can't be *deliberate* propaganda. Production on this movie had to have begun long before September 11, long before there was a 'War on Terrorism.' The timing of the movie must then be just a bizarre and fortuitous coincidence – just like the timing of all the other war and 'spy' films flooding the nation's theaters is just a coincidence.

The release of the aforementioned *Behind Enemy Lines*, just as real-life Special Forces operatives were being sent behind 'enemy' lines, was surely just a coincidence. Likewise for *Spy Games* and, so as not to leave out the little ones, *Spy Kids*. And *Collateral Damage* (Ahhnuld takes on the terrorists), *We Were Soldiers* (Mel Gibson helps rewrite the Vietnam War), *Hart's War* (Bruce Willis helps rewrite WWII), *The Farm* (aka the CIA's training center in Langley, Virginia), *Bad Company* (more of the same), *Spy Kids 2*, *The Accidental Spy*, *I Spy*, and the further adventures of fictional 'spies' James Bond and Jack Ryan.

And it is obviously just a coincidence that the television networks are quickly filling timeslots with spies as well, having premiered no less than three new series glorifying and romanticizing the exploits of the CIA just weeks after what was purportedly the most massive intelligence 'failure' in U.S. history.

We know that this was a coincidence because these new series were obviously 'in the can' long before 'the agency,' as CBS refers to it, had any inkling that it would be thrust into the limelight in September as it suddenly earned a much more visible role in formulating U.S. foreign and military policy, and a much larger budget.

As a brief aside, I just realized that I wrote "U.S. foreign and military policy" as though those were two separate and distinct concepts. Sorry. I have no idea what the hell I was thinking.

Anyway, the point here is that we know that the CIA's crack counterterrorism experts had no hint of the impending attacks because if they did they would have heroically risen to the task of saving the lives of the doomed inhabitants of the World Trade Center towers, just like they do every week on TV.

And that, of course, didn't happen.

So it had to be just uncanny timing that brought these new shows to America's television screens at the precise time that the much-maligned CIA was desperately in need of something to burnish its image.

And in a not-so-shocking development, the CIA is now openly participating in the crafting of its image for both the big and small screens. This is in stark contrast to the old days, when the intelligence community *covertly* participated in crafting its image – and the images of just about everything else, for that matter. Like the Hollywood crowd is fond of saying, it is the *agents* who wield the real power in Tinseltown.

With military and intelligence types overrunning both the big and small screens, some might be tempted to ponder whether there isn't a coordinated psychological warfare campaign

being waged against the American people to condition them to support a serious expansion of the 'War on Terrorism.' In retrospect, some skeptics in the crowd might even wonder whether the country hasn't been being primed for a major war for quite some time.

We have been, after all, bombarded with Steven Spielberg's masterful work of flag-waving war-glorification we all know and love as *Saving Private Ryan*. Some have noted, by the way, that Spielberg's films are structured to resemble nothing so much as Nazi propaganda films of the 1930s. Not unlike, for example, the films of Leni Riefenstahl – the master propagandist for the Reich who gave the world *Triumph of the Will*. If you aren't familiar with Riefenstahl, you will be soon: she's about to get a Hollywood makeover courtesy of actress/director Jodie Foster.

But that's beside the point ... sort of.

We also had to endure that wretched bit of historical revisionism known as *Pearl Harbor*, which was made by the very same Jerry Bruckheimer who is now offering us *Black Hawk Down*. Before *Pearl Harbor*, he gave us *Enemy of the State* and a godawful cable television series by the name of *Soldier of Fortune, Inc.*

One of Bruckheimer's earlier works was the feature-length recruiting film, *Top Gun*, that was released not long before the 1990s dawned as the decade in which it would become a rather routine practice for America's 'top gun' pilots to bomb the piss out of various defenseless nations that are selfishly hoarding their oil reserves.

In those days, Bruckheimer was working with ~~co-propagandist~~ co-producer Don Simpson – who opted out of the partnership when he was found dead in his home, allegedly the victim of a drug overdose or of natural causes, depending on who is telling the story. Simpson's personal physician and apparent drug supplier had likewise been found dead, in Simpson's poolhouse, and likewise was said to be the victim of a drug overdose. Shit happens.

In Hollywood, shit happens *all the time*. Since shortly after its emergence circa 1915 as the entertainment capital of the world, Hollywood's streets have been littered with the bodies of those who have died under, shall we say, questionable circumstances.

In September of 1920, Olive Thomas - a beautiful and very young actress with everything to live for - purportedly killed herself by overdosing on, of all things, mercury. One year later, actress Virginia Rappe turned up dead at a party hosted by silent film star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle. In February of the next year, 1922, producer William Desmond Taylor - a former British military officer whose life is shrouded in mystery to this day - was found shot to death.

In 1923, matinee idol Wally Reid was found dead in a padded cell at the mental hospital to which he had been confined. Reid was just thirty years old. His death was attributed to his morphine addiction, though how he would have fed that habit in a mental hospital remains a mystery. His widow then starred in an anti-drug film that she had lobbied for. The film was produced by Thomas Ince – a partner of D.W. Griffith, who gave the Ku Klux Klan a rather notorious Hollywood makeover in *Birth of a Nation*. Ince caught a bullet to the head in November of 1924 while attending a private party aboard William Randolph Hearst's yacht (though it was claimed that Ince died of natural causes, a story propagated primarily by Hearst's own newspapers).

And so began a tradition of unsolved and/or covered-up deaths that plagues Hollywood to this day. And the funny thing is that if you scratch beneath the surface of virtually any of these untimely deaths, you find the same cast of characters that you find lurking about the fringes of any self-respecting political 'conspiracy theory' – namely Mafioso, native and imported fascists, drug traffickers, and intelligence operatives.

As another brief aside, I just realized that I wrote "Mafioso, native and imported fascists, drug traffickers, *and* intelligence operatives," which is kind of like saying "Larry, Curly, Moe, *and* the Three Stooges."

The bodies continue to pile up in Hollywood to this day. Recent additions include:

Robert Blake's wife, who acquired some unwanted bullet holes in her head; William Shatner's wife, who ... uhhh ... drowned ("we've got you covered, Captain"); singer Aaliyah, whose plane - flown by a Florida-trained pilot with drug connections - went down because it was reportedly overweight, despite the fact that much of the band's equipment was reportedly left behind ("can we move some of this equipment out of here? - we have to make room for all these drugs"); and comedian Phil Hartman, whose shooting death was covered up with a murder/suicide story that had more holes in it than an Al Queda tunnel complex.

But here I have digressed at some length.

The point I was trying to make is that a psywar campaign has been in effect for quite some time now to condition the American people for what has been occasionally billed as World War III. The operative strategy has been to romanticize and glorify World War II, creating a kind of perverse wartime nostalgia. Hence we have seen the likes of *Pearl Harbor* on the big screen, *Band of Brothers* on the small screen, and literary masterpieces like *The Greatest Generation* in the bookstores.

And those works of 'art' are just the tip of the psywar iceberg. The media has become so besotted with images of heroic military and law enforcement personnel that the *World Socialist Web Site* recently felt compelled to commend an otherwise forgettable film simply because: "its protagonists are not generals or admirals, Navy Seals, Green Berets, marine commandos, FBI or CIA agents, state troopers or municipal police officers, sheriffs or deputy sheriffs, prison wardens or guards, secret service or Treasury agents, customs inspectors, immigration investigators, federal marshals, judges, bailiffs, parole or probation officers, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms inspectors, Internal Revenue criminal investigators, Fish and Wildlife Service special agents, or any other fictional representatives of law enforcement."

They seem to have left out federal prosecutors, district attorneys, judge advocate generals, Supreme Court justices, U.S. embassy personnel, White House staffers and well, I think you get the idea.

As for the spy trade, there have historically been two primary representations of intelligence operatives in our ~~propaganda~~ entertainment media, both of them grotesquely disinformational and at least one of them crafted by the spooks themselves. That would be the notion of the intelligence operative as a dashing, cultured, romantic hero. The prototype for this version of the fictional spy was largely provided by Ian Fleming, creator of the James Bond character.

Fleming was a British intelligence operative during (and after) World War II, when he worked closely with Nazi 'defector' Rudolph Hess and a rather notorious character named Aleister Crowley – a flamboyant occultist, British and probable U.S. intelligence operative, and avid German and Nazi propagandist during World Wars I and II. Fleming's work is now being carried on by the likes of Tom Clancy, a 'former' Naval Intelligence asset and good friend of George Bush.

The other predominant image of the intelligence community that has permeated the media is that of 'the gang that couldn't shoot straight' – the spy as a well-intentioned, bumbling fool. On the big screen, the *Pink Panther* films established the model for this archetype, along with such television series as *Get Smart*, which was co-created by Buck Henry. Henry also was credited with the screenplay for the film *Day of the Dolphin* – a blatantly disinformational look at the work of MK-ULTRA operative John Lilly.

Assisting Henry on creating *Get Smart*, by the way, was Mel Brooks, whose most recent endeavor was adapting for the Broadway stage his film *The Producers* – an offensive piece of work that trivializes the crimes of the Third Reich and casts Herr Hitler as a cartoonish character. Strangely enough, Brooks chose to stage the gala premier of his play on April 20, 2001 – the birthday of its protagonist.

Brooks wasn't the first to present a buffoonish screen image of Hitler. Charlie Chaplin did it far earlier – back in 1940 when *The Great Dictator* was released just after the Nazi

invasion of the Soviet Union. The funny thing was though that Charlie pretty much wore the same makeup to play the *Fuhrer* that he had been wearing for the previous twenty years.

Chaplin's toothbrush-mustachioed 'Little Tramp' character was created and began gracing the nation's silent movie screens just as the similarly adorned Adolf Hitler began his climb to power in Germany's fledgling Nazi Party following World War I (after, it should probably be noted, spending some time in the Pasewalk Sanitarium). By the time the real Hitler stepped onto the world stage, therefore, the American people were predisposed to view the silly-looking character as little more than a joke.

Coincidence? Probably so, but I thought I'd throw it out there anyway – along with the fact that the two men were born just hours apart: Chaplin on April 18, 1889 and Hitler on April 20, 1889. That means that actually, I have no idea what the hell that means, but it seems like it should mean something.

Chaplin, by the way, who shared with Ranger Stebbins a well-known appetite for underage girls, was among the elite guests aboard Hearst's yacht the night Ince was killed, may have been present at the party of his friend Fatty Arbuckle that ended in the death of Virginia Rappe, and was the guest of honor at a 1972 party at which Oscar Levant made his last public appearance before being discovered dead.

Though this warning may be a little belated, I would strongly caution everyone out there against attending any parties where Chaplin is on the guest list.

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Celluloid Heroes: Part II ***or: The Tangled Web of Charlie Manson***

David McGowan
February 10, 2002

“[In Hollywood], everyone's a producer or a hit man.”

Douglas Clark, convicted Sunset Strip serial killer and the son of a Naval Intelligence operative

“I don't know if you guys have ever in your entire life shot anybody, but it's really fun to do.”

Former child actor Carol Bundy, Clark's convicted accomplice, speaking to the police

It has frequently been said that if you scratch just beneath the glossy and oh-so-glamorous exterior of the Hollywood dream factory, you will find the dark and ugly reality that lurks just beneath the surface. But just how dark and ugly is that reality?

There is certainly no shortage of recurrent weirdness that passes for business-as-usual in the land of make-believe that we like to call Hollywood. For such a small and tight-knit community, the Hollywood gang has generated more than its fair share of scandal and sleaze over the better part of the last century.

Is that merely because, in our celebrity-obsessed culture, every misstep of the entertainment community is open to such intense scrutiny? Would we find the same skeletons in the closets of any other group in the country that was subjected to such unabashed media and public voyeurism? Is Hollywood merely a microcosm of America itself, illuminated by the harsh glare of the stage lights?

If so, then it is truly a strange and scary world that we live in. Consider, if you will, just a few recent examples of Tinseltown weirdness:

- Actress Margot Kidder, missing for a week, surfaces in the bushes of a stranger's yard with her head shaved and a few of her teeth conspicuously absent.
- Actress Anne Heche similarly goes missing, only to show up at the door of a stranger in the middle of nowhere babbling about being beamed up to the mothership.
- Actor/comedian Martin Lawrence decides to stop traffic one day on busy Ventura Boulevard by wandering into the street, waving a gun and shouting incoherently.
- Actor Robert Downey, Jr. finds himself sleeping in the bed of a neighbor, with no idea of how he got there.

- Dr. Haing S. Ngor, who purportedly survived the killing fields of Cambodia before starring in Hollywood's version of events there, doesn't survive the streets of Hollywood; he is gunned down in February of 1996.
- Actor Jack Nicholson decides to blow off some steam by attacking the vehicle of another motorist with a golf club.
- Someone 'falls' to their death from the apartment of actor James Caan.
- Comic actor Eddie Murphy is arrested in the company of a transsexual prostitute. He/she dies a violent death shortly afterwards, though the press doesn't pay much attention.
- Actor Hugh Grant is arrested while being serviced by Hollywood prostitute "Divine" Brown. Brown's pimp subsequently surfaces in the company of a neo-Nazi singer who claims he was offered money by Courtney Love to kill Kurt Cobain. The would-be assassin turns up dead soon after telling this story to filmmaker Nick Broomfield.
- Actor Brian Keith, the former star of television's *Family Affair*, is found with a fatal bullet wound in his head on June 24, 1997. His death, ruled a suicide, continues a long tradition of Hollywood notables allegedly shooting themselves in the head. Included on that list are Herve "Tattoo" Villechaize (September 4, 1993), Del Shannon (December 8, 1990), Jon-Erik Hexum (October 12, 1984), Freddie "Chico" Prinze (January 29, 1977), Pete Duel (December 31, 1971), and George "Superman" Reeves (July 1, 1959).
- On June 2, 1996, the 35th anniversary of her grandfather Ernest's alleged suicide, Margaux Hemingway joins the list of Hollywood personalities whose deaths are attributed to drug overdoses. Margaux is the fifth member of her family to have their deaths ruled as suicides. River Phoenix's death on Halloween, 1993, outside of Johnny Depp's Viper Room, is also attributed to an overdose.

Nothing unusual about any of that, I suppose. Looking further back over the sordid history of Hollywood, consider also these examples of unexplained weirdness (and these examples are, it should be noted, just the tip of a very large iceberg):

- At Marlon Brando's Los Angeles estate, his son Christian shoots and kills sister Cheyenne's significant other, Dag Drollet, in May of 1990. Christian and his father claim that the shot was fired accidentally during a struggle for the gun. There is no sign of a struggle, and Drollet is found in a sitting position with a cigarette lighter and the remote control for the TV still in his hands. Attorney Robert Shapiro, who also represented Robert Evans in the *Cotton Club* murder case, cops a plea that results in Brando serving just five years. By that time, Cheyenne is dead, allegedly a suicide victim. Christian is later considered as a husband by Bonnie Lee Bakley, before she decides to marry Robert Blake. Five months later, Bakley is dead.
- Actors and actresses like Clara "It Girl" Bow, Frances Farmer, and the aforementioned Oscar Levant and Wallace Reid find themselves forcibly confined to mental hospitals. Farmer later tells of being beaten, raped, locked in a cage, and administered electroshock torture (oops ... I meant to say electroshock therapy).
- Mob enforcer Johnny Stompanato is found stabbed to death in the home of actress Lana Turner. Turner's young daughter takes the rap, though she doesn't appear to be physically capable of committing the crime.
- Actress Natalie Wood goes missing in the middle of the night from a yacht while in the company of actors Robert Wagner and Christopher Walken. She subsequently is found floating in the Pacific Ocean. Witnesses later claim that she had been in a motel room with Walken on Catalina Island.

- Aspiring actress Elizabeth "The Black Dahlia" Short is found literally cut in half, with her mutilated remains left on display, on January 15, 1947.
- People close to actress Sarah Miles develop a knack for committing suicide. There is the roommate who jumps out of the window of their shared apartment. There is the ex-gardener who owes Miles money and decides to gas himself. And of course there is the business manager who is discovered dead in Sarah's motel room and declared to be the victim of a drug overdose – though there is reportedly blood on his face and on the bed in which he is found. Miles has purportedly spent the night in the room of her co-star at the time: Burt Reynolds.
- Actress Thelma "Hot Toddy" Todd turns up dead in her car, allegedly the victim of suicide by means of carbon monoxide poisoning. Blood on her face, a cut lip and a dislodged tooth indicate that she was beaten senseless prior to her uhhh suicide. Todd had at one time been the wife of Pat DiCicco, one of "Lucky" Luciano's top lieutenants.
- Three years after Todd's death, popular comedian Ted Healy - who had had a fling with Thelma - is beaten to death. Though the details of his death were never reported, it has been fairly common knowledge in Hollywood circles for decades that Healy was beaten by DiCicco and actor Wallace Beery. Present at the time of the beating is Albert "Cubby" Broccoli – first cousin of DiCicco, friend of Howard Hughes, and one-time agent for Lana Turner. Broccoli goes on to produce the James Bond films, penned by British intelligence asset Ian Fleming. Assisting in covering up the murder of Healy is Shemp Howard of the Three Stooges, whose careers were launched by Healy.
- Comedian/actor John Belushi is found dead in his room in a West Hollywood hotel in March of 1982. He is said to be yet another victim of a drug overdose. His last known visitors, on the night of his death, are Robert DeNiro and Robin Williams. The story of his death, and tragically short life, is then told in a book by former Office of Naval Intelligence 'briefer' Bob Woodward.
- A number of the people involved with the movie *Rebel Without a Cause* die mysterious deaths at young ages – including stars James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo (who is stabbed to death outside of his apartment on November 12, 1976) and Nick Reid (who is found dead of mysterious causes on February 7, 1968).
- Silent film legend Ramon Navarro is found dead in his home on Halloween day, 1968. He has been brutally tortured and murdered in what appears for all the world to be a ritual homicide. Two brothers, both young male prostitutes, are charged with the crime.
- Actor Bob Crane is murdered and it subsequently emerges that he had a secret life that centered around a passion for hardcore, homemade porno films.

Nothing unusual about any of that either, I suppose. But consider the web spun by the man known as Charles Milles Manson. Now this is where we really cut to the core of the dark underbelly of Hollywood. Join me then, if you will, as we embark on a journey that I like to call "Seven Degrees of Charlie Manson."

Before doing so, allow me to introduce a few members of the stellar cast of this strange and twisted tale:

- Sharon Tate - the most famous of the Manson victims, and the daughter of Colonel Paul Tate, U.S. Army Intelligence. Tate was killed on August 9, 1969, along with Abigail Folger, Steven Parent, Jay Sebring, and Voytek Frykowski.
- Kenneth Anger - former child-star turned underground filmmaker, and the son of a 'military-industrial complex' engineer who developed machine-guns for Kellogg during WWII and later worked for Douglas Aircraft.

- Judy Garland - child actor and singer who was kept drugged on a daily basis from about the age of five, first by her mother, and then by the studios. Garland was found dead on the summer solstice of 1969, just seven weeks before the Tate/LaBianca murders.
- John Phillips - musician/composer who founded the singing group The Mamas and The Papas and who was born in a military hospital, the son of a career Marine officer. John later attended the U.S. Naval Academy.
- Roy Radin - theatrical producer who specialized in staging vaudeville revival shows. Radin was working with Robert Evans to produce *The Cotton Club* when he was shot some twenty-seven times in the head in 1983. Radin began his career while still a teenager by staging shows in Masonic temples.
- The Hell's Angels - the most well-known of the biker gangs that arose after WWII due to the efforts of returning OSS and military officers. The Angels were led by Ralph "Sonny" Barger, reportedly an informant for the Oakland Police Department who was also on the payroll of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.
- Jayne Mansfield - actress/sex symbol who was decapitated, allegedly in a car accident, on June 29, 1967. According to Jayne's daughter, Mansfield's parties featured the rich and famous getting naked and filming themselves. Tate and husband Roman Polanski were reportedly the producers and collectors of 'fame porn' as well.
- Robert F. Kennedy - U.S. Senator and presidential candidate who was assassinated in Hollywood on June 5, 1968. Kennedy was allegedly shot from point-blank range behind his right ear by Sirhan Sirhan, who was standing several yards in front of and to the left of the candidate. Like I said, shit happens.

Without further ado, we begin this journey - for no particular reason - with the aforementioned Phil Hartman, who was a highschool friend of Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, who later became a disciple of Charlie Manson, a jailhouse correspondent of John Hinckley, and the attempted assassin of President Gerald Ford, who was once a roommate of modeling entrepreneur Harry Conover, whose wife was the infamous Candy Jones, who was 'treated' by CIA-linked hypnotist William Jennings Bryan, who also 'treated' the purported Boston Strangler, Albert DeSalvo, whose name was written repetitively throughout the diaries of Sirhan Sirhan, who was also 'treated' by Bryan, who served as the technical director on *The Manchurian Candidate*, which was directed by John Frankenheimer, at whose beach house a dinner was held on June 5, 1968 whose attendees included "Mama" Cass Elliot, Roman Polanski, and Sharon Tate, who was killed just over a year later by followers of Charlie Manson, whose music was recorded by Doris Day's son, music producer Terry Melcher, who lived with girlfriend Candace Bergen at 10050 Cielo Drive the year before it became a slaughterhouse after being rented by Polanski, who initially was slated to pen the screenplay for *Day of the Dolphin*, which purported to tell the story of Dr. John Lilly, who was a friend of Timothy Leary, whose Mellon family-owned Millbrook estate was frequently visited by Dr. Max "Feelgood" Jacobson, who once 'treated' Judy Garland and who served as the personal physician of John Kennedy, whose assassination prompted the shelving of the film *The Manchurian Candidate* by its star, Frank Sinatra, who was a frequent companion of fellow 'Brat Packer' Sammy Davis, Jr., who was an acknowledged member of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan, from where Manson recruited killers Bobby "Cupid" Beausoleil and Susan "Sexy Sadie" Atkins, who confessed to her cellmates that she had stabbed to death actress Sharon Tate, who was inducted into witchcraft on the set of the Polanski-directed film *The Fearless Vampire Killers* by Alexander "King of the Witches" Saunders, who received 'training' as a child from Aleister Crowley, whose followers included Anton LaVey and fellow Church of Satan member Kenneth Anger, who was the roommate (and probable lover) of Family member Bobby Beausoleil, who once appeared in an underground film titled *Mondo Hollywood*, which also featured hairdresser and Manson victim Jay Sebring, who was a former lover of Sharon Tate, who was a friend of a wealthy widow named Charlene Caffritz,

who played host to - and filmed the exploits of - Charlie and some of his girls, who also lived for a time with Beach Boy Dennis Wilson, who recorded a song penned by Charlie, who was an occasional member of the entourage of Mama Cass, who was listed as a defense witness for Charlie's trial (but never called), as was her Mamas and the Papas band-mate John Phillips, who was close to Polanski, Tate, Melcher, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Cass Elliot, and film producer Robert Evans, who was working with - and very likely contracted the execution killing of - Roy Radin, whose assistant was Michael DeVinko *aka* Mickie DeVinko *aka* Mickie Deans, who married - just a few months before her untimely death - *Wizard of Oz* star Judy Garland, who as a teen was flooded with phone messages and telegrams by admirer Oscar Levant, whose dead body was found by Candace Bergen, who - as a photojournalist for *Life* magazine - covered the preempted presidential campaign of Robert Kennedy, who was romantically linked to Marilyn Monroe, who was also linked to Anton LaVey, who appeared in Kenneth Anger's *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (released in August of 1969) along with Bobby Beausoleil, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, who was a guest at the 1968 London wedding of Sharon Tate to Roman Polanski, who - during a nude photo shoot - molested a thirteen-year-old girl at the home of Jack Nicholson, who was a friend of Cass Elliot, as were Robert Evans and Manson victims Jay Sebring, Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger, who provided funding for the Himalayan Academy, which Kenneth Anger helped form with Timothy Leary, who was at the side of the stage at the 1969 Altamont concert where - while the Rolling Stones played the Process Church-inspired *Sympathy for the Devil** - a fan was killed on film by the Hell's Angels, who had been romanticized and transformed into anti-establishment heroes in the film *Scorpio Rising* by Kenneth Anger and the book *Hell's Angels* by Hunter S. Thompson, both of whom have been accused of making snuff films** for private collectors, which was also a favorite pastime of Charlie Manson, one of whose underage recruits was Didi Lansbury, who had written permission to travel with Charlie from her mother, Angela Lansbury, who starred as the control agent in *The Manchurian Candidate*, which was based on the novel of the same name by Richard Condon, who once served as a publicist for Walt Disney, who once owned the home where the Manson Family slaughtered Leno LaBianca and wife Rosemary, who was involved in the trafficking of drugs, as were many of those in this twisted saga, including Charles Manson, victims Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger, John Phillips and Kenneth Anger, who was a huge fan of the dark and violent imagery of the Rosicrucian-inspired, L. Frank Baum-penned *Oz* books, which inspired the band *The Magick Powerhouse of Oz*, which was led by Bobby Beausoleil, who was also at one time in the band *Love* with Arthur Lee, four of whose members later turned up dead or missing and presumed dead, as did Charlene Caffritz, Cass Elliot (who allegedly choked on a sandwich in 1974), Dennis Wilson (who allegedly drowned on December 28, 1983), and Gram Parsons, whose corpse was stolen and burned at Joshua Tree on the autumnal equinox of 1973 by his band's road manager, Phil Kaufman, who was a good friend from prison of Charlie Manson, who met (at Cass Elliot's house) and received money from victim Abigail Folger, who also funded Kenneth Anger, who at various times lived with both Jimmy Page (who purchased Crowley's home and many of his artifacts) and Keith Richards & Anita Pallenberg, whose home - in 1979 - yielded the body of a teenager who had been shot to death, as was John Lennon the next year by Mark David Chapman, who shortly before doing so met with - and offered a gift of live bullets to - Kenneth Anger, whose films were cited as a major influence by photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, who was implicated by witnesses in the Halloween 1981 execution killing of New York photographer Ronald Sisman (a close associate of Roy Radin), who was reportedly in possession of a snuff film of one of the Son of Sam murders, which were allegedly committed by David Berkowitz, who from prison accurately described the Sisman killing *before* it happened and who took the fall for the Son of Sam murders to cover up the involvement of others, including possibly Roy Radin and wealthy art dealer Andrew Crispo, who admitted being present at the site of a ritual murder

which was committed by a man named Bernard LeGeros, who was the son of a State Department official, as was Pic Dawson, who was a regular member of the entourage of Cass Elliot, as was a one-time bodyguard of publisher Larry Flynt named Bill Mentzer, who was convicted of killing Radin and who was suspected of involvement in numerous other contract murders, including some of those attributed to David Berkowitz, who was 'examined' by psychiatrist/hypnotist Daniel Schwartz, as was Mark David Chapman, who was obsessed with the film *The Wizard of Oz* and the book *The Catcher in the Rye*, which was written by reclusive author J.D. Salinger, who served in the OSS with Henry Kissinger, who was a close adviser to Gerald Ford, who once met and shook hands with Mark David Chapman, who was 'examined' by psychiatrist/hypnotist Bernard Diamond, who also 'examined' Sirhan Sirhan, who had connections to the Process Church, as did many of those ensnared in this sordid web, including Kenneth Anger, John Phillips, Roy Radin, David Berkowitz and Charlie Manson, who attended a New Year's Eve party at the home of John Phillips, who wrote the siren song of the 'Summer of Love,' bringing thousands of hippies and flower children streaming into San Francisco and into the hands of such figures as Louis "Dr. Jolly" West, Anton LaVey, Charlie Manson, Bobby Beausoleil, Timothy Leary and Kenneth Anger, who - just three days after the suspicious death of Rolling Stone Brian Jones - filmed the Hell's Angels stomping the crowd at a 1969 Stones concert in London, just five months before they did the very same thing to the crowd at Altamont, which was organized by San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli, who consulted with F. Lee Bailey whilst the latter was busily railroading Albert DeSalvo and later consulted with Richard "The Night Stalker" Ramirez, who was offered an honorary membership in the Church of Satan by Anton LaVey's daughter Zeena, who along with boyfriend Nickolas Schreck staged an event on 8-8-88 celebrating the slaughter of the victims of the Manson Family, who some researchers believe were involved in the murders attributed to the "Zodiac," who called and sent correspondence to Melvin Belli, whose clients included the widow of Hermann Goering and Jack Ruby, who assassinated Lee Harvey Oswald, the purported assassin of John Kennedy, whose brother Robert was romantically linked to Jayne Mansfield, as was Anton LaVey, who served as Roman Polanski's technical director on the 1968 film *Rosemary's Baby*, which was set in New York's Dakota Apartments, where John Lennon was gunned down by Mark David Chapman, who shared a fixation on *The Catcher in the Rye* with failed assassin John Hinckley, Jr., who stalked actress Jodie Foster, who is working on a film biography of Leni Riefenstahl, who was met by - and admired by - fellow filmmaker Kenneth Anger, who laced his film *Scorpio Rising* with Nazi imagery, including the prominent use of swastikas, not unlike the one carved into the forehead of Charlie Manson, who - at the Cielo Drive home of Polanski and Tate - had a chance meeting with Nancy Sinatra, the daughter of Frank Sinatra, who was married to actress Mia Farrow, who starred in the Polanski-directed *Rosemary's Baby*, which was produced by Robert Evans, a friend of Henry Kissinger, who was the righthand man of President Richard Nixon, whose election was ensured by the assassination of Robert Kennedy by Sirhan Sirhan, who was yet another client of Melvin Belli, as were the Hell's Angels and Nazi-collaborator Errol Flynn, who made two films with Ronald Reagan, who was an occasional visitor to the childhood home of Candace Bergen, who - as a photojournalist - chronicled the short-lived administration of Gerald Ford, who married one of his friend Harry Conover's 'Covergirls,' who later opened the Betty Ford Center, where various celebrities in and out of this web routinely check in for tune-ups.

I could probably go on, but I really have to get back to work on my screenplay. I'm thinking of trying to break into Hollywood. I have this great script about a guy who is propelled to the heights of power through a combination of fraud, arrogance, legal manipulation and public denial to lead an imperialist military power that masterfully uses propaganda to turn reality on its head.

When the man-who-would-be-king first takes office, the public views him with a

considerable amount of well-deserved skepticism. But then there is an apparent attack upon the state which is used as a pretext to rally the support of the people behind a reactionary social agenda and a war of unspecified duration with unspecified goals. Some suspect that the attack was actually an inside job, but they are ridiculed by those who scoff at the notion that their government would attack one of its own institutions.

Meanwhile, the anti-hero sells the country out to huge corporate and financial interests and institutes overt police state measures to keep the masses in line should the people ever begin to catch on that their collective reality is little more than a grand illusion. Much later, historians reluctantly admit that the purported attack was in fact a staged provocation, but by then it is too late.

I'm almost done with the final draft. I just have to decide whether to name my anti-hero Adolf or George. Then I'm going to have my people get in touch with Jerry Bruckheimer's people and close the deal.

Of course, I might have to take out some of the plot elements and replace them with gratuitous, but really cool, special effects sequences. But it will still be a great movie. Maybe even as good as the biography of the Marquis de Sade that Kenneth Anger had long planned to film, in the original castle where deSade's crimes were committed. But that's another story altogether.

* A number of journalists have written that the killing took place later in the concert. This is perhaps due, at least in part, to the deceptive way in which the film of the event, *Gimme Shelter* (arguably the most widely viewed snuff film ever created), was edited. In the film, the killing is deliberately shown out of sequence, making it appear as though it occurred at the end of the concert. It did in fact occur while the Stones played *Sympathy for the Devil*, as can be discerned from a careful viewing of the final minutes of the video version of the film. The band, fully aware of what was going on immediately in front of the stage, played on. [<back>](#)

** Thompson, whose legal representation is provided by the same politically-connected law firm that successfully shielded John and Patsy Ramsey from prosecution, has been accused by the child witnesses in the case dubbed the 'Franklin Cover-Up.' Anger was suspected by police investigators, but was shielded from prosecution by sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, a devoted follower of Aleister Crowley. Kinsey died shortly after he and Anger visited Crowley's Thelema Abbey in Sicily. [<back>](#)

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American Heroes?

David McGowan
March 4, 2002

"We never will look at police officers and rescue personnel the same way ... Such men and women help define the word 'hero' in America."

So said America's national newspaper, *USA Today*, in the aftermath of the events of September 11.

Now maybe I'm all alone here, but I'm still looking at police officers in much the same way that I was before. Which is to say that, somehow, I'm having a real hard time viewing the troops of the New York City Police Department as heroes.

This is, after all, the very same NYPD that was, prior to September 11, best known for employing anal rape with a toilet plunger as an interrogation technique, and for sending out a civilian-clad goon squad to pump nineteen rounds into a man for the crime of standing on his own front porch, preparing to enter his home.

But now, as evidenced by the fact that the convictions of three of the officers convicted of complicity in the torture of Abner Louima were just overturned by an appellate court, all such incidents are to be forgiven. And not just in New York. No, the reflected glow of the supposed heroics of New York's finest have washed away the sins of all the nation's police forces.

Take, for example, the scandal-plagued LAPD – perhaps the most openly fascistic big city police department in the country. On October 23, 2001, just six weeks after the fall of the WTC towers, the venerable *Los Angeles Times* reported, in a brief story buried in the 'B' section of the paper, that the shooting of actor Anthony Dwain Lee by officer Tarriel Hopper was "in policy" and that no disciplinary action would be taken.

For those who may have missed the story of Lee's death, he was gunned down while attending a party on Halloween night of 2000. Officer Hopper, called to the house to investigate a disturbance, illegally entered the property and spied Lee through a closed window standing in a well-lit room within the house and proceeded to, for no apparent reason and without warning, summarily execute him.

That, at any rate, is the only way that I can think of to describe what happened.

The officer claimed, rather disingenuously, that the shooting was in self-defense. Lee reportedly was in possession of a replica gun, which the officer claimed was pointed in his direction. The facts of the case though indicate that Lee was not even aware of the presence of the officer, who was standing in darkness and would not have been visible to those inside the house. There is no indication that any of the revelers were aware of Hopper's presence until bullets suddenly began blasting through the window. Lee was hit four times – in the back.

Lee's gun was a non-working replica – a part of his Halloween costume. There is nothing

to indicate that he was acting in anything approaching a threatening manner. He was in fact standing amid a crowd of fellow partiers, none of whom reported feeling that Lee was posing a threat to any of them, or to the unseen officer.

None of that though matters now. We are trying, it must be remembered, to fight a war on terrorism here. We certainly can't tie the hands of our law enforcement officers by preventing them from summarily executing the occasional domestic 'evildoer,' or from planting evidence and framing innocent 'suspects,' as the LAPD's CRASH unit was fond of doing.

All of that is also now forgiven and forgotten. Just two weeks after the *Times* reported that the killing of Lee was a "good" shooting, it reported that the city's new DA, who took office amid strident claims of being a reformer, had announced that the Rampart/CRASH probe was essentially being shut down:

"Los Angeles County prosecutors plan to close their investigation of the LAPD's Rampart scandal without bringing charges against any more officers, Dist. Atty. Steve Cooley said Wednesday. One former member of the district attorneys' Rampart investigation task force said Cooley failed to solicit or accept help from any prosecutors who were on the task force before Cooley took over."

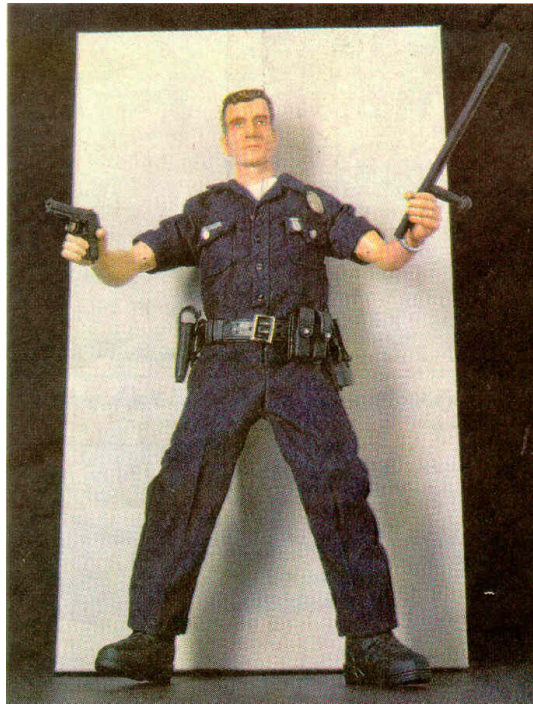
In the post 9-11 world that we are now living in, the police can do no wrong. If you are standing in your home one night, minding your own business, and bullets suddenly rip into your body from out of nowhere ... well, that's just too damn bad. Sacrifices have to be made in time of war.

If an overzealous band of jack-booted thugs decide that kicking your door down, beating the shit out of you, planting evidence and then openly perjuring themselves in court is necessary to 'keep the peace' ... well, that's also just too damn bad. Some curtailment of civil liberties is to be expected in time of war.

Exactly one month after the *Times* carried the report of the aborting of the ridiculously incomplete Rampart investigation, another story carried by the paper began: "Finally, a gift for the person who has everything: an LAPD doll."

It seems the Los Angeles Police Protective League is now marketing a 12" 'action figure,' complete with LAPD uniform, gun, baton, pepper spray, handcuffs, and - as the *Times* noted approvingly - "enough attitude to keep the peace from Rampart to West L.A."

And to think that I didn't even know that "attitude" was what was needed to "keep the peace." Kudos to the *Times* for clearing that up.



When I was a young boy, at the height of the Vietnam War, we had "G.I. Joe" to play with – the male counterpart of the ubiquitous Barbie. Little did I know that my generation was being conditioned, practically from birth, to be good little soldiers. As it turned out, of course, the war ended and our services were not needed.

Now we have a new psychological warfare device masquerading as a toy, to condition a new generation of American boys for a slightly different role: domestic law enforcement officer – though the line between domestic law enforcement and overt military operations is an increasingly fine one indeed.

The training, equipment, apparel and tactics of today's police forces are virtually indistinguishable from those employed by the military. On a regular basis, Angelenos are treated to scenes on local newscasts of small armies of LAPD officers occupying a residential neighborhood in search of a suspect. These types of arrests used to be accomplished, not too many years ago, with a handful of officers and a couple of squad cars.

But not anymore. Now what we see are scores of nameless and faceless officers, outfitted with automatic weaponry and flak jackets, ferried about in armored vehicles, and with the inevitable squadron of military-style helicopters hovering overhead. It is easy to forget that these are 'civilian' police actions we are witnessing, occurring just miles from our homes.

And now your kids can recreate these exciting scenes right there in the comfort of your home. Coming soon to join 'Officer West,' the first of the LAPD action figures to be released, will be: a K-9 officer, complete with his own dog; a motorcycle officer with, naturally, his own motorcycle; an air support officer, with his own really cool helicopter; and a SWAT team member, who will of course be outfitted in full SWAT regalia.

But my own personal favorite has to be the "riot control officer," which a league spokesman gushingly told the *Times* is "just like you saw during the [Democratic National Convention]." It sounds too good to be true, but you can now own a scale model of the very same officers who beat you senseless with batons, trampled you with horses, shot you with rubber bullets and bean bags, sprayed you with pepper spray and noxious gasses, and arrested you for exercising your alleged constitutional right to peacefully assemble to address legitimate grievances.

And you're not going to want to buy just one of these. No, you're going to want to buy a

whole bunch of them. Enough to line up along every wall of your home at least four or five deep. They'll feel much more at home that way, as that is their natural environment. They're not really designed to function well alone. They have been stripped of their ability to think independently and are only capable of a sort of mob mentality.

If, God forbid, one of your dolls should happen to die 'in the line of duty,' then you've really got a problem. In order to give them a proper send-off, you're going to have to take out a second on your house so that you can buy thousands of dolls. Then you can give the departed officer a proper funeral befitting a member of the British royal family, just like the ones we see on TV.

And why, you may ask, are our law enforcement personnel deserving of such a pompous display? Is it because the job they perform is of so much more value to society than are the jobs performed by the rest of us? I hardly think so. Educators perform a far more valuable service than do the police, and yet I can't recall ever seeing a teacher laid to rest in a ceremony rivaling the inauguration of a president.

Is it then because the police perform a job so dangerous - laying their lives on the line daily to protect the rest of us - that they are deserving of special consideration? Not really. There are any number of occupations that are far more dangerous than that performed by the police. Crab fishing in the Bering Straights is said to be the most dangerous job in the world, and yet the rather routine deaths of these brave souls are mourned by almost no one.

The case could be made that dissident writers perform a more dangerous task than do our domestic police. Just ask the surviving family and friends of such scribes as the 'suicided' Danny Casolaro and James Hatfield.

You may remember Hatfield as the author of the book *Fortunate Son*, released by St. Martin's Press as the 2000 presidential election campaign was taking shape and then quickly pulled from shelves and mulched under pressure from the Bush family. Hatfield turned up dead in a hotel room just weeks before September 11. His last published piece was a story in the *Online Journal* entitled "Why Would Osama bin Laden Want to Kill Dubya, His Former Business Partner?"

Or ask the survivors of 'former' Naval Intelligence asset William Milton Cooper, the iconoclastic author of the overrated conspiracy tome *Behold a Pale Horse*. Cooper was gunned down by local Sheriff's deputies (possibly at the instigation of federal authorities, according to some accounts) not long after he began devoting his radio broadcasts to promoting the idea that the September 11 attacks were an inside job.

Neither of these men, or the legions of others who came before them, were paid their final respects in ceremonies befitting the coronation of a king.

Why then this hero-worship of our nation's law enforcement personnel? Why this adulation of men who are frequently little more than criminals themselves – men who differ from those they arrest only by the fact that they are protected from the consequences of their actions by virtue of the uniforms that they wear?

This hero-worship has escalated considerably since September 11. It is instructive then to look back upon the events of that fateful day to see exactly what it was that the police did to earn their enhanced status as American heroes. Towards that end, it is always interesting, when trying to make sense of any big media story, to look back upon some of the initial press reports to emerge, before the all-consuming official spin sets in.

The UK's *The Guardian*, one of the world's most respected English language newspapers, ran a lengthy report from ground zero by a trio of its reporters the day after the alleged 'terrorist' attacks. Here is how they described situation on the ground just after the first tower collapsed – well over an hour after the ordeal had begun:

"First a stampede; flying glass cutting into flesh and ripping the clothes of those who fled - and no sign whatsoever of the authorities, only a police officer running about like a headless chicken (in the wrong direction) shouting: 'Get outta here!'" Later in the report it was added

that: "The full rescue operation was slow to arrive."

Still further along in the report, we find a representative of the NYPD treating the traumatized victims of the tower collapses exactly as a cynic might expect them to: "Even the smallest unrelated incident created conflict. A man who left his briefcase in the street was accosted by a cop. 'What you doing? Hey, just keep walking.'"

Such actions, apparently, are the makings of great American heroes.

A number of other interesting details emerged in the report from *The Guardian* – details that to this day have not been addressed by the media, including the so-called alternative/progressive media. These details beg rather obvious questions that have gone completely unasked by our gloriously 'free' American press.

For instance, there is the rather interesting fact that: "People were trying desperately to get through on cell phones that were no longer functioning." Very few accounts of the events of that day have noted that cell phones throughout the affected area suddenly stopped working. Why would this be so? Why should a building fire and collapse cause widespread cell phone failure?

Another interesting tidbit of information to emerge from *The Guardian* was that: "At a junction where the traffic lights had stuck on red a man in a flak jacket and combat trousers took it upon himself to direct the sparse traffic." Who was this rather curiously attired man and what was he doing at ground zero?

And consider this rather curious factoid: "One stockbroker, Alan Redmond, said he had arrived for work at the Nasdaq exchange to be told that there was a delay in opening, and to wait." Why was there a delay in opening the Nasdaq that morning, and how many prominent lives were spared due to this 'delay'?

Lastly, consider that "a 47-storey building which was part of the trade centre complex also collapsed, brought down by flying debris and fire." How is it possible that a third high-rise, and one which was not struck by a plane and doused with jet fuel, collapsed in identical fashion to the two towers? If it was due to a weakening of the structure caused by falling debris, then how is it that a building which lay between the twin towers and the third fallen structure remains standing?

These, alas, are but a few of the nagging questions that remain unasked, and certainly unanswered, in the months since "everything changed." Sadly, one thing that definitely hasn't changed is the unfathomable cravenness of the U.S. media.

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America Through The Looking Glass

by David McGowan

April 8, 2002

In the immortal words of Lewis Carroll, things are getting curiouiser and curiouiser. If there has ever been a more bizarre presidential team in place at the White House at any other time in U.S. history, it doesn't immediately come to mind.

Consider, if you will, that we have a vice-president (and I use that term rather loosely) who has all but disappeared from public view without any kind of credible explanation having been given to the American people. It appeared at first as though Cheney's vanishing act was a temporary and cynical ploy that would allow George the Younger to appear as though he were actually running the show.

But six months have now passed and Dick has only been whipped out for a few passing photo-ops (and to do some arm-twisting in the Middle-East). Never before, even during times of World or Civil War, has such secrecy and security ever been deemed necessary. What possible explanation can there be for this? What credible threats is the vice-president facing?

The only possible danger that Cheney could find himself in would be facing impeachment proceedings for, among other things, his involvement in the Enron scandal and his questionable dealings with Iraq. [\(1\)](#) But that of course could only happen if we had a Congress that wasn't as fully corrupt as the White House team that they are supposed to provide checks and balances on.

Consider also that we have a president (and I use that term even more loosely) who is so intellectually challenged that before even losing the election he had already issued enough verbal gaffes to fill a book or two. He seemingly cannot open his mouth to utter an unscripted response without lapsing into almost complete incoherence, as though he received his English instruction via home-schooling by his dad.

On top of that, he has appeared in public no fewer than three times now with

noticeably large bruises/contusions on his face. First there was the enormous bandage he sported in the dark days of the 'hanging chads.' Then there were the obvious contusions late in the year that would have gone without mention were it not for a reporter's question; only then did the White House hurriedly issue a claim that Bush had had lesions removed from his face.

And then we were treated to the sublimely comical story that our fearless leader lost consciousness while snacking on a pretzel and fell face-first into a coffee table (I could make a cheap joke here about the 'leader of the free world' being unable to watch TV and chew pretzels at the same time, but will refrain from doing so). And we were told that this is actually a very common occurrence.

Say what? In what parallel universe is this a common occurrence? What exactly is going on behind closed doors on Pennsylvania Avenue?

Is Poppy Bush trying to slap some sense into his brain-addled youngster? Is George hitting the bottle a little too hard ... just before hitting the floor? Is Stepford-wife Laura a closet dominatrix who sometimes gets a little carried away ("Goddamnit, Laura! How many times do I have to tell you? ... stay away from the face!")? Something is obviously not quite right here.

The media though doesn't seem to find anything unusual about the George and Dick Show. Nary a question has been raised about what exactly Cheney is doing in his 'secure' location. Bush's incoherent mumblings, brain-deadening jingoism, and stunning lack of knowledge about any issue of any significance are somehow presented as though the man has magically assumed presidential stature unequalled in U.S. history.

What the hell is going on here?

For the most part, just business-as-usual as the media performs its time-honored role of covering-up for the inadequacies and crimes of our 'elected' leaders. Yet it has become bizarrely surreal as the press struggles mightily to continue performing that function even while faced with an administration both arrogant and criminal almost beyond human comprehension.

How are we to digest the events of the last year? -- the wholesale theft of a presidential election, the massive give-aways to the largest and most corrupt corporations in the country, the largely unexplained and completely uninvestigated September 11 attacks, the declaration of open-ended war on much of the world, the rapidly escalating attacks on civil liberties and privacy rights

Millions are surely struggling to make sense of their world as the full extent of the

corruption of the American political, economic and legal systems is increasingly laid bare. Denial is a fierce weapon, but it does have its limits -- even when aided and abetted by a 'mental health' community that hands out MK-ULTRA-derived anti-anxiety and anti-depressant drugs like Halloween candy.

How are we to make sense of a vast sea of media outlets all shouting the same lies and all failing to ask the most obvious of questions? How are we to account for an allegedly thriving 'alternative' press that takes at face value the official version of the events of September 11 -- pretending not to notice the gaping holes in the story? And how are we to make sense of the fact that the leading voices of the supposed 'left' have questioned the events of 9-11 only in terms of so-called 'blowback,' carefully avoiding questioning the underlying assumption that "Osama did it?"

And how long can we cling to the futile hope that the Democratic Party is somehow going to ride to the rescue and get us out of this mess? The party whose two standard-bearers, "Animatronic Al" Gore and Joe "Jews for Fascism" Lieberman, have openly cheered the 'War on Terrorism,' all but demanded its expansion into Iraq, endorsed the preposterous notion of an 'Axis of Evil,' and given favorable reviews to America's new nuclear 'Posture'? The party whose congressional members, in both houses, have embraced nearly every reactionary appointment by the Bush regime, signed on to every openly fascist 'security' measure that has come their way, given a huge thumbs-up to virtually unlimited military spending, and failed completely to voice even the tiniest protest over the flagrant theft of the election or to launch any sort of an investigation into the events of September 11?

And those are just a few of the Democratic Party's recent sins. Of course, our learned opinion-shapers insist that the Democrats' hands are tied -- hampered by the massive public support behind the Bush agenda. Opinion polls, brought to you by the very same media to whom lying is an art form, keep insisting that to be the case. And I have a couple of towers in New York that I can let you have for a real good price

The truth is that the Democratic Party, quite frankly, offers no resistance to the Bush juggernaut because they differ from their Republican counterparts only in that they give slightly more lip-service to social issues. And that, of course, is only posturing for public consumption.

Changing the party in charge of the White House and/or Congress isn't going to significantly alter the agenda. Everyone of any importance in Washington is on-board the war train for the long haul. And the notion that the war is being prolonged just to gain a Republican advantage in the 2002 and 2004 elections, propagated by many a pseudo-dissident journalist, is pure fantasy.

As has been made quite clear by a steady stream of official statements, this is a 'war' without end -- a war with the goal of wiping out any and all pockets of resistance throughout the world, including here on the home front, to the corporate and military elite's vision of a system of global fascism, and with the parallel goal of identifying false enemies to keep the American people too frightened, disoriented and disjointed to fight back against the encroaching police state. Doesn't anybody read Orwell anymore?

But I know how comforting it is to believe in the American ship of state. To believe in the two-party system. To believe in the Democratic Party as the party of the people. To believe that things will be OK again just as soon as the next election rolls around and we can get 'our' party back in charge. To believe that our obviously free press isn't really lying to us. To believe that 'this too shall pass,' and that we'll be back to 'normal' soon.

It wasn't that long ago that I was a believer.

But that was before I joined the ranks of those who inhabit a strange, hallucinatory world that is roughly akin to waking up every morning finding yourself trapped in a cheesy sci-fi film. Clicking on the TV, you find that the same lies that you just heard the day before are still spewing out. Turning the channel, you discover that everyone is telling the same lies, in the same way, using the same catch-phrases as though if everyone repeats them they somehow acquire some kind of inherent meaning.

No matter how many times you change the channel, all you hear is "war on terrorism ... axis of evil ... rule of law ... evil-doers ... weapons of mass destruction ... enduring freedom ... 9-11 ... 9-11 ... 9-11 ..."

You briefly ponder whether you might be a victim of some kind of practical joke -- an unwitting participant in some kind of new 'reality show.' But then you find that everyone else seems to believe the lies, or at least they pretend to. Could they all be in on the joke? And if this isn't a joke, then how come you seem to be the only one who can see so clearly that the emperor has no clothes?

You hear on the news that the key witness in the biggest financial scandal in the nation's history has been found shot to death in his car not long before he is to begin delivering his testimony. "Holy shit!" you say, "they're killing off witnesses in broad daylight." But no, the somber newscasters all intone, it was an unfortunate suicide.

"Ha!" you say, "nobody's going to believe that one. The shit is really going to fly now." You remember back to when Vince Foster supposedly committed suicide,

and how the 'liberal' media had a field day with the story. "Payback's a bitch," you say to yourself. "The Dumbocrats are going to get some mileage out of this one."

But nobody says a word. No one on Capitol Hill, no one in the press corps. You mention to some co-workers that the suicide story sounds a little suspect, and they look at you as though you are wearing an "I Love Osama" button on your lapel as they robotically ask you if you've been to see *Black Hawk Down* yet. Realizing that you've blown your cover, you start nervously watching out of the corner of your eye for the goon squad to arrive and send you happily on your way to Guantánamo.

The Enron scandal, you quickly realize, is not going to be seriously investigated -- just as the coup-like nature of the election wasn't investigated, and just as the 'terrorist' attacks on Washington and New York aren't being investigated, and just like the anthrax attacks, so obviously timed to ratchet up the level of fear and outrage among the American people, aren't being investigated.

You absent-mindedly take note of the 'terrorist alert' warning color for the day as you ponder when this extended acid trip began and if and when it is going to end. What will it take to wake the American people up to the fact that there is something seriously wrong with this picture?

The mounting of a coup d'état in that diseased appendage known as Florida didn't do it. (2) Nor did the Supreme Court arrogantly ruling that the American people have no right to have their votes counted in a presidential election. (3) Nor the revelation that the Bush regime -- itself a shamelessly illegal, unconstitutionally-assembled government -- has established an even more illegal, secret and unaccountable 'shadow' government. And neither did the fact that military tribunals have been proscribed that have the authority to hand down anonymous death sentences based on secret evidence presented by government-appointed lawyers.

The indefinite detention of 'suspects,' held without charges in undisclosed locations and largely deprived of legal counsel, didn't do it. Nor the open talk of torturing these same 'suspects.' Nor the open admissions of an emerging surveillance infrastructure that goes far beyond anything Orwell ever envisioned. Nor even the deliberate leaking of the country's sociopathic 'Nuclear Posture Review.' And, as we have seen repeatedly in the past, mercilessly bombing yet another civilian population in yet another oil-driven military venture certainly didn't do it.

Is the control too complete -- control not just of information, but of *thought*? Are we so blinded by propaganda, and so desperately clinging to the basic human desire to view ourselves as the good guys, that we are fundamentally incapable of taking an objective look at the world we live in? Can the government get away with

literally any lie, no matter how brazen? Is there no hope?

Or is the script of this particular Roger Corman flick somewhat different than what it appears to be?

What if you're not the only sane person left in a world gone mad? What if there are millions of others out there, all harboring serious doubts about the increasingly unpalatable servings of 'news' we are being dished-up? And what if the number of such individuals is growing every day?

What if the constant touting of Bush's alleged popularity is all part of a well-orchestrated psy-war campaign aimed at stifling dissent by intimidating doubters in the crowd into keeping their opinions to themselves, lest they be viewed as clinically insane for failing to interpret reality in the same way that everyone else purportedly does?

A campaign designed to make you feel, in other words, precisely as you now do: alone, isolated, frustrated, powerless, frightened and confused. A part of that campaign seems to involve, amazingly enough, efforts to taunt you -- to rub in your face your utter powerlessness -- by dropping tantalizing hints along the way, as though you are being dared to do something about it.

Wasn't it, after all, France's *Le Figaro* that dropped that little bombshell about bin Laden meeting a CIA operative in a Dubai hospital room shortly before September 11? And isn't *Le Figaro* owned by the Carlyle Group, whose investors and principals include the Bushes, the bin Ladens, and various ranking members of the national security infrastructure?

And wasn't it that mouthpiece of the far-right, the *Wall Street Journal*, that dropped the story about the stock market manipulations that occurred in the days immediately preceding the September 11 attacks?

And wasn't it a vice-president of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, itself a fully-integrated part of the military/intelligence complex, who initially identified the collapse of the World Trade Center towers as controlled implosions?

And wasn't it James Bamford (a man with uncomfortably close connections to numerous NSA operatives), working with Doubleday (a publisher not known for bringing the work of dissident authors to light), whose book -- released just five months before 9-11 -- revealed the details of 'Operation Northwoods' -- a purported anti-Cuban operation involving a staged provocation with marked similarities to the events of September 11?

And what of the obviously deliberate, and curiously well-publicized, leaks of the so-called Nuclear Posture Review, of the existence of Dick's 'shadow' government, and of the proposed Ministry of Propaganda? [*](#) Why leave all these crumbs scattered along the evidence trail?

It's a little something the spooks like to call 'Mind War' -- more commonly known on the streets as 'fucking with your head.' They *want* you to feel as though you are stuck in the *Twilight Zone*. I believe Mr. Orwell referred to it as a state of "controlled insanity."

But even with the endless blizzard of propaganda -- coming straight at you from all directions, including from virtually every avenue of the media, 'news' and 'entertainment' alike -- there are clear indications emerging that there is considerably more dissent out there, considerably more questions being raised, than we are being led to believe.

As just one indication, several commentators have noted that Michael Moore's new book, *Stupid White Men*, is selling like hotcakes, despite the fact that conventional wisdom holds that there is currently no market for what is reportedly a fairly harsh assessment of America under a Bush.

Perhaps a more significant measure of the level of discontent and frustration among the American people was reflected in the shockingly low turnout for the recent California gubernatorial primary. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported:

"After the terrorists struck and the buildings fell, Americans united in a surge of patriotism not seen in a generation. On Tuesday in California, citizens were asked to join in what may be the most patriotic ritual of all, the celebration of democracy known as voting. Two out of three registered voters were no-shows." [\(4\)](#)

The article also noted that many eligible voters didn't even bother to register. The net result was that nearly *four out of five* eligible California voters opted not to cast a vote in the March primary. The *Times* further noted that the California election was a continuation of a post-September 11 trend:

"In Washington, for instance, turnout for the November general election -- which featured two ballot initiatives on taxes -- was 13 percentage points below the 1999 figure. Virginia and New Jersey elected governors in November, and turnout was down about 3% and 7%, respectively, from the previous governor's races in 1997.

"In Georgia, meanwhile, a special election to fill a state Senate seat was decided by just 3% of the electorate: 'It's always low in specials, but we usually get 15%,'

lamented Georgia's director of elections, Linda Beazley. 'This is dismal. What's wrong with our voters?'" (4)

A concerted effort is made by the *Times* reporter to offer up any number of excuses for the dismal voter turnout. But three words in the article, uttered by a small-business owner in Fresno, pretty much said it all: "Politics are crooked." Or, to elaborate just a bit -- a large majority of citizens recognize that voting -- when presented with hand-picked, interchangeable candidates -- is not a true exercise of democracy, but rather an exercise in futility.

Perhaps one of the clearest indications that large sectors of the American electorate aren't buying the mainstream-media line is the fact that the decades-long effort to discredit and marginalize those dissidents derisively referred to as 'conspiracy theorists' has been stepped-up dramatically in recent months, by both the corporate media and the self-proclaimed 'alternative' press.

Prominent among those heaping derision on 'conspiracy theories' is *The Nation's* David Corn. Among other inanities, a piece penned by Corn makes the rather remarkable claim that: "Simply put, the spies and special agents are not good enough, evil enough, or gutsy enough to mount this operation ... Such an operation -- to execute the simultaneous destruction of the two towers, a piece of the Pentagon, and four airplanes and make it appear as if it all was done by another party -- is far beyond the skill level of U.S. intelligence." [\(5\)](#)

No ... an operation of that sort would clearly require a loosely-organized band of poorly-equipped cave-dwellers.

There's no way that the largest and most well-funded intelligence network the world has ever seen could pull off something like that. They may be capable of rigging foreign elections, routinely plotting and carrying out assassinations and coups, and 'destabilizing' the economies and political structures of various hapless nations, but it clearly strains credulity to posit that they could hijack a few planes.

They may have an enormous, secret and unaccountable budget, 'front' companies and organizations set up in every corner of the globe, and prominent mouthpieces installed throughout academia, the media, the legal community, the mental health community, the entertainment community, the medical community, and pretty much every other community that is in a position to influence public opinion; and they may control proxy armies and fascist (though certainly not 'terrorist') cells around the world, and they may have their very own private air force, but certainly no one would ever seriously suggest that such a vast intelligence network could pull off something of the magnitude of what the world saw on September 11.

As yet another reason why alternative explanations of 9-11 are, in Corn's words, "absurd," "tripe," and "crap," he makes the bold claim that: "in the spy-world some things [are] beyond the pale." One of those things, insists Corn, is "kill[ing] an American citizen." (5) That would certainly take the wind out of the sails of many a 'conspiracy theory' -- if it weren't a statement totally unsupported by the historical record.

Corn has already been challenged in print by such writers as Stephen Gowans, Alex Constantine, and Michael Ruppert, who is identified in the Corn article as one of those who are promoting conspiracy theories "too silly to address." Corn has also, apparently, been challenged by many of his readers. In an *L.A. Times* opinion piece, he complains of the response to his missive: "I was besieged by people accusing me of being a CIA disinformation agent." (6) [Imagine that.](#)

Corn ends his diatribe on an interesting note: "Perhaps there's a Pentagon or CIA office that churns out this material. It's mission: distract people from the real wrongdoing." (5) There is little doubt that at least some of the conspiracy theories seeking to explain the events of September 11 have been put out as deliberate disinformation to muddy the waters. But when it comes to distracting people from the "real wrongdoing," few allegedly progressive publications do as good a job at that as does the one that Corn is associated with.

The *L.A. Times* piece, written by Gale Holland a few weeks after the Corn article was posted, is a particularly offensive attack on 'conspiracy theorists.' The article, entitled "Have You Heard About Osama's Cheez-It Stash?," is illustrated with oversized, side-by-side photos of Osama bin Laden and, naturally enough, Elvis Presley. The obvious and rather heavy-handed intent is to equate alternative explanations for the September 11 attacks with Elvis sightings.

Apparently the newspaper didn't have any stock photos of any 'alien grays' to accompany the article.

Holland refers dismissively to what he calls a "conspiracy lobby, a tiny but persistent subgroup spawned by the John F. Kennedy assassination" that is obsessed with "shadowy government agencies with Maxwell Smartish-sounding acronyms." (6)

As for how this "persistent subgroup" views September 11, Holland writes that: "In the misty climes where the far left meets the far right, conspiracy theories have begun to dominate the 9/11 rumor mill. The basic premise is that President Bush/ the CIA/ Big Oil either planned the attacks or let them happen to secure a U.S. oil pipeline/ take over the Middle East/ launch a one-world government." (6)

Well ... let's see now. Is it 'conspiracy theorizing' to posit that Bush, the CIA and "Big Oil" would work together towards a common cause? Is there any political family in the country with closer and more extensive ties to both the CIA and the oil industry than the Bush family? Isn't it only stating the obvious to note that this triumvirate shares common interests and goals -- goals that were in fact advanced as a result of the 'terrorist' attacks?

As for the pipeline, it is a well-documented fact that the U.S. has long harbored plans to build both oil and natural gas pipelines through the nation of Afghanistan. (7) It is also an established fact that the oil companies have long coveted having a 'stable regime' (which is to say, a regime under the direct control of the U.S.) in place before committing to constructing those pipelines. (7) And it has already been reported that those pipeline plans, which have languished in recent years, have now been put on the fast track. (8)

As for the Middle East, it certainly appears as though there is a major effort underway to destabilize the entire region -- currently being spearheaded by the U.S.-armed proxy known as Israel, but likely soon to be coupled with a U.S. invasion of Iraq, accompanied by general mayhem in the area. It should also be noted that oil-rich Central Asia is quite obviously slated to be brought under the control of the U.S. as well, with troop deployments and the building of military bases in the region accelerating rapidly. (9)

And as for the notion of a one-world government, what exactly does Holland think is the goal of all those "Maxwell Smartish-sounding acronyms" -- the IMF, the WTO, the CFR, the TLC -- if not to turn the planet into one global marketplace governed only by corporate spreadsheets -- a global marketplace that can be exploited and pillaged to consolidate all of the world's wealth into the hands of the few?

Even while dismissing 'conspiracy theories,' Holland obliquely acknowledges the implausibility of the official 9-11 story: "Faced with the inexplicable, we seem to take comfort in irrational pseudo-explanations." (6) Or perhaps, when faced with the irrational pseudo-explanations offered by the state, we take comfort in searching for a more rational, logical explanation. Or, as Gowans has written for *Swans*: "Where the official conspiracy theory is so bad, other conspiracy theories rush in to fill the void." (10)

Also jumping into the conspiracy-bashing fray, the very same week that the *L.A. Times* opinion piece was published, was the allegedly progressive *L.A. Weekly*. A report by Ella Taylor purported to shed light on the KPFK controversy -- by declaring the "jewel in [the station's] crown" (11) to be Marc Cooper, the 'left's' leading cheerleader for the 'War on Terror' and an unapologetic supporter of the

Warren Report.

Throughout the article, Taylor refers to anyone whose politics fall to the left of hers -- which is to say, anyone who is even vaguely progressive -- as "hard-line Marxists," the "Marxist left," the "far left" which spouts "vulgar Marxist doctrine," and finally as the "loony left." Exemplifying the "far left," according to Taylor, is "Amy Goodman's popular *Democracy Now*" -- easily the most honest offering the station serves up.

Singled out for derision in Taylor's tirade, as he was by both Corn and Holland, is Michael Ruppert, a former LAPD investigator who runs the *From the Wilderness* website (www.copvicia.com) and newsletter. In the *Weekly* piece, he is described as a "defrocked cop" and a "nutball conspiracy theorist." That title is bestowed upon him for the sin of having compiled a timeline of occurrences in the months leading up to September 11, drawn from respectable media sources, that all raise serious questions about the official version of events.

As for Taylor's hero -- Marc Cooper, one of Corn's fellow scribes at *The Nation* -- she notes that he "has received hundreds of e-mails insinuating that he survived the coup in Chile because he's a CIA agent who plotted the murder of his boss, Salvador Allende." (11) Imagine that.

The conspiracy debunkers are striking on other fronts as well. A website billing itself as the *Urban Legends Reference Pages* (www.snopes2.com) has skyrocketed in popularity in the post-9-11 world, largely due to numerous citations in the print and broadcast media (Holland's *L.A. Times* piece references the site twice). Along with purportedly debunking so-called 'urban legends,' the site has focused its attention of late on various September 11 'conspiracy theories.'

On television, cable's TNN premiered its new *Conspiracy Zone* in January 2002. The primary purpose of the show appears to be to make 'conspiracy theorists' the butt of jokes by the show's marginally talented host, Kevin Nealon, and by the show's almost entirely untalented celebrity guests, such as Gabe "Welcome Back, Kotter" Kaplan and Adam "The Man Show" Carrola.

The most recent airing of the show, on March 31, 2002, featured an appearance by, of all people, Mike Ruppert -- to discuss the 1968 assassination of Robert Kennedy. Every effort was made to discredit the facts brought to the table by Ruppert (who came very well prepared), but the ringer brought in for the job, Ann Coulter, was clearly outclassed and reduced to repeatedly making the asinine assertion that "million-to-one coincidences" actually occur millions of times every day, and so we should expect to find numerous oddities and discrepancies littered throughout the RFK evidence.

Coulter is, by the way, the very same reprehensible individual who recently wrote in the *National Review* that America's response to the perpetrators of September 11 should be to "invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity." More recently, princess Ann has been quoted as saying: "In contemplating college liberals, you really regret, once again, that John Walker is not getting the death penalty. We need to execute people like John Walker in order to physically intimidate liberals by making them realize that they could be killed, too. Otherwise they will turn out into outright traitors." [\(12\)](#) Talk about your "nutballs" ...

The question that needs to be raised here is: why is all this energy being expended to discredit 'conspiracy theorists'? If we're just talking here about a few "nutballs" preaching to a "tiny subgroup," then why all the fuss? What possible threat to the purportedly rock-solid American system could such a marginalized group pose?

As anyone who has ever published material in this country that falls outside of the boundaries of acceptable dissent can tell you, the first response of the power structure is not to attack the messenger -- it is to *ignore* the messenger. If the publication receives no mention by the media, if it garners no reviews and -- as is virtually always the case -- the publisher lacks the resources and/or the opportunities to market the work, then for all intents and purposes the published material does not exist.

It is only if and when the information manages to find an audience despite the obstacles erected, *despite* being ignored in the hopes that it would just go away, that the second line of defense kicks in: destroy, by any means necessary, the credibility of the source.

We can only conclude from this then that 'conspiracy theories' are beginning to reach a much wider, and much more receptive, audience than the boys in Washington are comfortable with. And that which can't be ignored must be destroyed. Coupled with the depressed voter turnouts and the apparent hunger by the American people for books critical of the current agenda, it begins to look as though there may be a considerable amount of dissent bubbling just beneath America's tranquil surface.

That simmering anger and frustration can be gauged in another way as well -- by perusing the e-mails that are pouring in to websites that offer alternative 9-11 scenarios. The confusion, anger and fear is palpable in such mailings. They frequently begin something like this: "I have never considered myself to be a conspiracy theorist, but"

The desperation evident in such mailings is striking, as respondents struggle mightily to find answers to questions they never thought they would be asking. One such letter, drawn from my own mailbag, captures quite eloquently the spirit of such letter writers. It is reproduced here just as it was received:

"I am 52 years old, an Episcopal nun (formerly a professional musician and, before quitting my day job, a math teacher) and the executive director of a small non-profit organization -- an interfaith meditation center. I'm a pretty mainstream sort of person -- liberal on most issues and conservative on a few. I'm moderately well educated (master's degree), reasonably well read, and considerably well traveled -- having studied some in England and worked for years in both Ireland and South Africa as well as various parts of the United States. Until quite recently I considered 'conspiracy theorists' to be, at best, pathetically misguided and, more likely, suffering from paranoid delusions. I don't know what was the wake up call for me after September 11. Maybe it was Dan Rather prostituting himself on the Dave Letterman show. Maybe it was Time Magazine's photograph of Osama Bin Laden in evil red. Maybe it was watching unprecedented war powers handed to the executive branch with only one congressperson daring to utter a lone plea for moderation that hardly qualifies as dissent. Maybe it was that implosion of the towers that looked suspect from the get-go. I'm the only person I know who has actually read huge chunks of that so-called 'Patriot's Act' and it makes my blood run cold. I knew then that I was watching a coup inexorably unfold and I'm sick at heart.

"I've only talked about any of this with one trusted colleague who warned me that I was starting to sound like those crackpots who think the moon landings were faked. I don't dare tell him that I'm actually having my serious doubts about that too. (Why haven't we gone back in 30 years? Why has no other nation duplicated the feat?)

"I'm wondering if I'm losing it or finally seeing clearly. The magnitude of it all is devastating. The 'cognitive dissonance' is horribly painful. I understand why people turn off their faculties for critical thought and inquiry; they want to be able to sleep in their beds in reasonable peace.

"What do you propose that ordinary people like me actually do? I currently live in a very conservative part of the country where the flag-waving jingoism is nauseating."

E-mails such as this pile up in my in-box day after day, week after week -- awaiting answers that are difficult to come by. What, indeed, can ordinary people do to reverse the course we are on? How are we to begin to fight back against a system that few seem to even recognize as an enemy of the people?

The best advice that I can offer at this time to all those who currently inhabit *The Twilight Zone* is to let your voices be heard. Stop biting your tongues and begging off from engaging in political debates. You just may find that there are other non-believers around you who are just waiting for someone else to break the ice.

As much as appearances may suggest otherwise, you are not alone. There are many other non-believers out there, but they too are intimidated into silence. You will only find them if you have the courage to speak up -- if you refuse to be cowed by the propaganda war. Only then can grass-roots organizing begin to take shape.

Alone, you are powerless. But you don't have to be alone.

Gale Holland concluded his *L.A. Times* opinion piece with the following words: "Getting at the truth is tough, accepting it can be harder still. Paranoia is a lot easier." (6) Getting at the truth is indeed tough. And accepting it may be one of the hardest things that you ever do. But it is not paranoia that is easier; it is complacent acceptance of the inexplicable.

The unfortunate reality though is that there isn't time for complacent acceptance. We don't have the luxury of taking the easy route. And maybe, just maybe, there are enough quiet dissenters out there to make a difference. And maybe, just maybe, our fearless leaders have overstepped this time -- overestimated the level of lies and corruption that they can get away with.

Those are, alas, very big 'maybes.' But now is certainly not the time to throw in the towel by standing mute. The stakes are far too high. Our children and grandchildren have to grow up in this world that is being created for them. They deserve far better. For their sake, it is time for all the non-believers to stand up and be counted. And to refuse to sit back down until our voices are heard. The clock is ticking

* All of these leaks were, notably, disinformational. The premise of the Nuclear Posture Review, for instance, was that America's eagerness to unleash nuclear weapons came about in response to the September 11 attacks. Earlier documents reveal, however, that the United States has been itching to cross the nuclear threshold since long before last September. The reports of the establishment of a 'shadow' government implied that America hasn't long been run from behind the curtain. And the uproar over the proposed establishment of a disinformation ministry served to cloak the fact that the overwhelming majority of the news we already get is government approved disinformation/propaganda. ([back](#))

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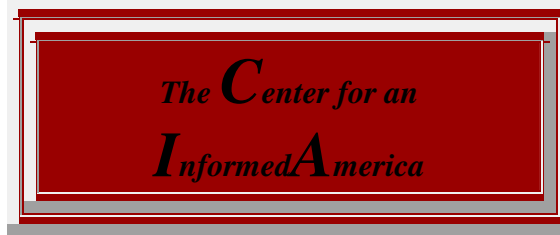
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## *Lee Harvey Oswald Goes to Nanterre*

*David McGowan*  
*April 18, 2002*

"These days, France is a tough place to be a cop." (1)

So said the *Los Angeles Times* on March 22, 2002. The timing of this report was rather curious, to say the least, though that fact wouldn't become apparent until a few days later – when a man named Richard Durn paid a visit to the city council chambers of Nanterre, France.

The *Times* article was intended to be an exposé on the rampant levels of lawlessness and lack of respect for law enforcement that are allegedly sweeping the nation of France, leading to what reporter Sebastian Rotella called "a time of discontent for French police. Crime was up 7.6% in 2001, continuing a trend marked by what police union officials say was a fourfold increase in physical and verbal assaults on officers in the last five years. Last year, more than 600 officers were attacked while on duty." (2)

The blame for this state of affairs was laid, naturally enough, squarely on the shoulders of the politicians of various left-wing persuasions who populate the French political structure. Where else to place the blame but on those criminal-coddling politicians who - according to the *Times* - "seem out of touch with the street"? (3)

Fueling this crime wave, alluded the newspaper, is a law enforcement reform measure passed last year aimed at guaranteeing suspects "immediate access to a lawyer and other Miranda-type safeguards," to combat what the *Times* described as "an inquisitorial justice culture that had created one of Europe's largest populations of suspects jailed while awaiting trial or indictment." (4)

The reform measure actually went beyond the safeguards established here in the U.S. by the Miranda decision (which is currently slated for review by the same people who appointed the president). It includes, for example, provisions for webcams to be used to monitor the interrogation of juveniles, and for medical doctors to be brought in to determine if a suspect has been physically abused while in custody.

This purportedly 'soft-on-crime' reform measure, the *Times* would have us believe, has led to an unprecedented level of brazenness among France's 'criminal element.'

The "most outrageous case" cited as an example by the *Times* "was the ambush slaying in October of two officers responding to a home invasion. Suspect Jean-Claude Bonnal, an ex-convict accused of killing four civilians two weeks earlier in a holdup, had been released on bail the previous December--even though he was awaiting trial for a department store robbery that left nine wounded." (5)

Bonnal was free to roam the streets, implied the *Times*, because of the restrictions placed on law enforcement by the legal reforms. A cynic might ponder whether he wasn't

deliberately unleashed upon society in order to teach the people a lesson about the consequences of 'coddling' criminals. In any event, the double slaying of the officers brought to eight the number of law enforcement personnel killed last year in France.

It also proved to be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back: "Resentment in the ranks boiled over in November. National police officers held demonstrations across the country. Then came the turn of the gendarmerie, the force that patrols the rural areas." (6) The demonstrations were said to be spawned by spiraling crime rates, police resentment of the law enforcement reform measure, and the political establishment's alleged lack of support for the law enforcement community.

What the police demonstrations appear to actually have been though is an integral part of a campaign in which fear of supposedly rampant criminality is being manufactured and manipulated to push a law-and-order agenda that is clearly intended to push the French electorate in the direction of the most right-wing elements of the French political structure – precisely mirroring, in every detail, the psychological warfare campaign that has been waged here in the States for the last several decades.

Crime in France has, no doubt, been on the rise in recent years. *The Guardian* has reported that: "France's crime rate surged by a record 8% last year, exceeding 4m offences for the first time in the country's history. Violent crimes, particularly armed robberies, increased by 9.8%, while the number of rapes rose by 13.2% and there was a sharp rise in offences carried out by under-13s." (7)

The *Independent*, however, offered a different take on France's recent rise in criminality: "Never mind the statistics, which show that the French murder rate has been falling steadily (as has the American murder rate) ... Never mind the fact that, despite an undoubted surge in the last few years, most violent crime in France remains far below the levels in Britain or Germany." (8)

And never mind that the levels of violent crime in the UK and Germany remain but a pale shadow of the violent crime levels here in the United States – the largely undisputed world-heavyweight-champion of violent crime. In the year 2000, the entire nation of France (population 60 million) recorded 1,051 homicides; by way of comparison, Los Angeles County alone (population 9.5 million) recorded a nearly identical number of murders. (9)

Missing from virtually all press accounts of the supposed crimewave sweeping France has been any sort of analysis of the underlying social causes of the relatively mild levels of rising criminality. The *World Socialist Web Site* provided some of the missing context:

"For some years now, successive French governments have been reducing the cost to the state and to employers of unemployment insurance and other social benefits. There are now 2,200,000 unemployed in France, 9 percent of the population. In some areas, youth unemployment approaches 50 percent. An estimated 4 million people live in poverty, including many who have jobs, and France has the highest youth suicide rate in Europe." (10)

The WSWS also reproduced a letter written to the editor of the French daily *Liberation* which reflected the levels of despair and frustration felt by many French youth. The letter read, in part: "We are the first generation since the Second World War to earn less than our parents. Our future is uncertain." (11) Indeed it is, as is the future of all inhabitants of planet Earth.

The erosion of social services, needless to say, is an idea imported from America, so it is hardly surprising that it would be coupled with what the *L.A. Times* described as an eruption of "U.S.-style street violence." (12) Facilitating the rise in high-profile violent crime has been "the increased presence of assault rifles and other heavy weapons smuggled from the Balkans." (13) "Once smugglers enter the European Union, the absence of borders makes for booming business." (14)

It should go without saying that the increased presence of military-style weaponry, particularly in what we like to refer to as the 'inner cities,' has also fueled the rise in "U.S.-

style street violence" right here in the U.S.. It should also go without saying that most of those weapons currently flowing through the Balkans into Europe originate right here in the munitions factories of U.S. 'defense' contractors.

While the erosion of the social safety net and the infusion of guns have certainly led to higher rates of crime, the perception being generated - of violent crime running rampant through the streets of France - is largely an illusion. This illusion is being created by both an unprecedented rise in the occurrence of ultra-violent rampage killings, and a media fixation on crime that is wildly out of proportion to the problem.

That is, alas, the script that has been followed here in America to incrementally push the people to support a right-wing 'law-and-order' agenda that has resulted in a wholesale stripping away of civil rights, due process rights and privacy rights. Accompanying that has been a pronounced race-baiting that has led to rising racial tensions in this country and a prison population composed largely of African-Americans and Hispanics.

It is notable then that the *Los Angeles Times* has commented that among the "most worrisome trends" in France has been "a spreading drug-and-thug culture, especially among the young men of North African descent." (15) Ahhh, yes ... if it wasn't for the inherent criminality of those 'inferior races,' with their penchant for 'gang-banging,' we could lick this crime problem once and for all.

Never mind that the modern-day "drug-and-thug culture" is largely a product of CIA covert operations that dumped a toxic mixture of guns and crack cocaine into the country's 'inner cities' in the 1980s. That is not to say that gangs and gang violence didn't exist before that time. Certainly they did. But just as certain is that the Iran/Contra operations fundamentally changed the nature of crime in America's impoverished neighborhoods, which then became the justification for the complete militarization of 'big city' police departments.

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The WSWS noted that "Outbreaks of extreme violence by desperate individuals are associated in France with the United States. But these problems have increasingly surfaced in France as well. Over the last 10 years there have been at least 17 such incidents, often ending with the suicide of the perpetrator." (16) The *L.A. Times* reported that three such mass murders have been committed just in the last eight months. (17)

The same *Times* report noted that "the French have been shocked by acts of unprecedented viciousness. Headlines speak of brazen cop-killers, gang rapists prowling housing projects, and schoolyard extortionists." (18) The *Guardian* added that: "Near blanket media coverage of incidents of youth crime has helped to keep the issue firmly in the public eye." (19)

Such sensationalized crime reporting, including the demonizing of youth (20), has been a staple of the American print and broadcast media for quite some time, and has aided immeasurably in rallying public support for the rolling back of constitutional protections. As the National Criminal Justice Commission noted in a February 1996 report: "When national news wants to excite viewers, it scours the nation for the day's most titillating crime, and broadcasts it everywhere. The result is a popular sense that rare and extreme crimes happen around every corner." (21)

Vincent Schiraldi, the director of the Justice Policy Institute, explained to the *Christian Science Monitor* in November 1997 how such reporting skews public perception of crime: "For example, since 1993, the homicide rate nationwide dropped by 20%. Yet since 1993, coverage of murders on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news increased by an astonishing 721%. As a result, in 1993 alone, the number of Americans ranking crime as the number one problem increased six fold." (22)

And so it is in France as the country heads into a presidential election in which "the leading candidates [and the press] have made law-and-order issues and juvenile delinquency a major theme of their campaigns." (23) Assisting in keeping the people's attention focused on law-and-order issues and the looming menace of violent crime has been a steady stream of those once uniquely American creations – rampage killers.

And just as in America, France's versions of rampage/spree/mass murderers have followed a time-honored script, as though they have all attended the same Rampage Killer Training Academy. With a few minor variations, that script generally reads something like this: a man described as a loner (though the facts frequently contradict that description) suddenly explodes in an orgy of violence, gunning down - in a coldly professional, emotionless manner - as many people as possible, before turning his guns on himself – thereby preempting any sort of a meaningful investigation of the crime and ensuring that the 'evidence' in the case will never be aired in open court.

Richard Durn apparently had read a copy of that script. At 1:15 AM the morning of March 27 - after sitting in the public gallery of Nanterre's city council chambers through some six hours of tedious local political wrangling, and after waiting until all other visitors had cleared out - Durn approached the gathered group of forty or so elected officials without saying a word and opened fire with a dizzying barrage of semi-automatic handgun fire, shooting his initial victims in the back. (24) "The attack was," according to the *BBC's* Paris correspondent, "clearly prepared in advance." (25)

When it was all over, eight local councillors lay dead and another nineteen were wounded (early reports claimed that as many as 30 were wounded). The council chambers were littered with dozens of spent shell casings and, according to a Paris fire brigade spokesman, Captain Laurent Vibert, "There are at least 50 bullet impacts in the council chamber. According to our first reports, he used at least five ammunition clips." (26)

The mass murder was - according to the local mayor, who survived the rampage - "conducted with clinical precision." (27) Press reports were littered with descriptions of a preternaturally calm, emotionally-detached killer.

*The Irish Times* commented that: "Eyewitnesses were struck by Mr Durn's calm, methodical manner." (28) The *BBC* reported that: "The gunman who opened fire on a council meeting in Paris acted methodically and calmly, working his way around the room as he shot his victims, witnesses say." (29) One councillor/witness told the *Guardian* that: "He was shooting at anything that moved ... but he was completely calm." (30)

Other witnesses noted that "Mr Durn did not utter a word while spraying the room with bullets." (31) One unidentified official told the *BBC* that Durn "was very calm. He didn't look like a crazy person at all." (32) Christian Brunet, a councillor/witness, told the *Independent*: "He didn't say a word. He must have used three or four magazines. He had a second pistol in his belt. It was like being in a horror film. He shot the councillors in the front row, coldly, one by one." (33)

It was a performance that seemed to borrow heavily from *The Terminator*: "Witnesses say the man had two or three guns, and was shooting with both hands at once ... Others described how he calmly reloaded his weapons before carrying on." (34) Two of those guns, which Durn was apparently firing simultaneously, were Glock 9mm semi-automatics.

Durn was eventually overpowered – but not without considerable effort. He seemed to be oblivious to attempts by witnesses/victims to stop his rampage: "At least one councillor reportedly threw a chair at the gunman to try to knock him to the ground. Another person tried to wrestle him to the floor. But witnesses said the man never stopped shooting." (35)

One can almost picture Ahhnuld calmly reloading and robotically firing with both hands even as chairs and would-be attackers bounce off of him.

Several councillors ultimately braved the barrage of bullets to disarm and contain Durn. As they did so, the well-armed Durn pulled out yet a third gun, "a .357 magnum handgun

which he fired at those trying to overpower him." (36)

Had he not been stopped, Durn's performance was apparently scheduled to include his own suicide as the final act – most likely to be performed with the .357 he had tucked in his belt and which he produced as soon as he realized that the show was drawing to a close. After being overpowered, he reportedly screamed "kill me, kill me." (37) It was later reported that: "Police said Durn admitted during questioning that he planned to kill himself after gunning down the councillors." (38)

Most press accounts portrayed Durn as the proverbial 'deranged loner' – noting that he was unemployed, unmarried and still living with his mother, and that he had a long history of mental illness. *LeMonde*, for instance, reported that: "He did not have friends, nor a known girlfriend, and he lived with his mother." (39) But Durn did in fact have political connections, and was well-known within the council chambers where the shootings took place.

One witness told the *BBC* that: "He comes to all the council meetings and had no motive to do this." (40) Other witnesses reported that "some councillors had chatted with him before the debate on the local budget." (41) *The Irish Times* held that not only did Durn speak "to several of the men and women he was about to murder ... he joked with some of them." (42) Some of the councillors in the room that night had served alongside of Durn in the local chapter of the League of Human Rights, an organization for which Durn had at one time served as treasurer. (43)

Most media accounts also presented the mass murder as a motiveless, random act of violence. Police referred to it as "motiveless dementia," (44) while prime minister Lionel Jospin spoke of "a case of furious dementia." (45) *The Independent* though talked to some eyewitnesses who said that "Durn selected his targets. They said he seemed to know precisely which councillors he wanted to kill, starting with the Greens and Communists." (46) A later report by *Reuters* claimed that Durn had "intended to kill only the Communist mayor, according to a confession published by *LeParisien* newspaper yesterday." (47)

If Durn's intent was to kill leftists, then he certainly chose the right place to launch his attack. There is certainly no shortage of "Greens and Communists" in Nanterre, which has been described as a "staunchly communist blue-collar suburb" (48) located in "the so-called 'Red Belt' of left-wing municipalities surrounding the capital." (49) *The Independent* offered a bleak description of Nanterre as "a neat, soulless, working-class enclave." (50)

Durn himself was described in most press reports as a leftist, though at least one journalist commented on the fact that his supposed leftist leanings were contradicted by his well-documented fascination with guns. Nevertheless, he apparently registered with the Socialist Party in 1995 before switching to the Green Party in 2001; that same year, he joined the League of Human Rights. (51)

Beyond that, the details of Durn's life remain rather murky. He was the son of an immigrant mother whom he lived with. The identity of his father, interestingly, is said to be unknown. Durn was reportedly highly intelligent and very well educated, with a "history degree and a masters in political sciences." (52) *LeMonde* reported that, at school, "he was exceptionally gifted, so much so that he was bored in class." (53) *The Guardian* concurred, noting that he was: "Considered brilliant at school." (54)

Despite his intelligence and academic prowess, Durn appears to have an almost non-existent employment history and he was unemployed at the time of the shootings. For the past four years, he has spent part of his time going on what were described as "humanitarian" missions to Bosnia and Kosovo. (55) Bosnia and Kosovo, it should be noted, are the focus of an array of Western intelligence-run covert operations, as well as being the source for the military-style guns flooding into Europe – guns not unlike the ones wielded by Richard Durn.

How Durn maintained possession of those guns in a country known for having tough gun control laws remains very much a mystery. As *Time's* European edition noted: "Legally possessing such a weapon is difficult in France," though the magazine purports that: "Durn

qualified because he was an active member of a shooting club in a nearby town." (56)

Many press reports echo the claim that Durn was allowed a license for his guns because he was a sport shooter with a membership in a shooting club. Unmentioned in these reports is the fact that the guns owned by Durn were hardly of the sort used by sport shooters. As the *Independent* correctly noted, the "Glock is a lightweight, hi-tech, automatic pistol used by bodyguards and assassins." (57)

Even if one accepts that these decidedly non-sporting guns were owned for sport shooting, there is still the question of why the guns were not confiscated two years ago, when Durn allowed his license to expire. As Adam Sage wrote in the UK's *The Times*: "Durn had been allowed to keep the guns that he used in the shootings despite the expiry of his three-year firearms licence in 2000." (58)

The expiration of the license alone should have resulted in the confiscation of the weapons. In addition to that, Durn had exhibited what the *L.A. Times* described as "a history of ominous behavior." (59) The *Times* was referring to the fact that, in 1998, Durn had "threatened a psychiatrist with a handgun." (60) And yet, even with this threat to the doctor "at a social security office," his guns still were not confiscated. (61)

There is also the question of why Durn's psychiatric history did not disqualify him from gun ownership. As *The Irish Times* recounted: "He had been under psychiatric care since 1990, and took the anti-depressant drug Prozac." (62) This is, alas, yet another element of the script that they apparently teach at the Rampage Killer Training Academy; the overwhelming majority of America's spree killers have had a fondness for ingesting so-called 'anti-depressant' drugs.

During his twelve years of psychiatric treatment, Durn had reportedly made two suicide attempts and had on at least one occasion been confined to a mental hospital. France's *LeFigaro* marveled at how it was that a man with a lengthy psychiatric history, who had already shown himself to be a danger both to himself and to others, and who was knowingly in illegal possession of three weapons which had been unregistered for over two years, had somehow managed to avoid having those weapons seized. (63)

Durn was, notably, never charged with any crime in connection with his armed threat at a government office. It would seem almost as though someone wanted him roaming the streets of France with his mini-arsenal.

\* \* \* \* \*

After being overpowered in the council chambers, Durn was taken into custody by French police. The young man who had previously been joking with his victims - before coldly and methodically gunning them down - was by that time said to be "speaking incoherently." (64) He reportedly told his captors that he felt "very awkward in his skin" (65), as though - perhaps - he felt he had lost control over his actions.

Shortly after 10:00 AM on the morning of March 28 - 33 hours after Durn unleashed a barrage of bullets inside a building described as an ultra-modern, concrete and glass pyramid - the 33-year-old gunman allegedly committed suicide while being questioned in the Quai des Orfevres, described as "the French equivalent of Scotland Yard." (66)

As the *Associated Press* described it: "Durn was being interrogated in a locked fifth-floor room when he bolted to a closed window, according to [an official police] statement. It said he opened the window and began climbing out." (67) At the time, Durn "was being questioned by two senior officers, a captain and a brigadier, when he was asked to stand up and sign a statement." (68)

According to the official police account: "The two officials tried to stop him by grabbing his legs, but the determination of the suspect, whose body was already mostly out of the



window, thwarted that attempt." (69) The police statement also claimed that: "One officer injured his hand trying to haul [Durn] back in." (70) Once out the window, Durn allegedly scurried across the roof and then plunged to his death.

This official story is, needless to say, not without its problems. Questions have been raised about why the suspect was not handcuffed or otherwise restrained, as well as why he wasn't being held in a secure mental facility rather than a jail (strangely enough, the French apparently recognize that the mentally ill should be treated differently than other suspects).

Perhaps the most obvious question raised is exactly how a man being closely monitored by at least two experienced officers had time to get to a window, open it, and then climb through it before anyone had a chance to restrain him. This is an especially troubling question in light of the fact that the window, variously described as a "fanlight" or a "skylight," was quite small and was located 1.6 meters off the floor (slightly more than five feet). (71)

As a leading Parisian lawyer, Jean-Louis Pelletier, commented to *The Times*: "It is perfectly obvious to everyone that you need time to climb through a skylight." (72) Lucien Batard, the deputy mayor of Nanterre, asked pointedly: "How can you kill yourself at police headquarters? I didn't think that someone at criminal police headquarters would have so much liberty of movement that he could jump out of a window." (73)

Apparently a number of French citizens didn't think so either. *Agence France-Presses* reported that the alleged suicide "caused sharp protests, particularly on behalf of the mayor of Nanterre, Jacqueline Fraysse." (74)

There were obvious signs that a struggle had preceded Durn's 'suicide.' The *Guardian* reported that Durn's body was "missing one shoe and a sock, perhaps as a result of the struggle." (75) *LeMonde* added that the "clothing of Richard Durn was, moreover, drawn backwards." (76) These signs of struggle were universally attributed to the officers' alleged efforts to thwart Durn's suicide, though they could just as easily have been the result of Durn's captors' efforts to *assist* in his 'suicide.'

John Lichfield wrote in the *Independent* that Durn's timely suicide assured that "the massacre in the suburban council chamber may never be fully explained." (77) Just as, one might note, the death while in police custody of that most famous of 'deranged loners,' Lee Harvey Oswald, assured that the shootings in Dallas would never be fully explained.

Mayor Fraysse observed that "there will be no trial. The families will not know. They had a right to know." (78) Indeed they did, as did the families of the victims of so many of America's rampage killers who have self-destructed before their stories could be told.

John Lichfield wrote in the *Independent* that Durn "joins a long list of mass killers, including ... Mark Barton, a day trader in Atlanta who killed his family and then nine others at his office in 1999, James Huberty who killed 21 people in a McDonald's restaurant in San Diego in 1984, and Charles Whitman who shot dead 16 people from a tower at the University of Texas in 1966." (79)

None of these men, who were notably all Americans, survived to stand trial. The families of their victims are still waiting to hear what really motivated their murderous rampages. There is some indication that at least one of these legendary mass murderers, Charles Whitman, had received intelligence training while serving as a Marine. (80)

It doesn't seem entirely out of line to ponder whether Richard Durn was a covert intelligence operative. While hard evidence is lacking, there is a circumstantial case to be made: his murky family history, sketchy employment records, documented political connections, questionable leftist credentials, inexplicably lax treatment by law enforcement officials, and mysterious sojourns to the Balkans all point in that direction.

*Time* proclaimed that: "Last week's mass murder of eight city councilors in a Paris suburb ... set France searching for political meaning in a fundamentally senseless act." (81) But was it a senseless act, or was it an overtly political act? Aren't all 'rampage' killings, in the final analysis, political acts? They certainly, at the very least, are exploited for political gain.

Durn's shooting rampage is expected to have very specific political consequences, which were spelled out in an April 3 report from the *BBC*. Even while claiming that in "normal circumstances, of course, a massacre by a disturbed individual would play no part in a general debate on crime" (a dubious claim at best), reporter Sheila Bartner wrote that: "But when Richard Durn carried out his murderous attack, he may have inadvertently done more than unleash grief and tragedy in this pleasant Paris suburb. It is just possible he has intervened decisively in the French presidential election ... Mr Chirac may have two trump cards after Nanterre – his stronger image on law and order, and his traditional role as a man of the people ... The tragedy of Nanterre allows Mr Chirac to play both cards. If Mr Chirac can avoid over-playing it, then Richard Durn may just have dealt him a winning hand." (82)

A winning hand that he wouldn't otherwise have held. Prior to the Durn affair, Chirac was trailing in the polls behind the country's Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin – despite persistent attacks from the right on Jospin's alleged "poor record on crime." (83) Chirac has been, notably, "campaigning on a 'zero-tolerance' law and order stance similar to that of New York." (84)

Similar, that is, to the agenda implemented by Mayor Rudolf Giuliani – widely viewed as an overtly fascist agenda before Rudy was resurrected by the media as 'America's Mayor' in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

Numerous prominent voices of the right in France quickly seized upon the Nanterre massacre. Presidential candidate Alain Madelin, for example, said "the killing spree exemplified French society's dangerous drift toward 'American-style violence.'" (85) How better to remedy that than through the implementation of American-style fascism?

Bruno Megret of the National Movement, described by the *Independent* as one of France's more "extreme right-wing voices," insisted that "Durn's actions were part of a 'collapse of traditional values, a descent into barbarism.'" (86) Such language has been a staple of far-right opinion shapers here in the United States for quite some time.

If these voices of the right carry the day in France, then Richard Durn will do for Jacques Chirac what Willie Horton did for George H.W. Bush.

As for Jospin, he has, "like many French leftwingers ... long tried to play down the law-and-order issue as a rightwing, or even far-right, scare tactic." For that reason, according to the *Guardian*, "as he seeks to stop Mr Chirac from running away with the election's crunch issue, he remains more or less stuck with the left's traditional view that crime is partly the fault of society, whereas the right sees the offender as wholly responsible." (87)

It can be quite a burden to be "stuck" with promoting the truth when one is embroiled in a political campaign based on lies, smears, and disinformation aimed at discrediting those voices that do attempt to speak the truth about such issues as the causes of crime. Fortunately for our politicians here in America, such burdens don't exist since nobody even pretends to want to tell the truth. That, of course, doesn't stop the 'right' from relentlessly attacking what passes for the 'left' for being 'soft on crime.'

The attacks of last September 11, probably the most highly-publicized mass murder of all time, have been used by the illegitimate Bush administration to solidify support among the American people for a decidedly reactionary agenda, and to cast the previous - purportedly 'leftist' - administration as 'soft on terrorism.' In the same way, the attack in Nanterre is being used to push the French electorate to the right.

Perhaps it is appropriate then that among the "scores of police and firefighters" who were brought in to assist with tending to the victims in the Nanterre council chambers was a "contingent of New York City firemen currently visiting the Paris area." (88) It always helps to have people on-hand with experience in dealing with the aftermath of choreographed tragedies.

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*The Center for an Informed America*

## **NEWSLETTER #21**

***Special Edition: Was Wellstone Whacked?***

***November 5, 2002***

Greetings, once again, to all subscribers!

Two years ago, I wrote the following words: "October 16th is not, as it turns out, a good day to travel by air if you happen to be a politician who has become, shall we say, troublesome." October 16, 2000 was, for those suffering from that peculiarly American malady known as "lack of historical memory," the day that populist (relatively speaking) Senatorial candidate Mel Carnahan's chartered plane allegedly crashed due to inclement weather.

(<http://davesweb.cncost.com/regressive.htm>)

Now it seems that October 25 is also not a good day to travel by air if you happen to be a democratically-minded Senatorial candidate, as the Wellstone family has just learned the hard way. Widely regarded, accurately or not, as the most progressive voice in the U.S. Senate, Wellstone has just succumbed to "small chartered plane carrying left-leaning politician meets inclement weather" syndrome.

And there will be no repeat of the "Corpse Beats John Ashcroft and Gains Senate Seat for Widow" scenario, since Wellstone's wife and daughter were killed along with the Minnesota Senator in what the media would like us to believe was a tragic accident that was not, of course, in any way suspicious.

At the time of his demise, Mr. Wellstone was uniquely poised to reveal the lies and fraudulence of the Washington establishment and their media cohorts, by virtue of the fact that he was the only Senator in a contested race to vote against the Congressional resolution that unconstitutionally transferred war-making power to the executive office.

By casting a dissenting vote, Wellstone had committed political suicide -- or so said all the Washington spinmeisters. As George Bush likes to say, "America speaks with one voice" on the issue of waging genocidal war against the Iraqi people. And the media, of course, don't really bother to challenge such specious claims.

Paul Wellstone though opted to speak with a different voice, thereby allegedly guaranteeing his political demise. To hasten that demise, his opponent was reportedly hand-picked and enthusiastically endorsed by Boy George himself, and was supplied with truck loads of campaign money.

(<http://www.startribune.com/stories/587/3382739.html>)

But a strange thing appeared to be happening: Wellstone seemed to be on his way to electoral victory. Contrary to Washington spin, Wellstone had gotten a large boost in his poll numbers as a direct result of his vote on the Iraqi resolution. But how could that be? How could a maverick Senator who had chosen to voice such an 'unpopular' opinion actually gain support?



The vast majority of Wellstone's allegedly 'Democratic' colleagues chose to give a thumbs-up to transferring war-making power to the White House, despite being inundated with correspondence from constituents who strongly opposed the measure.

(<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20021003-851543.htm>)

It has been almost universally proclaimed by pols and pundits that these 'Democrats' lined up behind Bush on the war resolution (as they had on the Patriot Act, and the resolution authorizing the use of force in Afghanistan, and various other reactionary measures) because it was the "politically expedient" thing to do.

Wellstone's reelection would have revealed this 'conventional wisdom' to be a craven lie. As the hopelessly compromised *Nation* put it in a posting from May of 2002, "If [Wellstone] wins, a blow will be struck not just against the Bush machine but against those in the Democratic Party who argue for tepid moderation."

(<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20020527&s=nichols>)

In truth, the blow would have been struck against the entire, and entirely fraudulent, Democratic Party -- which doesn't argue for "tepid moderation," but is in fact wholly complicit in advancing the increasingly fascistic agenda of Team Bush. As Michael I. Niman argued, in a posting on *AlterNet*, a Wellstone victory "would both be an embarrassment to the Bush administration and to Democratic Quislings such as Hillary Clinton who voted to support 'the president.'"

(<http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=14399>)

Even without a Wellstone victory, the Democratic Party has largely revealed itself for the fraud that it is by failing to follow up on what it claimed was one of the "politically expedient" reasons for green-lighting an attack on Iraq and beyond: to enable the party to shift the focus of the campaign onto domestic issues, where Bush is said to be vulnerable.

Now maybe I've been in a coma or something, but I don't recall any Democratic candidates challenging their Republican rivals on the current state of the economy, or on the massive tax cuts handed out to corporate America, or on the direct connections of various members of the Bush mob to massive corporate scandals, or on the rollbacks of environmental safeguards, or on the decidedly anti-labor stance of the White House, or on the repeated attacks on civil liberties, or on the erosion of the separation between church and state, or on the blocking of any meaningful inquiry into what happened on September 11, or on the failure to investigate the anthrax attacks, or on the failure to capture bin Laden despite laying waste to the nation of Afghanistan, or ....

It is clearly not the case, as *The Nation* claimed, that "most Democrats are still trying to figure out how to challenge a popular President" -- but rather that most Democrats are trying to figure out how to continue to masquerade as some sort of legitimate opposition party even while signing off on every police-state measure and every imperialistic military venture that has been proposed by the administration.

So while there may be some truth to *The Nation's* contention that "getting rid of Wellstone is a passion for Rove, Dick Cheney, George W. Bush and the special-interest lobbies that fund the most sophisticated political operation ever assembled by a presidential administration," it is arguable whether it was not the 'Democrats' who had the most to gain from Wellstone's death.

The reality is that Wellstone did nothing to slow down the Bush juggernaut, and wasn't exactly the principled leftist that he is made out to be. He had no problem signing off on the Patriot Act or the resolution authorizing the brutal assault upon the nation of Afghanistan, and had little or nothing to say about the brazen theft of the presidential election or the evidence indicating that the official story of what happened on September 11 is almost entirely a work of fiction.

And even on those issues where Wellstone did take a stand in opposition to the White House, the effects of his actions were negligible. Since Bush took office, and certainly since September 11, 2001, there has not been a vote in Congress on any resolution of any significance that has not gone overwhelmingly in the Bush administration's favor.

So it seems to me that the 'Democrats' had as much or more to gain as did the 'Republicans' by terminating Wellstone's political career -- though that of course assumes that 'Democrats' refers to an identifiable group that is separate and distinct from the 'Republican' Party, and that there is more than one political orientation represented in Washington.

And that, of course, really isn't the case. But it is of supreme importance to maintain the illusion that that is the case. And Paul Wellstone was threatening to partially shatter that illusion by stripping away some of the lies that the 'Democrats' have been hiding behind.

It would probably be more accurate then to say that the Washington establishment, as a whole, had a motive for eliminating Paul Wellstone. So ... was he whacked?

It seems a fair question to ask, though the conspiracy bashers on the fake left have been working overtime to launch what is essentially a pre-emptive strike against anyone who dares to pose such questions.

([http://twincities.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=7814&group=webcast](http://twincities.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=7814&group=webcast) and <http://www.salon.com/news/col/sullivan/2002/10/30/wellstone/?x>)

The speed with which the debunkers have issued their missives, and the vehemence with which they have insisted that only those on the lunatic fringe would speculate that Wellstone's demise was due to anything other than a tragic accident, is enough to make a skeptic wonder if there isn't something to hide.

Postulating that foul play was involved does not, it should be noted, necessarily imply the guilt of the Bush administration, or of any other players in Washington. As was seen during the DC sniper case, and during the anthrax mailings (to name just two examples), Washington and the media are quick these days to blame almost any tragedy or act of violence on 'terrorism.'

And yet, as *USA Today* was quick to report, "FBI spokesman Paul McCabe said there was no indication the crash was related to terrorism." This proclamation was made, of course, before any sort of an investigation had even begun, and while we were being told that it would take months to determine the cause of the crash.

([http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

With the wreckage still smoldering, the *Star Tribune* reported that Acting NTSB Chairman Carol Carmody "refused to speculate on what happened in the crash, but said NTSB specialists would be looking at all aspects of the accident, including weather, the engines,

human performance, the plane's structure and airworthiness of the aircraft."  
(<http://www.startribune.com/stories/1752/3390667.html>)

Conspicuously missing from that list, and apparently ruled out before the investigation even began, was sabotage. So much for "looking at all aspects of the accident." But then again, why would you look at that possibility when you are "looking at all aspects of the *accident*"? You would only look for that if you were looking at all aspects of the *crash*, to determine if it was in fact an accident. And Carmody, of course, isn't doing that.

Carmody, by the way, who is now serving as the spokeswoman for what has been referred to as the NTSB's "Go Team," has a rather interesting history. Her official NTSB biography proudly proclaims that her career has included "serving at the Central Intelligence Agency."  
([http://www.nts.gov/Abt\\_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm](http://www.nts.gov/Abt_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm))

That should set everyone's mind at ease -- as should the fact that she "has been [an] on-scene member at several accidents, including the aircraft accident which killed Governor Carnahan in October 2000."

Joining Carmody, as the lead investigator on the case, is Robert Benzon, whose previous claim to fame was leading the cover-up ... oops, that must have been some kind of Freudian slip, because what I meant to say is that he led the *investigation* into the cause of the November 12, 2001 crash of American Airlines flight 587 into a neighborhood in Belle Harbor, New York.  
(<http://www.nts.gov/events/2001/AA587/default.htm>)

Benzon began his aviation career in the jungles of Vietnam, where he served on a secretive Tactical Electronics Warfare Squadron, according to his own account: "I served as a 2nd Lt, then 1st Lt copilot in the 362 TEWS at DaNang AB during 1972 and 1973. We closed the unit down several months after the spring of 1973 cease fire agreement. Interestingly, we continued to fly missions from DaNang after the cease fire with South Vietnamese markings on the airplanes. I never did fully understand that little maneuver. I went on to fly as a copilot and aircraft commander in KC-135s, shot through the ranks to Captain, and went off active duty in 1980 or so. I'm now an aircraft accident investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board."  
(<http://www.ec47.com/returns3.htm>)

It's interesting to note here that Benzon writes that he went off active duty "in 1980 *or so*." Does he not know when he went off active duty? Perhaps Benzon operates in that murky world where the lines between 'active duty' and 'plausible deniability' are a little fuzzy.

Ooops ... I guess that by speculating about such things I have qualified myself for a fitting for a "tin foil hat." Or did I already qualify myself for membership in that club simply by questioning whether the crash of Wellstone's plane *might* have been due to something other than an accident, rather than boldly insisting, absent any corroborating evidence, that it definitely was an accident -- which is apparently considered intelligent political discourse?

So what does the evidence suggest in the Wellstone crash? Details are sketchy at best at this point. There are, of course, the usual glaring contradictions in the early reports that we have all grown accustomed to.

All avenues of the media, for example, are in agreement that there were no voice or flight recorders on the plane, thus denying investigators a key piece of evidence. Early reports, however, claimed that there was indeed a voice recorder on the aircraft, and that it was actively being searched for.

The *Star Tribune*, for instance, reported that Carmody had "said investigators would be searching for the cockpit voice recorder as they sought to determine what happened." The recorder was said to be "key to learning more about the crash." *USA Today* concurred, noting that "Carmody said the first priority was finding the cockpit voice recorder."

(<http://www.startribune.com/stories/1752/3390667.html> and [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

It is possible that Carmody was mistaken about the existence of a cockpit voice recorder, though one would think that the Acting Chairman of the NTSB, with "more than 20 years experience with the aviation community," including "11 years at the FAA," would know about such things.

([http://www.nts.gov/Abt\\_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm](http://www.nts.gov/Abt_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm))

You've got to wonder why they even bother with those 'black boxes.' They either aren't on board when you need them to be, or they manage to get destroyed in the crash, despite being virtually indestructible. Go figure.

There is also some question as to where exactly the plane crashed. The *Washington Post*, for one, claimed that the "FAA said the plane crashed in trees about two miles short of the runway. Wreckage was spread over a wide area, indicating that it did not nose into the ground but crashed at a relatively flat angle."

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17030-2002Oct25.html>)

Such reports strongly implied that the plane simply came up short on its landing, hitting trees rather than a runway. Was the FAA simply mistaken, or did it deliberately try to misrepresent the crash?

Later reports, such as this one from *CNN.com*, place the location of the wreckage elsewhere: "tree damage around the crash site indicated the plane, which should have been landing from the east on an east-west runway, was actually turning away from the airport, traveling from northwest to southeast about 2 miles south of the runway, when it crashed."

(<http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Midwest/10/26/wellstone.investigation/index.html>; see also <http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>)

The *CNN* report also holds that the "angle of tree damage showed a descent much steeper than would be expected with a controlled landing," while a posting on the *WSWS* website mentions that there were eyewitness accounts of "a near vertical plunge."

(<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/oct2002/well-o29.shtml>)

The *WSWS* report also noted that "none of the typical causes of a small plane accident - engine failure, icing, pilot error - appear to be involved." These are largely the same causes that Carmody claimed to be looking at: "weather, the engines, human performance, the plane's structure and airworthiness of the aircraft."

The media has for the most part pointed to the weather as the most likely culprit. Several reports though dispute the notion that the weather was to blame for the crash. The *St. Paul*

*Pioneer Press* reported that the airport's manager "said the weather was overcast with light snow and a temperature of 31 but was well within the landing limits at the airport."  
(<http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>)

*USA Today* talked to a pilot, Don Sipola, who told them that "visibility in the area at the time of the crash was 2.50 miles, well above the one-mile minimum for a standard instrument landing."  
([http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

A newsletter sent out by Mike Ruppert quotes the following exchange, between correspondent Wolf Blitzer and a local reporter, that was aired on *CNN*:

Reporter: There is no evidence that weather had anything to do with the crash.

Blitzer: But the plane was flying into some sort of ice storm, was it not?

Reporter: There is no evidence that the weather had anything to do with the crash.

According to Ruppert, *CNN* quickly cut away from this reporter, who was never heard from again.

As further indication that the weather at the time of the crash wasn't nearly as bad as the media would have us believe, and wasn't likely the cause of the crash, it has been reported that "two smaller Beech Queen Air planes had landed at Eveleth without incident two hours before the crash, when temperatures were colder."

(<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/oct2002/well-o29.shtml> and  
<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

There was certainly no indication from the plane's crew that they were having trouble with the weather -- or any trouble of any kind, for that matter. *The Pioneer Press* reported that "there was no distress call or any indication of trouble before the plane went down about 10:20 a.m."  
(<http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>)

This was in spite of the fact that the aircraft had been in radio contact just two minutes before it plowed into the ground. According to the *New York Times*, during that last transmission, at 10:18 a.m., "there was no evidence on the controller's part or from the pilot's voice that there was any difficulty, no reported problems, no expressed concern."  
(<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/28/politics/28CRAS.html>)

No expressed concern about, for instance, icing, though the media has been rife with speculation that icing could have played a role in the crash. The King Air A100, as the *Washington Post* noted, "is equipped with numerous de-icing systems. Wings and tail surfaces are equipped with pneumatic de-icing 'boots' that inflate and deflate repeatedly to break ice from the leading edges of these surfaces. The plane's engine intakes are protected by electric heating elements, as are propeller surfaces. Fuel is heated automatically."  
(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17030-2002Oct25.html>)

It seems unlikely then that icing was a major contributor to the crash, unless the aircraft's multiple de-icing systems failed, and the aircraft's warning systems failed to notify the pilots of those failures -- but if that were the case, then perhaps the most likely explanation would be sabotage, and that has, of course, already been ruled out.

The King Air A100 is said to have a very good safety record, with the last fatal crashes occurring six years ago. Strangely, there were two such fatal crashes involving the A100 just eleven days apart in December of 1997. Even more strangely, one of those two crashes was of a plane that was owned by the very same charter company that owns the plane that Wellstone was killed in.

As the *Pioneer Press* reported, the 1997 crash that killed two Minnesota men, and that bore "some eerie similarities to Friday's accident ... involved a King Air owned by Aviation Charter, Inc., of Eden Prairie. That company has the same business address and CEO as Beech Transportation." Beech Transportation, of course, is the owner of the plane that was carrying Wellstone.

(<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

So as long as the King Air planes are not owned by this particular charter company, and don't happen to be carrying residents of the state of Minnesota, they are known to be very safe and reliable aircraft.

The particular King Air plane carrying the Wellstone family "had only two reports of problems in its [23-year] history, according to the FAA. Both were in March 1996 and were problems with worn fuel cutoff levers that were replaced with the recommendation for more frequent inspections."

(<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

We have thus far covered weather, icing, and the structure and airworthiness of the plane as likely causes of the crash. Next up is engine failure. That one, alas, doesn't seem very likely either.

The *New York Times* held that "Officials have said that both of the plane's engines showed blade damage, which they said suggested that the engines were running when the plane crashed," while *CNN* noted that Carmody voiced the same conclusion: "propeller damage indicates the engines may still have been operating at the time of the crash."

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/28/politics/28CRAS.html> and <http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Midwest/10/26/wellstone.investigation/index.html>)

The only other typical cause of small plane crashes is pilot error, and that also doesn't seem very likely. Though only required to have a single pilot, Wellstone's plane had two pilots on board, and both were fully qualified to fly the aircraft. The primary pilot, Captain Richard Conry, held an "airline transport pilot certification -- the highest certification a pilot can receive."

(<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

It appears as though the WWS was right then in concluding that none of the typical causes of small aircraft crashes appear to apply in this case. That is not to say that they can be definitively ruled out -- just that they don't initially appear to be applicable.

Wellstone, in other words, appears to have been in good hands with regards to the choice of aircraft and the flight crew, and the flying conditions - while less than ideal - were well within the abilities of the plane and its crew. And yet, in just two minutes time, with no distress calls and no warning, something went horribly wrong.



Casting doubt on the most likely causes of an accidental crash does not, of course, prove that an alternative theory - such as sabotage - is true. Neither, for that matter, does placing the crash in its proper context in light of recent history, though it seems appropriate to do so.

Though not widely reported, Wellstone was apparently previously targeted for assassination while visiting Colombia in December of 2000, which of course was right after Mel Carnahan's plane fell out of the sky just a few weeks before election day.

(<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/colombia001201.html>, <http://www.counterpunch.org/pipermail/counterpunch-list/2000-December/004162.html>, and <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2000/12/irp-001201-col.htm>)

As has already been forgotten by the media, Congress was shut down for a period of time just after the September 11 attacks due to the anthrax mailings -- widely portrayed at the time as yet more 'terrorist' doings, and now rarely talked about at all.

And who was it that was targeted by those mailings? Two of the most prominent Democrats in the Senate: Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy. These were not likely meant to be successful attacks, by the way, since Daschle and Leahy are good team players, but rather were probably meant as a warning to others.

Some have theorized that Flight 93, which never made it to its intended target on September 11, was scheduled for an attack on Congress. If so, were the anthrax attacks meant to do the job that Flight 93 failed to accomplish -- put the fear of God into Congress and force the temporary closure of the legislative body?

More recently, the House considered legislation that would enable the quick replacement - which is to say, replacement without going through the bother of checking with the voters - of House members in order to maintain "continuity of government" in the event of - what else? - some sort of terrorist attack.

(This legislation was discussed in an *L.A. Times* article from October 2, 2002, the link to which no longer works.)

This legislation could very easily be perceived, by any dissenters in the legislative crowd, as a not-so-subtle warning that they can be quite easily replaced with hand-picked stand-ins.

When viewed on a continuum then, with the attempted assassination of Wellstone, what is widely perceived to be the assassination of Carnahan, the possible (and, admittedly, entirely speculative) targeting of Congress on September 11, the attack on Congress just after September 11, and the House legislation allowing for rapid replacement of members who might suddenly find themselves victims of a terrorist attack, it is only natural to speculate on whether the Wellstone crash was something other than an accident.

So what are we to make of all this? We can, through a process of elimination, narrow the options on the causes of the crash, but we cannot then conclude that the plane was in fact sabotaged (or shot down, as evidence at the Carnahan crash site seemed to indicate).

We can speculate that assassinating Wellstone fits in with what seems to be a systematic effort to quell any and all dissent in Congress, but that likewise doesn't allow us to reach a definitive conclusion.

So the key question, if we are to construct a case built on something more than speculation and circumstantial evidence, is: has any direct evidence surfaced that there was foul play involved in the crash?

There are a couple of tidbits of information that point in that direction.

There were reports, for instance, of what Carmody herself referred to as "an intense post-crash fire." The *Pioneer Press* quoted airport manager Gary Ulman as saying that the plane, broken into several scattered pieces, was engulfed in fire that "was still burning five hours after the crash."

(<http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Midwest/10/26/wellstone.investigation/index.html> and <http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>; see also [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

And there was one letter writer to the WWS who says that there "was at least one witness, a blond haired man who said he saw a flash of light at the rear of the plane. This was on *CNN*. Saw him once and that was it."

(<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/nov2002/well-n02.shtml>)

Of course, this claim, as with that of Mike Ruppert's correspondents, cannot be verified unless someone happened to catch it on videotape. But neither should these accounts be dismissed out of hand. It is in fact the case that the cable news networks run live footage that contradicts what later emerges as the official story. The networks invariably then proceed to pretend as though the offending footage never aired.

So ... was Wellstone whacked? The only way to definitively answer that question is through a full investigation of the crash -- preferably one not run by a former CIA analyst and a former electronic warfare specialist who both have experience in issuing questionable reports on the causes of high-profile aircraft crashes.

And now, I leave you with this cryptic posting that has been circulating of late, and that was purportedly first posted in May of 2001. If so, the pseudonymous poster made some uncannily accurate predictions. Of course, this could also be a hoax created after the fact and pre-dated.

The missive claims that several Senators were being "evaluated" for possible assassination. The means of assassination was being "narrowed down to one of several choices. One being a carefully planned 'plane crash.' Another is through the delivery of certain biological agents to the Senator."

(<http://www.voxnyc.com/archives/senator-assassination.html>)

The author specified that if a biological approach was used, it would most likely be an "Anthrax hit." Also specified in the posting is that if "the death occurs just prior to the midterm senatorial elections, expect it to be in a state with a close race. Expect a 'Mel Carnahan' style hit."

Strange but true, or just a hoax? I couldn't tell you, but I pass it along for whatever it's worth.

## **NEWSLETTER #30**

*February 26, 2003*



***Protest Sign of the Week***

Sorry once again for the delay in getting this newsletter out. It took me considerably more time than I thought it would to wrap my house in duct tape and plastic sheeting to ward off a biological attack. It wasn't easy, but I think I've finally got the place airtight now.

At first, I was just going to create one 'safe room,' like the friendly people on TV advised me to do. But I'm a little claustrophobic, so I decided to just seal the entire interior of the house. And then, for added protection, I sealed the outside as well.

The neighbors seemed a bit perplexed, until I told them all that we were tenting the house for termites. I think they're getting a little suspicious though, since it's been 'tenting' for a couple of weeks now, and we've been living in it the whole time.

The living room has been converted into a decontamination chamber, so getting in and out is a hassle, but I feel a whole lot safer. I just hope that the attack, when it comes, doesn't last very long, because I've noticed that my home, while now completely free of all toxins, is also noticeably lacking in oxygen.

But the important thing is that I am prepared for the terrorist attack that the good folks at Homeland Security assure us is coming. And I have no doubt that it is indeed coming. The terrorists have, after all (and we're talking about the real terrorists here, by the way, not the imaginary ones), been rather unrelenting in their attacks, especially since September 11, 2001.

They have attacked Afghanistan, they have attacked the Constitution, they have attacked the Bill of Rights, they have attacked the right to vote and to have that vote counted, they have attacked the environment and Social Security and Medicare and ...

Now they are preparing to attack Iraq. And there is a certain sense, it seems to me, of *deja vu* in the air. The attack has been planned for too long to not proceed; the Bush Brigades will not back down. The problem is that, despite rather valiant and creative efforts, Team Bush hasn't been able to sell this unprovoked war to an American, or to an international, audience.

It's much like the situation they would have been facing a couple of years ago if they had just decided, suddenly and for no readily apparent reason, to start selling the public on the idea of launching a massive assault on the nation of Afghanistan. That was, of course, also an attack that had been planned long in advance.

As it turned out though, the Afghan 'war' was an exceptionally easy sell, particularly after a bunch of crazed Saudis managed to crash airplanes into the WTC towers in such a precise way that the towers both collapsed in spectacularly choreographed implosions, all covered on live television.

And so it wasn't surprising that Team Bush had no problem whipping up immediate and nearly universal public support for bombing the piss out of Afghanistan. Actually, it was a *little* surprising, since the alleged hijackers were almost all Saudis, which doesn't really, on the surface, seem to translate to a rationale for bombing and occupying Afghanistan.

But let's not dwell on that. The point here is that, without 9-11, the Bush team's script for the pummeling of Afghanistan (a script which predated the alleged provocation) would have been a tough sell, both at home and internationally ... much like the situation that we find ourselves in today.

I notice that a little piece of legislation that has been dubbed 'Patriot Act II' is being floated around, promising yet further sweeping attacks by the terrorists on our alleged democratic rights. And if I recall correctly, the first Patriot Act had been bouncing around for some time before September 11, 2001, but it wasn't the kind of thing that anyone was going to try to sell to the American people.

(Patriot II: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/feb2003/poli-f22.shtml>, <http://www.public-i.org/dtaweb/report.asp?ReportID=502&L1=10&L2=10&L3=0&L4=0&L5=0>, <http://reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=politicsNews&storyID=2192053>, <http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/lewis.htm>, and <http://www.aclu.org/SafeandFree/SafeandFree.cfm?ID=11835&c=206>.)

So there we were in 2001, holding one script for launching a blatantly illegal, unprovoked attack on the nation of Afghanistan, and another script for launching a blatantly unconstitutional, wholesale attack on democratic rights, but neither of them were likely to find much support with the public.

But then along came some hijacked airliners ... and suddenly *everything changed*.

And now here we are in 2003, holding one script for launching a blatantly illegal, unprovoked attack on the nation of Iraq, and another script for launching a blatantly unconstitutional, wholesale attack on democratic rights, but neither of them are likely to find much support with the public.

Unless ... those hijacked airliners make a return engagement, or something else occurs that will suitably inflame public opinion against ... well, against whomever Washington chooses to point a finger at, both inside and outside these borders.

That's why I have my house sealed up tight. Quite frankly, these terrorists seem a little desperate to me. They've tried everything imaginable to sell their 'war' script, but have failed miserably. There's no telling what they'll try next.

Their psy-war attacks, in the form of increasingly frantic 'terrorism alerts,' have become laughably predictable. The false arrests to create the illusion of breaking up terrorist 'cells' around the world, maybe even right in your own neighborhood, are heavy-handed and obvious. And the menacing Osama bin Laden tapes have been overplayed, to say the least. Yet another new one would be about as welcome as another Michael Jackson television special.

All of which begs the rather obvious question: how much longer do you think it will be before that strange little triangular thing on Michael Jackson's face atrophies and just falls off, leaving him with no nose at all -- which could conceivably, though by no means necessarily, leave him looking even more bizarre than he already does?

What does Michael's plastic surgeon say when the Gloved One strolls in to see about getting a little bit more of his nose shaved off? Does he agree that it's a good idea? "You know, Michael, your nose is much smaller than it was when you were a young black man, and it's smaller than it was when you were a young white man, but I think it's still a little too large for the androgynous alien look that you're going for now. How much should we take off this time? I *would* suggest that we take it all off, but I can make a lot more money if we just keep taking a little bit off at a time. And how about the lips? There's still a little bit there that can come off. And maybe we should start trimming back the ears. What do you think?"

Anyway, the real point is that Washington has been unable to generate any appreciable level of support for its imperial ambitions, unable to produce or fabricate any sort of convincing evidence, unable to generate a level of fear sufficient to herd to flock, and unable to enlist the support of allies who must posture for the home crowd -- due to the fact that they have to face elections where actual ballots are cast and counted.

(unlike, for instance, elections elsewhere: <http://www.commondreams.org/views03/0131-01.htm> and <http://www.blackboxvoting.com/Georgia-fix.html>)

And yet, there is little doubt that the attack on Iraq will proceed, and the Son of the Patriot Act will become the law of the land -- one way or another.

That is why there is a real possibility that the terrorists may strike again. And when they do, it may be in L.A. The reason I say that is because one of the terrorists has managed to infiltrate the highest levels of the LAPD. I'm talking here, of course, about the new police chief, William Bratton.

Amazingly, almost no one seems to have noticed that such a high-profile terrorist has assumed control of the LAPD. These terrorists are sneaky that way. But I'm on to him. I'm pretty sure that he was sent here to lay the groundwork for the attack and its aftermath.

That's why I loaded up a cart at Home Depot with duct tape and plastic sheeting.

Luckily, I work in construction, so it didn't raise too many eyebrows when I did so. "Just protecting one of his jobs from the rain," the Depot staffers probably said to themselves, "or maybe doing some asbestos abatement work. He's definitely not one of those wackos who's preparing for a biological attack."

That business about working in construction, by the way, is true. And that is the real reason that this newsletter didn't make it out in a timely manner. My day job of late hasn't left much time for my night job.

I mention this because some readers have some rather peculiar notions about who I am. One of you wrote recently to ask me, in strictest confidence, if I didn't in fact also write as David Icke, Chuck Grossman (of *Yellow Times*), and some other writer whose name now escapes me.

I guess it would be futile to deny it. It's all me. I also do Mike Ruppert and Steve Gowans (that one's kind of obvious -- I was running out of names and just said "screw it; I'm just going to drop the 'Mc' -- nobody will figure it out") and me and another guy trade off doing Jared Israel (I write the good stuff, and the other guy writes the shitty stuff).

You're not buying that story? Well ... let's see what else I have for you. How about this: some readers think that I might be a spook. Sometimes they come right out and ask: "Are you a spook?" Other times they smugly assert that they know that I am. One reader was actually hoping that I was. That, he said, would be "kind of cool."

Unfortunately for that particular reader, I am not that cool. I do kind of feel like a spook at times though. Or maybe an anti-spook. Something like that. What that means, essentially, is that I have become rather adept at leading a double life.

I have the perfect cover during the day -- a rather mundane, nondescript, working stiff, suburban existence -- closer to *Ozzie and Harriet* than to *The Osbournes*, except that when dad leaves the house, he actually has to go to work. Because that, you see, is how the bills are paid.

Speaking of the Osbournes, by the way, exactly how dysfunctional do you have to be for *Ozzy Osbourne* to publicly question your fitness as a parent? Oops, sorry, I guess I already milked the Michael Jackson angle, didn't I?

What I wanted to say is that, as hard to believe as it may be, I actually do have a real job. The kind that you have to go to every day, sometimes even on weekends. The kind that basically suck, but you have to go every day anyway, because ranting and raving on the Internet about the rampant corruption and criminality of the Bush administration, while obviously a job of great importance, is not rewarded in Western culture the way that, say, banging nails is.

Yeah, I know, that really is a sad story. It probably could use some violin accompaniment. Unfortunately, I don't know how to add sounds to my postings.



The point of this is ... oh, who am I kidding? I don't even know what the point is. I'm not even sure there is a point. I'm going to have to reread what I wrote to see if I can figure it out ... OK, apparently the point was that I lead a double life. During the day, disguised as mild-mannered "Dave," I am never recognized as my notorious alter-ego.

If you were ever to encounter me in a work setting, which would generally be in an unfinished office building, you would be very unlikely to hear a conversation that went like this: "You know that guy, Dave, that is remodeling our offices? I wonder what he thinks about our foreign policy in the Middle East?"

No, that would only occur late at night, after I've changed into my superhero costume to become "The Conspiracy Theorist" (actually, I don't need to wear the superhero costume, since I never actually leave my house while in superhero mode, but there's something about the feel of a tight leotard that would probably be best left unexplored).

But enough about me. I've probably already revealed too much. I don't want to violate my contract with *Fox*, which has purchased my story to present as a new reality series entitled "Joe Commentator," in which a dim-witted construction worker masquerades as a knowledgeable political commentator and fools a group of unsuspecting readers. Stay tuned ...

Meanwhile, what I really want to talk about is Colin Powell - the Bush administration's alleged voice of sanity, the purported lone dove in a nest full of bloodthirsty hawks - who has now become, as one news report dubbed him, a "reluctant warrior." And I guess if even Colin Powell is now convinced that launching a *blitzkrieg* raid on Iraq is a swell idea, then the Bush team must have a pretty strong case for doing so. They haven't shown it to anyone, of course, but they must have it, or else a fine, upstanding man of conscience like Colin Powell wouldn't be banging the war drums so shamelessly.

While it's not quite as good as an endorsement from the UN Security Council, a thumbs-up from Powell is the next best thing. If the 'evidence' is good enough for Colin, then it's good enough for me. And, apparently, good enough for a whole lot of people who had previously been posing as tepid critics of the administration's war drive.

Most of the poseurs in the Democratic Party are now convinced. All the 'liberal' poseurs in the media are now convinced. It's clear now to just about everyone that there is no other course of action than to lay waste once again to the nation of Iraq. There's really nothing else we can do.

And the psy-war campaign marches on ... complete with way-over-the-top terrorist 'alerts' to scare and confuse the masses (as well as to justify the attempted cancellation of scheduled anti-war marches); a grotesquely over-hyped national 'tragedy' to unite the country behind our fearless leaders; and the seemingly obligatory new message from a disembodied voice that could belong to almost anyone, but is said to be that of none other than the Great Evil One himself, and which was first aired, once again, by Al Jazeera, which we are supposed to think is a constant thorn in Washington's side, but which would have been shut down long ago if it actually was.

Meanwhile, why don't we stop for a reality check? Colin - who, if I'm not mistaken, works in close proximity to Bush, both of them occasionally providing safe haven for Dick - is not now, nor has he ever been, a 'dove' (and yes, that was a crude sexual joke that you just read), he is not a voice of reason, he is not a moderating force within the Bush administration, and he is certainly not someone to look to for political guidance.

(<http://www.disinfo.com/pages/dossier/id803/pg1/> and <http://www.onlinejournal.com/Commentary/Wingo021303/wingo021303.html>)

In truth, there are no voices of moderation on the Bush team. The people now contemplating waging unprovoked chemical and nuclear warfare against the helpless civilian population of Iraq did not sit down at the beginning of Bush's term and say: "You know what? We should bring Colin Powell on board. We really need someone to rein the rest of us in or there's no telling how many people we will slaughter."

What was said was more likely along the lines of: "We really need someone who will provide the illusion of balance in this administration. Someone who the public trusts and views as a moderate, but who has a lot of experience covering up the torture, rape and massacre of civilians in Vietnam, and the crimes committed by the Iran/Contra gang, and the war crimes committed in Panama, and the war crimes committed in Iraq, and ... has anyone talked to Powell yet?"

Powell has merely been playing the role that he was assigned to play, which is to serve as something of a lightning rod for the millions of Americans out there who have had doubts about the warmongering of the Bush administration, and who are looking for someone - anyone - to provide some guidance.

Having become the Pied Piper of the Doubting Thomases, it is now time, as the onset of the attack grows near, for Powell to undergo a miraculous transformation and, by doing so, pull as many wavering Americans into the fold as possible. A healthy assist is being provided, as always, by the media.

Nice performance, Colin. You are doing a fine job. You should be very proud. Your son, by the way, is also doing a fine job over at the FCC. You should be very proud of him as well.

While we're on the subject of Iraq, it occurs to me that the last time someone named George Bush led us into a war with that nation, the story sold to the American people was that Baghdad had one of the world's largest, most powerful, and most feared military machines and therefore posed a dire threat not only to the region, but to the entire world. Once Operation Desert Slaughter began, however, that much-touted army was nowhere to be seen, and the country appeared to be almost entirely defenseless against the U.S.-led onslaught, directly contradicting the notion that Iraq was ever a military threat to anyone.

Now, twelve years later, after suffering a severe pummeling and being saddled with twelve years of sanctions and intermittent bombings that have made it all but impossible to rebuild the nation's military forces, as well as its civilian infrastructure, another George Bush is portraying a much weaker Iraq as being an international menace.

With that in mind, I have a few questions for all the flatliners out there who have become accustomed to parroting the cascade of lies emanating from Washington:

- Why, when hindsight tells us that the last Bush administration to sell us this story was lying, and rather brazenly, should we now believe the very same story being sold by the very same mouthpieces in the new Bush administration?
- Why, if Iraq is such a military powerhouse, was it unable to gain any ground in its war with Iran after years of fighting, even with an extensive amount of covert Western

support? How can Iraq be a threat to the region if it needs help just to reach a draw with its nearest rival?

- How can a country that is so poorly equipped militarily that it can't even defend its own airspace, and reportedly hasn't been able to pick off a single U.S. aircraft during twelve years of illegal over-flights and occasional bombing 'sorties,' pose any sort of a threat to its neighbors?
- Why, if waging war with neighboring Iran and 'gassing its own people' are such inexcusable crimes, did the Baghdad bunch receive generous Western support while engaging in such actions?
- And why, if waging war with neighboring Iran and 'gassing its own people' are such inexcusable crimes, was the regime allegedly responsible for such actions not removed twelve years ago? Isn't it 'double jeopardy' to bomb a country again for something that it has already been bombed for?
- Why, when Saddam Hussein was largely forgotten for a decade or so after the first 'war' that was supposed to relieve him of his command, and when Osama bin Laden has been largely forgotten after the 'war' that was supposed to be about bringing him to justice, should we now believe that the goal of this 'war' has anything to do with Saddam Hussein?
- If Saddam Hussein is in possession of 'weapons of mass destruction,' as the Washington gang has repeatedly assured us that he is, is it really a good idea to repeatedly assert that the primary goal of the invasion will be 'regime change'? If Saddam has been served notice, loud and clear, that his days are numbered, then what possible reason would he have for *not* deploying any and all 'weapons of mass destruction' that he can get his hands on?
- Country "A" has been accused of possessing weapons of mass destruction, though no tangible evidence has been produced to support those allegations. Country "A" has not threatened to use such weapons, if they do exist, nor has it threatened to attack Country "B." Country "B," on the other hand, possesses enormous stockpiles of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. Country "B" also has the dubious distinction of being the only nation that has wielded all three as instruments of war. Country "B" has already launched one massive assault on Country "A," which included the use of radioactive weaponry (Depleted Uranium: <http://www.disasternews.net/news/news.php?articleid=1687>,

<http://www.coastalpost.com/03/01/03.htm>,

[http://www.lifeinfo.de/inh1./texte/GLOBE\\_INTEL1.html](http://www.lifeinfo.de/inh1./texte/GLOBE_INTEL1.html), <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2003/01/13/MN233872.DTL>,

<http://www.unobserver.com/layout5.php?id=715&blz=3>, and

<http://www.voice4change.org/stories/showstory.asp?file=030210~cfwp.asp>) and

indirect biological warfare (the deliberate targeting of water treatment and sanitation facilities in order to create the breeding grounds for otherwise preventable diseases).

Country "B" is now about to begin a second assault on Country "A," and has openly threatened to, and has drawn up plans to, deploy both nuclear

(<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/STE302A.html>, <http://www.latimes.com/la-na-nukes3feb03004428,0.6347310.story>, and

<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/VAR302A.html>) and biochemical

(<http://www.counterpunch.org/hammond02072003.html> and

<http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/story.jsp?story=378740>) weapons in

carrying out that attack. Here then are the questions: which is the aggressor nation -- Country "A" or Country "B"? Which is the international outlaw? Which is the 'rogue

state'? Which poses the greater threat to world peace and global stability? Take your time; I know they're tough questions.

What else is new to report? ... oh yeah, there was something about one of the Space Shuttles having a re-entry problem. It was hard to find any media coverage though, so I'm not really that clear on the details.

I do know that it was a tragedy of epic proportions. The entire nation is still grieving over it. The global village attended a memorial service, during which the president's words washed away some of our pain, but the hurt still lingers. How much tragedy, after all, can one nation endure?

This tragedy was of such magnitude that I believe I am required here, based on much of what I have read lately, to pay some kind of homage to the handful of fallen heroes. But I think I'll pass.

I'll pass because I'm not entirely convinced that the deaths of the seven astronauts were any more tragic than the deaths of countless others whose lives came to an abrupt end that day. Reader "Nick" noted that, elsewhere in the world, there were two major vehicular accidents that each claimed more lives than were lost in the Columbia disaster.

And assuming that February 2nd was a statistically average day, approximately 115 lives were tragically cut short right here in America due to vehicular accidents. Twelve days after the Columbia incident, a single head-on collision on a Texas interstate highway, just below where the Columbia broke up, left seven dead. The media barely paid attention.

Elsewhere in the world, 274 Iraqi children died on February 2nd due to the intolerable conditions created by the deliberate destruction of the country's infrastructure, the imposition of exceedingly harsh 'sanctions,' and the massive environmental damage caused by the widespread use of depleted uranium and the deliberate targeting of chemical facilities on the ground.

That death toll assumes, of course, that February 2nd was an average day. Nothing unusual about it. U.S. policies and actions kill 274 Iraqi children every day. Enough children's corpses to fill all the graves of the victims of the September 11 attacks every 11 days. And it's been like that in Iraq for twelve years now.

And we're just getting started ...

Returning then to the subject of the space shuttle ... if I remember correctly, this is the second shuttle that has made a rather spectacular exit from the space program. I mention this only because I find it odd that two space shuttles have suffered catastrophic breakdowns, whereas the Apollo missions always brought our astronauts home safe and sound.

My guess is that the aerospace technology that we had in the 1960s was rather primitive compared to what we have today. Call it a hunch. And yet our mission then was far more complex and required far more advanced technology than our mission today. We have lowered our sights, after all, from putting men on the moon to merely putting men into orbit.

We may have the Cadillac of orbiting spacecraft now, but 'back in the day' we put a rickety old Model T on the fucking moon -- and got it back with our heroes alive. And we kept on doing it, and our boys kept on coming back every time. Oh sure, there was that one time with

Apollo 13 when it was allegedly touch-and-go, but, by God, we solved the problem and we got our astronauts back alive.

Nowadays, we can't even get our boys home safe after sending them up to work on some orbiting weapons systems. So I guess what I'm wondering is: how did we manage that perfect safety record with the Apollo program (aside from, of course, that fire during training exercises that disposed of some troublesome astronauts)?

It is utter madness, of course, to suggest that that safety record was due to the fact that it is easier to fake repeated successes than it is to actually achieve repeated successes. But it does seem kind of odd that we pulled it off not just once, but repeatedly. And with 1960s technology that, to be honest, basically sucked.

Some readers will recall that (younger readers may want to cover their eyes here, because the information to follow is shocking), in the 1960s, a full complement of 'home electronics' consisted of a fuzzy, 13-channel, black-and-white television set with a rotary tuning dial and no remote.

And yes, I am quite aware that it wasn't consumer electronics that allegedly sent men to the moon. The point here though is that advances in aerospace technology, or in any other type of technology, mirror advances in consumer technology. So it is safe to say that, technologically speaking, the 1960s fell somewhere within the Dark Ages.

But we didn't need any of the fancy technology that we have today to land Buzz and the boys on the moon. No sir. Nor to get them back. They reentered in a space capsule that looked like it was left over from the set of a Roger Corman flick, but which nonetheless safely parachuted into the ocean. Every time. And we didn't need to cover those capsules with all those high-falutin tiles either.

Back in the 'sixties, we just used good-old Yankee ingenuity. We MacGyvered those spaceships to the moon. All that was needed was an old Volkswagen, a body kit, some duct tape and a roll of bailing wire. That, and a few Nazi scientists recruited through Project Paperclip.

Well, dear readers, once again I have run out of space before getting to the material that was promised in the previous newsletter. Actually, I haven't, strictly speaking, run out of space, since the length restrictions on these missives are entirely self-imposed. But you get the point.

Before signing off though, I have some noteworthy links to pass along. This first one, to an organizational chart on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website, reveals that the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research has merged the functions of counter-terrorism and pediatric drug development, creating the Office of Counter-Terrorism and Pediatric Drug Development. Does anyone other than me find that a bit disturbing?

(<http://www.fda.gov/cder/pediatric/PediatricOrgchart.htm>)

If not, then does anyone other than me find it a bit disturbing that Henry the K's replacement to head the allegedly independent investigation into the events of September 11, 2001 has business ties to a brother-in-law of our arch-enemy, Osama bin Laden?

(<http://www.fortune.com/fortune/print/0,15935,410237,00.html>, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO212A.html>, and [http://truthout.org/docs\\_02/020303E.htm](http://truthout.org/docs_02/020303E.htm))

Still no takers? Then how about this: does anyone other than me find it a bit disturbing that the U.S. media - the very same allegedly 'liberal' media that flogged the Gary Condit/Chandra Levy story unmercifully - has had absolutely nothing to say about the fact that the corpse of a woman with whom former Republican Congressman Joe Scarborough (FL) was having an affair turned up in the congressman's office with a messy head wound?

(<http://www.liberalstlant.com/journalists.htm>)

Am I still alone here? Tough crowd, obviously. Well then, does anyone find it disturbing, or perhaps revealing, that Donald Rumsfeld, during an interview with a journalist for *Parade Magazine*, spoke of a "missile" in connection with the attack on the Pentagon?

([http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2001/t11182001\\_t1012pm.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2001/t11182001_t1012pm.html))

Let's see what else I have here ... does anyone find it disturbing, though not necessarily shocking, that the U.S. now fairly openly embraces torture as an 'interrogation' tool?

(<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/12/26/1040511135568.html>,

<http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/12/us1227.htm>,

<http://www.observer.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,866235,00.html>,

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/dec2002/tort-d30.shtml>, and

<http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/post911fp/renditiontorture.htm>)

That applies, one presumes, only to 'terrorist' suspects. And, I suppose, to U.S. citizens who have been declared to be 'combatants.'

([http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030108/ap\\_on\\_go\\_ot/afghan\\_american\\_prisoners\\_6](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030108/ap_on_go_ot/afghan_american_prisoners_6))

And occasionally, perhaps, to guys that try to take photographs of the hotel that Dick Cheney is staying in. (<http://www.2600.com/news/view/article/1441>)

I can't help wondering exactly what sort of information it is that U.S. interrogators need to force from 'terrorist' suspects. Would the interrogation go something like this?

Interrogator: "Where is Osama bin Laden?"

al Qaeda suspect: "I can't really tell you for sure, but I heard he has a little place in Washington a few doors down from Don Rumsfeld."

In other news, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, just a couple of days before Christmas 2002, that a U.S. soldier had been killed in Afghanistan. He was, according to the report, "the 23rd U.S. service member to be killed since the fighting in Afghanistan began in autumn 2001. The previous fatality was on May 19."

Some readers may find these statistics a little hard to believe. Only 23 killed on our side in more than 14 months of fighting? No fatalities at all between May and December? Seven months of waging war without a single fatality? How could that be? How could it be that taking in a show at a club is significantly more hazardous to your health than fighting in a war?

Don't people die in a war anymore? Don't any of our 'enemies' fight back?

The reality is that our servicemen are not supermen (though the Pentagon is busily working at making them just that: <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/01/05/1041566309313.html> and <http://www.counterpunch.org/floyd01132003.html>). The other side does fight back, and idealistic young Americans - their heads filled with delusions of John Wayne-style heroism - do have their dreams brought to a sudden, violent end.



A report by *Jihad Unspun* provides somewhat different casualty figures than those given by the *Times*: <http://www.jihadunspun.net/articles/08212002-Casualty.Report/casualty02.html>. Based on reports that managed to make it into various avenues of the media, allied casualties are shown to run to nearly 1,000. The real figure is likely much higher even than that.

U.S. casualties in *Iraq Attack II* will be significantly higher. Too high, most likely, for them to be completely concealed from the American people. Speaking of Iraq, it was the U.S. and its Western allies, in case anyone still doesn't know this, who supplied Iraq with its 'weapons of mass destruction' back in the days when it had a nasty habit of actually using them.

([http://www.truthout.org/docs\\_02/12.21A.us.firms.iraq.htm](http://www.truthout.org/docs_02/12.21A.us.firms.iraq.htm),  
<http://www.news.scotsman.com/international.cfm?id=1422882002>, and  
[http://www.ccmep.org/2002\\_articles/Iraq/121802\\_leaked\\_report\\_says\\_german\\_and\\_us.htm](http://www.ccmep.org/2002_articles/Iraq/121802_leaked_report_says_german_and_us.htm))

Still on the subject of Iraq, here is a piece by Joe Bob Briggs that didn't get nearly the circulation that it deserved when it was first published back in November of 2002 (<http://www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=20021111-014603-8803r>). I see, by the way, where Saddam Hussein would like to publicly debate George Bush. Sounds like 'Must See TV' to me. Much better would be a televised debate between Bush and the always eloquent Fidel Castro. (<http://www.swans.com/library/art9/mws041.html>)

And yet still on the subject of Iraq, *ABC News* revealed that the U.S. plans to unleash an enormous new bomb known as a MOAB, which is said to be even larger and more powerful than the 'Daisy Cutters' that we recently dropped on Afghanistan. The blast from a MOAB is said to be "similar to a small nuclear weapon."

(<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/wnt/World/newbomb030225.html>)

The final words of the *ABC* posting are quite telling. They read as follows: "But one important aspect of using this type of weapon, sources say, will be psychological impact on enemy troops. It is intended to terrorize Iraqi troops, drastically reducing their desire to continue the fight."

That, you see, is what terrorists do: they use brutally violent means to foment terror which is intended to coerce compliance. They use weapons that are "intended to terrorize." They try to break the will of the 'enemy.' That is what they're doing here in America. That is what they did in Afghanistan. And that is what they will do in Iraq. That is what terrorists do.

Elsewhere in the news, Pennsylvania has decided that it is perfectly acceptable for police to shoot pre-teen children in the back (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/feb2003/penn-f25.shtml>), while New York wants to vastly increase the spying powers of the NYPD. (<http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0251/lee.php>)

At least twenty cities ([http://www.truthout.org/docs\\_02/12.21D.20.cities.htm](http://www.truthout.org/docs_02/12.21D.20.cities.htm)), oops, make that twenty-two cities ([http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030110/ap\\_on\\_re\\_us/rights\\_resolutions\\_1](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030110/ap_on_re_us/rights_resolutions_1)), have now rejected the Patriot Act and Homeland Security legislation, even while Team Bush moves to further strengthen Big Brother's hand by monitoring ISPs. (<http://www.siliconvalley.com/mld/siliconvalley/4779109.htm> and <http://www.smirkingchimp.com/article.php?sid=9507>)

The *WSWS* reported that an investigation into warnings that preceded the bombing in Bali was a whitewash (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jan2003/igis-j07.shtml>). Probably so, but at

least there was a fake investigation -- which is more than can be said for the September 11 attacks. Or the anthrax attacks.

In the unlikely event that such investigations ever do get underway, here are some pieces of evidence that investigators might consider (both from decidedly right-wing sources): *American Free Press* claims that a tape from the WTC towers containing firefighters' voices has been suppressed precisely because the tape casts serious doubts on the notion that the towers' collapses were due solely to the aircraft crashes and fires ([http://www.americanfreepress.net/08\\_09\\_02/New\\_York\\_Firefighters\\_/new\\_york\\_firefighters\\_.html](http://www.americanfreepress.net/08_09_02/New_York_Firefighters_/new_york_firefighters_.html)); and Judicial Watch charges that the White House staff was put on *Cipro* on September 11 -- before any hint of the coming anthrax attacks (<http://www.judicialwatch.org/2953.shtml>). Hmmm ...

One reader asked the other day whether there was any new news on the Wellstone crash investigation. Funny you should ask. On February 21, crash investigators released some preliminary investigative reports. According to the *L.A. Times*, they reveal that the lead pilot almost canceled the flight due to poor weather, but later changed his mind. (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-wellstone22feb22,1,940810.story>)

While the emphasis appears to be on smearing the pilot and co-pilot, likely as a prelude to the issuance of a report claiming pilot error, investigators are also looking at "the procedures used to de-ice the plane, and the FAA's oversight of aviation charter companies." There was no mention of whether investigators had looked at, or ruled out, sabotage as a cause of the crash.

Wrapping things up, let's take a quick look at: the UK's Celldar Project, which aims to use mobile phones to track anyone, anywhere, anytime (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/mobile/article/0,2763,811034,00.html/>); Army Secretary Thomas White and Enron (<http://www.counterpunch.org/leopold01032003.html>); Zionist collaboration with the Nazis during World War II (<http://www.counterpunch.org/brenner1223.html>); the fabrication of evidence against protesters in Genoa (<http://www.fair.org/activism/genoa-update.html>); some mysterious webs in Texas (<http://www.galvnews.com/report.lasso?wcd=6722>); and the Bush Team's 'no-fly' list (<http://www.interventionmag.com/cms/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=278>).

Finally, here is a link to a wonderfully insightful and satirical look at 'conspiracy theories' and September 11 ([http://adelaide.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=4246&group=webcast](http://adelaide.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=4246&group=webcast)), and another to a site featuring a set of 'Friendly Dictator' (defined as: thugs supported and financed by the U.S.) trading cards that you can collect and trade with friends and family. ([http://home.iprimus.com.au/korob/fdtcards/Cards\\_Index.html](http://home.iprimus.com.au/korob/fdtcards/Cards_Index.html))

And that, as they say in Hollywood, is a wrap. See you next, uhmm, week ...

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## **NEWSLETTER #38**

*June 4, 2003*

### *Of Myths and Monsters*

Those who impugn campaigns of vilification based on deception, soon find themselves caught in the same web, discredited themselves. It has always been so. Those who rush to the defense of the unfairly accused, join the ranks of the unfairly accused. Machiavells, and those with their eye of the main chance, including left-wing radicals who eschew any cause that has even the faintest taint of being associated with anyone who has been discredited, no matter how unfairly, clam up, or worse, add their voices to the chorus of accusers, to put as much distance between themselves and the unfairly accused as they can.

(<http://www3.sympatico.ca/sr.gowans/lie.html>)

So said Stephen Gowans in a posting from October 2002 entitled "Turning a lie into a received truth." In *Newsletter #19*, also from October 2002, I took what I assumed would be a very unpopular stance by championing someone who has definitely been the target of a campaign of vilification -- a campaign that has endured for decades. For those who missed that missive the first time around, here it is again.

(<http://davesweb.cncast.com/nwsltr19.html>)

[On March 5, 1953, Joseph Stalin died under conditions that "to this day are shrouded in mystery." Stalin, as I noted, had "held the rampant imperialism of the West largely in check for eight years following World War II." In August 1953, just five months after his death, the U.S. directed a bloody coup in Iran.]

And so began an endless series of bloody coups, rigged elections, and assassinations -- all aimed at bringing all of the world under the control of the West, even while Western leaders justified their actions with claims that it was the Soviet Union that had its sights set on world domination. Strangely though, *Time* had earlier admitted, in yet another Man of the Year offering (1942), that Stalin was "concentrat[ing] on building socialism in one state," and wanted "no new territories except at points needed to make Russia impregnable against invasion."

(<http://www.time.com/time/special/moy/1942.html>)

It is also interesting to note that, even in the midst of demonizing Stalin in an earlier Man of the Year offering (1939), *Time* begrudgingly admitted that after twelve years of his rule, "There were accounts of big dams built, large factories going up, widespread industrialization, big collective-farming projects. Five-Year plans were announced. Free schools and hospitals were erected everywhere. Illiteracy was on the way to being wiped out. There was no persecution of minorities as such. A universal eight-hour and then a seven-hour day prevailed. There were free hospitalization, free workers' summer colonies, etc."

(<http://www.time.com/time/special/moy/1939.html>)

That same MOY article also made a passing reference to "Soviet Russia's meticulously fostered reputation of a peace-loving, treaty-abiding nation," and noted that "Soviet Russia had definitely gained some measure of respect for its apparent righteousness in foreign affairs."

It had supported against reactionary attacks popular governments in Hungary, Austria, China, Spain."

... It should go without saying that the excerpts from *Time's* two profiles of Stalin sound nothing like the dreaded "Stalinism" that we all love to hate. Instead, we find a peace-loving, treaty-abiding nation that consistently sides with the people to oppose fascist regimes, that offers free, quality education and healthcare for all, that has guaranteed worker protections, and that is known for racial tolerance.

Compare that with what we have now: a war mongering, outlaw nation that consistently backs brutal, fascistic regimes against the will of the people, that barely bothers to fund public education and that offers medical care only to those who can afford the exorbitant fees charged for such services, that has declared war on labor by invoking the Taft-Hartley Act under entirely contrived circumstances, and that could, shall we say, use a little work in the area of racial tolerance.

Now bear with me here, because I'm just thinking out loud, but it seems to me that 'Stalinism,' even as presented through the biased eyes of *Time*, would be a vast improvement over this fabulously 'free' and 'democratic' system that we now have. And it seems kind of funny to me, quite frankly, that we have all been taught to so thoroughly and universally despise the one man on the world stage who could honestly take credit for doing what the U.S. likes to pompously boast of: defeating the fascist powers of Europe.

Any reasonably honest reading of history reveals that it was the Red Army that crushed the Nazi war machine, with only nominal 'help' from the West coming late in the fourth quarter. And it was Joseph Stalin who commanded that Red Army. According to *Time*, Stalin put in sixteen-hour days personally directing the war effort, while living in a modest three-room apartment.

This may not be a 'politically correct' statement, but the world owes an incalculable debt of gratitude to Joseph Stalin for slaying the fascist beast -- or at least sending it underground until, in case you haven't noticed yet, it recently resurfaced.

Those are the types of comments that I usually anticipate will not sit well with most readers. The name "Stalin," after all, is used interchangeably with the name "Hitler," just as the term "Stalinism" is frequently substituted for "Nazism" or "Fascism." In modern history, the two World War II leaders stand head-and-shoulders above the crowd as the most evil, the most hated, the most loathsome, the most indefensible of historical figures.

On an almost daily basis, I read otherwise commendable newspaper articles and Internet postings that are marred by the author's conditioned response of always equating Stalin with Hitler. In fact, Stalin seems to be well on his way to surpassing Hitler and becoming the single most despised figure of the twentieth century.

On November 23, 2002, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article (buried in the entertainment section) entitled "What's Behind This Ugly Hitler-Fest?" In the piece, the authors denounce what they refer to as "a crop of disturbing new movies that attempt to exploit the media-genic Fuhrer."

Aim is taken at the movie *Max*, which is characterized as presenting Hitler through the prism of the "rejected artist syndrome," and at a recent CBS miniseries that portrays Hitler as

suffering from "abused child syndrome." The authors conclude that "announcements from the movie industry show [that] those who shape popular culture are at the crossroads [writer David] Irving reached in the 1970s."

That crossroads was reached by Irving when he realized "that the time had come to make a case for Hitler. Irving argued that in the court of history, Hitler had had too many prosecutors and no serious defenders." The authors of the *Times* piece believe that Hollywood is now rising up to rectify that situation, ever so subtly beginning to reshape the consensus view of Adolf Hitler.

Joseph Stalin is enjoying no such renaissance. Nowhere in America can a sympathetic portrayal of the Soviet leader be found. And again I must say that I find that a little odd, considering that Stalin was, as commander of the Red Army, the man who saved the world from an overt fascist takeover in the 1940s.

Much has been written in the last couple of years, by myself and others, of the parallels between the Hitler regime and the Bush regime. George Bush's Supreme Court appointment has been compared to Adolph Hitler's quasi-legal ascent to power; the September 11 attacks have been equated with the Reichstag fire; the repressive PATRIOT ACT has drawn comparisons to Nazi Germany's 'enabling' laws; the 'preemptive' strike on Iraq has been said to mirror the invasion of Poland; and the looting of Baghdad's banks and national and historical treasures seems to owe much to the model provided by the Nazis.

But one parallel that I haven't seen mentioned – and I could be wrong here, since I'm still getting caught up on things – is the one between the fall of Baghdad in April 2003 and the fall of, say, Paris in June 1940. For those who have forgotten, Paris fell without a fight after being declared an "open city." German troops rolled right in unopposed by any organized forces. Sound familiar?

In fact, pretty much all of Western Europe, and parts of Eastern Europe, fell without a fight. Resistance groups like Tito's 'Partisans' in Yugoslavia and the French Resistance fought valiantly against the occupation forces, to be sure, but the official military structures of the European nations did almost nothing to oppose the imposition of the Nazi puppet governments.

And why was that? Because much of World War II was fought, quite covertly, long before any front lines were formed or any shots were fired. Europe had been sold out -- by the Lavals, by the Quislings, by others far too numerous to mention -- and was just waiting to be rolled over. The change in government had essentially already been made; the people just hadn't been informed yet (and when they were, many of them chose to take up arms with grassroots resistance movements).

That is how fascists tend to fight wars. They like to do their dirty work behind the scenes. They like to ensure that when it comes time to actually fight an overt war on the public stage, the deck has been so thoroughly stacked, through subterfuge, that the 'enemy,' for all intents and purposes, no longer actually exists.

And so it was that the Nazi war machine rolled easily through most of Europe, virtually unopposed in its initial occupations, yet continuously hampered by 'pockets of resistance' throughout its occupied empire (not unlike the scenario that has played out in both

Afghanistan and Iraq). Conventional wisdom held that the Germans would roll just as easily through the Soviet Union.

And why not? Western intelligence operatives had made their initial penetrations into the fledgling Soviet Union in 1917, just after the revolution. They had been at work for a quarter-century before the first Nazi tanks rolled into Soviet territory. Many of these Soviet 'assets,' particularly among the so-called 'White Russian' community, would later 'defect' to the West bearing tales of terror and repression. The massive intelligence apparatus run by Reinhold Gehlen, who coordinated Nazi Germany's Eastern operations, had been hard at work as well, paving the way for the massive June 22, 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union.

But something very strange and unexpected happened: the Red Army did not follow the lead of Europe's armies and roll over for the Nazis. They fought back long and hard, at a cost of millions of lives, and ultimately prevailed. Why did that happen? Why did the Soviet Union defy expectations by not just resisting, but defeating the Nazi aggressors?

We'll get to that, but first let's take a look at a response that I got to my initial pro-Stalin diatribe. This is the type of response that I anticipated receiving, and was surprised that it took over a week for this one, lonely, solitary response to arrive:

[This] is indeed one of those e-mails that you predicted would come to you in opposition to your comments on Stalin. Funny thing happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union: the archives opened up. Josef Vissarionovich didn't do such a fantastic job after all, (although this was known before as well) there was indeed massive repression (much more than our own current prison complex), strict censorship, many executions, shortages of food and several famines took place, 1932-33 was the big one. A lot of people suffered and millions of people died early and nasty deaths. Stalin's actual command during WWII was not as wonderful as it might've been. He missed a number of warnings of the coming German invasion and he weakened the Red Army by purging its lead officers, among other things. Racial problems and ethnic tensions remained although diminished and driven underground.

Now I have nothing against this particular respondent. He has written before and he is, as near as I can tell, a good egg. But I believe that he is mistaken about a number of things. What he has essentially done here is to catalogue the "received truths" about Joseph Stalin, which is what I was hoping someone would do, so I am thankful that someone did, thereby saving me the trouble of having to write it up myself so that I could then provide a rebuttal.

Let's begin with the notion that "Stalin's actual command during WWII was not as wonderful as it might've been. He missed a number of warnings of the coming German invasion and he weakened the Red Army by purging its lead officers, among other things."

Conventional wisdom and Western historians say that Stalin's lack of military leadership skills did indeed weaken the Red Army and undermine the country's military preparedness, but a rational reading of history indicates otherwise.

If Stalin had in fact purged the Red Army of its best officers, if he had "betrayed the revolution" by purging all the party loyalists, then the conquest of the USSR would have proven to be the easy victory that it was scheduled to be. Instead, it was precisely because the Soviet Union did what the European nations failed to do - purged their army of fascist 'fifth columnists' prepared to sell out the Russian people - that the Red Army triumphed rather than sitting the war out.



Without the purges, the Red Army would have fallen apart, as previous foes of the Nazi war machine had done, unable to withstand the Nazi blitzkrieg. Were the purges brutal? Probably so. Were there excesses? Undoubtedly. But would the outcome of World War II, and the last sixty years of human history, have been much different without them? Undeniably.

As Party official Georgi Malenkov noted: "In the light of the war and its results, we perceive in all its magnitude the importance of that implacable struggle which over a period of many years our Party waged against every brand of enemy of Marxism-Leninism ... the Party in good time destroyed all possibility of the appearance of a 'fifth column' in the U.S.S.R., and prepared the country politically for active defence. It will be easily understood that if this had not been done in time, we should, during the war, have found ourselves under fire from the front and the rear, and might have lost the war."

So the purges achieved the desired result, but were they necessary, or was there another option? I don't have an answer for that, but I do know this: Western intelligence agencies are remarkably skilled, now as then, at structuring the game so that it is a no-win situation for the opponent.

Imagine that you are Jacobo Arbenz in the 1950s, or Fidel Castro in the 1960s, or Joseph Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s, or, skipping ahead, Hugo Chavez in the present day. You're trying to get a fledgling administration off the ground and you've got a big problem: the institutions of your country are littered with assets controlled by Western intelligence agencies.

The CIA, for instance, has moved into town and set up shop under various assumed names to operate an 'opposition' press, which daily agitates against the sitting government with heavy doses of manufactured 'black' propaganda. If you take any action against these operations, you will be vilified via the entire Western media establishment for brutally censoring the opposition press and crushing free speech. If you do nothing, the problem will continue to fester and grow. What do you do?

The political and military infrastructure of your country is seeded with Quislings, installed by the Western puppet regime that previously ruled your land, but if you take any action against these operatives you will be vilified via the entire Western media establishment for brutally repressing the political opposition -- thus 'proving' to all the world that you are indeed the monstrous tyrant that Washington claims you to be. If you do nothing, you leave yourself and your administration vulnerable to coups, assassination plots, election rigging, propaganda campaigns, and all manner of other covert shenanigans. What do you do?

Washington has left you only two choices: do nothing and allow the *covert* machinations to run their course, or take action and provide Uncle Sam with a manufactured justification for waging *overt* warfare against you. Those are your options. Which do you choose?

Fidel Castro, faced with a group of phony journalists who were openly collaborating with CIA assets to undermine the Cuban government, recently chose the latter option, arresting and imprisoning some six dozen of them. He has been roundly vilified in all avenues of the Western media for doing so, including by brazenly phony leftists like our old friend Marc Cooper.

Here is how Cooper described the situation in a recent *LA Weekly* offering (<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/03/22/dissonance-cooper.php>):

A month ago, as the war in Iraq was breaking out, Cuban police arrested nearly 80 dissidents on charges of receiving money from and collaborating with U.S. diplomats to undermine Cuba's government. The Bush administration's top diplomat in Cuba, James Cason, has indeed been quite assertive. Publicly challenging Castro, he made a point of visiting the homes of many of these dissidents and had also brought many of them to his own residence ... Within a few weeks of their arrest, all six dozen had been given prison sentences of six to 28 years ... Among those condemned are self-styled independent journalists and librarians. I know some of these people, and some are rather pathetic. Others are quite courageous. Hector Palacios, who got a 25-year term, was a leader of the Varela Project -- a completely public campaign calling for free elections that was signed on to by thousands of Cubans ... Spin this any way you please, but in the end these people are being jailed not for anything they have done -- but rather for things they have said. Or read.

No, Marc, I think it was actually for conspiring with foreign agents to further their efforts to topple the Cuban government, which I believe would be classified as a treasonous offense, and which I am pretty sure would result in incarceration, if not execution, in just about any nation on this planet.

What Cooper forgets to mention, of course, although he is well aware of it, is that the U.S. doesn't actually have any "diplomats" in Cuba. U.S. embassies in 'unfriendly' nations are not staffed with diplomats. They are staffed with intelligence operatives. The embassies serve as the CIA's station in the host country, and the head of the 'diplomatic mission,' whatever his title may be, is most likely the CIA station chief for that country.

In fact, U.S. embassies in friendly countries aren't really staffed with diplomats either. The reality is that one of the primary functions of the U.S. State Department is to provide diplomatic cover for intelligence operations. The State Department and the CIA are, in essence, opposite sides of the same coin. Never was that more clearly illustrated than during the eight years of the Eisenhower administration when the brothers Dulles ran and closely coordinated both entities, John Foster at State and little brother Allen at the CIA.

The position of Secretary of State is, by the way, a military/intelligence post, not a diplomatic one -- in case you have ever wondered why former generals like Al Haig and Colin Powell are appointed as the nation's chief 'diplomat.' Or why Secretaries of State like John Foster Dulles, Henry Kissinger and James Baker have wielded such extraordinary power.

Sorry to have to break the news to those who are still clinging to the belief that Colin Powell is a voice of reason in the Bush cabal, but you aren't going to find too many heroes riding to the rescue bearing the title of Secretary of State. And by the way, Powell isn't just a member of the Bush administration; he's a member of the Bush *family*. I guess that's why the Bush team trusts the Powells to run both the State Department and the FCC.

(<http://www.ancestry.netscape.com/landing/strange/bush3/answer3.htm>)

We seem to have, as usual, veered somewhat off course here. So let's get back to Cuba, and the fact that a group of "self-styled" journalists were, apparently rather openly, working with an "assertive" ... uhhh ... American "diplomat" to "undermine Cuba's government."

That is exactly the kind of situation that you would find yourself in, repeatedly, if you were our hypothetical world leader. So what would you do? Ignore the brazen acts of sedition? Not a wise choice. Take action? Only if you want to move yourself up a few notches on the preemptive strike list.

I noticed something interesting about Cooper's rant, by the way - other than the not-too-surprising revelation that he knows some of the Cuban operatives - which is that he included a very nice example of the sort of logical inconsistencies that you will find routinely sprinkled throughout rants of this type, and that are always accepted without comment by the media at large.

Marc Cooper would like you to believe that Fidel Castro is a brutally repressive, iron-fisted dictator who tolerates no dissent and no questioning of his authority. That is what virtually all commentators, whether from the 'left' or the 'right,' would like you to believe. They will tell you, for as long as you can stand to listen, how the Cuban people are terrorized into silence, afraid to speak of the horrors visited upon them, afraid that speaking out, in any manner, will only worsen their lot in life. That is what Marc Cooper and his media brethren want you to believe.

But here is the part that doesn't make sense: Cooper has written that one of those arrested and convicted was a leader of a "completely public campaign calling for free elections that was signed on to by thousands of Cubans." You don't say? Thousands of Cubans, living in a brutal police state, where a single unguarded comment can bring an unwelcome knock on the door late at night, *publicly* signed their names to a campaign challenging the legitimacy of the Cuban government? And they weren't rounded up and executed? They aren't rotting away in a concentration camp? How could that be?

Cooper doesn't bother to explain, nor do any of the other Cuba bashers in the Western media who make such claims. 'Journalists' will frequently claim to have gone to Cuba and to have had unguarded conversations with the Cuban people, in which said people candidly revealed their true thoughts about the reign of Fidel Castro. That always makes for good copy, but the truth of the matter is that in a real totalitarian state, people learn rather quickly not to talk to someone claiming to be a journalist, not to talk candidly to *anyone* asking too many questions, for one can never be sure that anyone is really who he claims to be.

We know then from the inherent contradictions that many of the claims made about Fidel Castro's Cuba are not true. We also know that Castro has for decades now been blamed for economic conditions that are almost entirely of our own making. We know that he has been targeted for assassination on countless occasions. We know that the U.S. has, for decades, cultivated a rabidly fascistic Cuban exile community that is regarded by many as the world's number one terrorist organization. We know that Cuba's crops and livestock have been targeted with biological and chemical agents, in efforts to starve the people and foment a revolt. We know that an invasion of the island using a proxy army was planned and carried out, albeit ineptly. We know that Castro's diversion of funds from social programs to the military has been a necessary, though quite unfortunate, response to direct and repeated U.S. provocations. We know that Cuban industry has been repeatedly sabotaged for forty years now. And we know that, despite all the obstacles placed in the way, Castro has raised the standard of living for the vast majority of Cubans, who enjoy longer life expectancies, much higher literacy rates, and vastly improved healthcare and education services.

It is not Castro's Cuba though that is the focus of this rant; it is Stalin's Soviet Union, which squared off against the covert tactics of the West long before Castro did. So let us now return to my e-mail correspondent and the majority view of Stalin. I have already addressed the notion that his dubious military command weakened the Red Army. Now let's take a look at some of the other "received truths" about Stalin.

1) "Funny thing happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union: the archives opened up."

I suppose they did. But another funny thing happened as well: when those archives opened up, a whole bunch of fraudulent, falsified documents popped out of them. That was probably due to the fact that control of those archives, after Stalin's death, passed to those who had assassinated the Soviet leader and had a vested interest in vilifying him.

I indicated in my previous Stalin rant that the circumstances under which he died are "shrouded in mystery." A new book has shed some light on that mystery, according to a recent offering from the *New York Times* (Michael Wines "New Study Supports Idea Stalin Was Poisoned," March 5, 2003):

Fifty years after Stalin died, felled by a brain hemorrhage at his dacha, an exhaustive study of long-secret Soviet records lends new weight to an old theory that he was actually poisoned, perhaps to avert a looming war with the United States ... Relying on a previously secret account by doctors of Stalin's final days, its authors suggest that he may have been poisoned with warfarin ... during a final dinner with four members of his Politburo ... Stalin suffered extensive stomach hemorrhaging during his death throes ... significant references to stomach bleeding were excised from the 20-page official medical record, which was not issued until June 1953, more than three months after his death on March 5 that year.

This book appears to be largely disinformational, intended to downplay the notion that Stalin was poisoned even while acknowledging that the available evidence indicates that he was. The authors -Vladimir Naumov and Jonathan Brent - claim "that a cerebral hemorrhage is still the most straightforward explanation for Stalin's death," while "poisoning remains for now a matter of speculation." This despite the fact that the authors admit that, "at the least -- Stalin's Politburo colleagues denied him medical help in the first few hours of his illness, when it might have been effective." The authors also acknowledge that the official report on Stalin's death was deliberately altered to create the impression that medical help was sought immediately, when in fact it was deliberately withheld.

As a second line of defense, the book's authors attempt to place blame for the assassination, if in fact it was an assassination, on Lavrenti P. Beria, chief of the Soviet secret police. Beria was one of the four senior Politburo members present at Stalin's last dinner. The others were "Georgi M. Malenkov, Stalin's immediate successor; Nikita S. Khrushchev, who eventually rose to the top spot; and Nikolai Bulganin."

The choice of Beria as the prime suspect is a convenient one, to say the least; Beria was himself executed just months after Stalin's untimely demise. So even if Stalin was assassinated, you see, justice was served, so there's really nothing to be concerned about. And besides, as the authors throw in as their third line of defense, it was actually a good thing that he was assassinated, if he was, since it spared the world the devastation of the imminent war that Stalin was preparing to launch against the U.S.

Nice story ... but I'm not buying it. And neither, for that matter, are the majority of the Russian people. Despite the massive vilification campaign, a recent "poll of 1,600 adults by the All-Russian Public Opinion Center, released today on the eve of the 50th anniversary of his death, shows that more than half of all respondents believe Stalin's role in Russian history was positive, while only a third disagreed."

It stands to reason that that is because a lot of Russian people are old enough to know that their own memories, or their parents' or grandparents' memories, don't jibe with the official reality.

As for suspects, Nikita Khrushchev seems a far more likely one than Beria. Khrushchev certainly gained much more from the assassination than did Beria. And the authors acknowledge that "Khrushchev's own account of Stalin's death, in his memoirs, [is] an almost cartoonish distortion of the truth." Nevertheless, the man who gained the most, and who brazenly lied about the assassination, is dismissed as a suspect. Go figure.

The authors, by the way, describe Beria as "for 15 years [Stalin's] despised minister of internal security." That is another one of those logical inconsistencies that I was talking about earlier. As is perfectly obvious to anyone, the most important figure in any thuggish police state, other than the dictator himself, is arguably the chief of internal security. He's the guy in charge of dealing with any dissenters in the crowd. He's the guy entrusted to maintain internal stability. So why in the world would a merciless tyrant like Joseph Stalin, purger extraordinaire that he was, allow a guy that he despised and distrusted to hold such a position for 15 years? And why did that guy wind up dead just months after Stalin died?

Another questionable theory that the authors advance is the one that says that if Stalin was assassinated, by the guy who was killed shortly afterwards, then it was done for the noble cause of averting a looming war with the United States. But what Stalin was actually preparing to do, as the authors are well aware, was to launch a defensive war, so to speak, against the covert war that he believed was being waged against his regime.

Stalin had become convinced, as the book acknowledges, that his administration had been infiltrated by actors who were plotting against him. He had reportedly determined that it was time to once again conduct a purge, and had ordered prison facilities built.

The new book apparently makes repeated references to "the Doctor's Plot, a supposed collusion in the late 1940's by Kremlin doctors to kill top Communist leaders." The authors dismiss the plot as "a fabrication by Kremlin officials, acting largely on Stalin's orders."

The book contends that "Stalin disclosed the plot to a stunned Soviet populace in January 1953." Here's what happened next:

On March 1, 1953, two weeks after [four new prison] camps were ordered built and two weeks before the accused doctors were to go on trial, Stalin collapsed at Blizhnaya, a north Moscow dacha, after the all-night dinner with his four Politburo comrades ...

Less than a month later, the doctors previously accused of trying to kill him were abruptly exonerated and the case against them was deemed an invention of the secret police ... By year's end, Beria faced a firing squad, and Khrushchev had tempered Soviet hostility toward the United States.

So if I have this right, this is basically what happened: Stalin was convinced that there were elements within his administration, likely working in collusion with Western interests, who were plotting against him, and just days before evidence of that plot was to be aired at trial, Stalin just happened to die. Immediately thereafter, all charges were quickly dropped against all the accused conspirators. The brave soul who felled the beast, if he was in fact assassinated, was rewarded by being sent before a firing squad. One of the men who had

denied medical treatment to the fallen leader, and then lied repeatedly about it, and then arranged for Beria's execution, rose up to assume Stalin's throne. This same man quickly "tempered Soviet hostility," which really means that he began working with the very same Western interests that Stalin had so feared. From the time of Stalin's death, the new breed of Soviet leaders began covertly converting the Soviet Union to a capitalist system, while they and their Washington counterparts continued for forty more years to pretend as though the two nations were still ideological rivals. However, no one should conclude from any of that there ever was any actual plot to do away with Stalin.

In the minutes of a meeting of top Party officials from December 1952, just three months before his death, Stalin is quoted as saying: "Here, look at you -- blind men, kittens. You don't see the enemy. What will you do without me?" The problem though wasn't that they couldn't see the enemy. And they knew exactly what they would do once Stalin was no longer around.

2) "Racial problems and ethnic tensions remained although diminished and driven underground."

Probably so. As far as I know, no one has the power to make decades, even centuries, of racial and ethnic tensions simply disappear overnight. If such tensions had merely been "diminished and driven underground," that certainly showed that Soviet society was moving in the right direction, and that vast improvements had been made.

It is not a perfect world that we live in and no one yet has offered us any perfect models to choose from. Nearly a century-and-a-half have passed in this country since the Civil War was fought, allegedly to free the slaves, but the problem of racial tensions has certainly not been 'solved,' but merely "diminished and driven underground." Stalin accomplished considerably more in much less time, and he had scores of rival ethnic groups to contend with.

3) "shortages of food and several famines took place, 1932-33 was the big one. A lot of people suffered and millions of people died early and nasty deaths."

Indeed they did, and conventional wisdom tells us that Joseph Stalin was to blame. During his reign, three consecutive "Five Year Plans" were launched with the intention of rapidly industrializing the nation. The plans were wildly successful in achieving the goal of converting a largely agricultural society into a self-sufficient, industrialized nation.

These plans were a response to World War I, the first massive invasion of Russian territory. Stalin recognized that another invasion was coming and that the only way to defend the Soviet Union was to rapidly create an infrastructure that could support a modern, mechanized army.

He also recognized that the Soviet Union needed to become self-sufficient, and by the dawn of World War II that goal had been attained: the Soviet Union did not need any imports or exports to survive. But just as with Castro in Cuba, Stalin didn't set out to isolate the Soviet Union from the Western world; he reacted to the fact that the Western world had already isolated, and targeted, the Soviet Union.

In the rush to industrialize, agriculture and food production inevitably suffered. So Stalin must certainly shoulder some of the blame for the famines of the 1920s and 1930s. But Soviet leaders consistently maintained that Western operatives repeatedly sabotaged food production. And there is little reason to doubt such claims. That has, after all, been the *modus*



*operandi* of the West for quite some time, and continues to be to this day. The Iraqi people, for example, were starved for a full decade prior to the recent U.S. occupation.

Since I just provided that nice segue onto the topic of Iraq, I have to comment here on the chatter about the elusive 'Weapons of Mass Destruction.' It is pretty clear by now that such weapons don't actually exist, and that maybe, you know, Bush received some faulty intelligence or something, or maybe he even lied a little bit, but it really doesn't matter because there were other justifications for going to war, and the outcome clearly vindicated the U.S. stance.

The problem is that the WMDs *do* matter. Very much so. For you see, according to international law, there is one and only one justification for taking military action against a sovereign nation, just as, throughout the 'civilized' world, there is one and only one justification for willfully taking a human life: self defense against an imminent threat.

There is no other valid justification for waging war. And if there were no 'Weapons of Mass Destruction,' then Iraq certainly didn't pose an imminent threat to the United States. It didn't pose any sort of threat at all. And that leads to the inescapable conclusion that those who planned and carried out the invasion of Iraq are war criminals ... but here I have, as usual, digressed.

Returning to the subject at hand, I guess the question that needs to be asked here is: who was ultimately to blame for the tragic loss of human life due to starvation? Was it the leaders who, with an eye to ensuring the continued security of the sovereign Soviet state, chose to industrialize and militarize the nation, thus enabling the USSR to defeat the Axis powers? Or was it the leaders who forced the Soviet state to adopt a defensive posture, and then repeatedly sabotaged that nation's agriculture and industry? There seems to be no shortage of blame to toss around.

4) "there was indeed massive repression (much more than our own current prison complex), strict censorship."

Perhaps, but as I noted earlier, the majority of the Russian people don't remember things that way. They remember a leader who took necessary actions to insure the security of the state. What is portrayed as repression and censorship isn't necessarily so.

In an ideal world, there would be absolute freedom of the press and absolute freedom of political expression. But we live in a world where the deck is stacked, and a utopian society cannot be created in a hostile environment. So where does the answer lie?

5) "many executions"

Ahhh, yes, the executions. Millions of them, if I'm not mistaken. Except that, as near as I can tell, there is scant evidence to support that charge. Not so in Nazi Germany, where the victims' bodies were found stacked like firewood. But where are all the mass graves in the former Soviet Union?

A recent offering from the *Los Angeles Times* proves illuminating. The title of the frontpage piece, "Skeletons of History in Russian Graves" (John Daniszewski, November 18, 2002), implied that evidence of mass murders was readily available, but a careful reading of the text of the article reveals a different story.

The article concerns the activities of "a small team investigating what it says is a newly discovered Stalinist killing field outside St. Petersburg." The group, a non-governmental organization known as Memorial, claims that the Soviet state sponsored the "killing of tens of millions of Soviet citizens from the earliest days of the Bolsheviks until the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, and some even later." In St. Petersburg, according to Memorial, victims from Kresty Prison and from the local NKVD headquarters were loaded into vehicles in the dead of night, driven out into the woods, and then summarily executed.

Now you would think that if tens of millions were executed in the USSR, a city like St. Petersburg, being one of the largest and most strategic population centers, would have supplied a good number of those victims. So you would expect that the primary killing grounds for that city would yield an unfathomable number of corpses. But you would be mistaken.

According to the *Times*, Memorial has concluded, "now that more than 50 graves have been found ... [that] there can be little doubt that this was the NKVD's main graveyard in St. Petersburg during the 1937-38 period known as the Great Terror." And it only took Memorial "14 years of deduction, investigation and detective work ... to find the first remains."

It's kind of funny, but I seem to remember that a guy named George Bush ordered about 50 executions in the state of Texas during the 1997-98 period, but I don't recall anyone referring to that as the Great Terror. And everyone knows where those bodies are buried.

Anyway, Memorial "presumes" that there are actually "many layers below, but it says it is not interested in disturbing the dead by doing a complete excavation." Of course not. Why would you want to get an accurate count when you can just presume? And besides, Memorial already *knows* how many victims there were. They have devised an accurate system for estimating the death toll: they just make it up.

For the site in the forest near Toksovo, Memorial has arbitrarily arrived at a figure of 32,000. That is, I should note, only about 640 times the actual number of bodies that have been recovered. And here is how Memorial deduced that figure: "Memorial's estimate of 32,000 victims in Toksovo is based on subtraction. About 40,000 people in what was then Leningrad and its surrounding region were killed in the Great Terror, but the one known grave of the victims is believed to hold only about 8,000."

It's interesting to note that the other known grave site is "believed to hold" 8,000 corpses, just as the Toksovo site is "presumed" to hold another 32,000. In fact though, there is precious little evidence that either site holds anywhere near that many victims. There is little evidence to indicate that there are *any* substantial mass graves in the vicinity of one of the largest population centers in the FSU.

So the question remains: where are the *tens of millions* of bodies of the victims killed during the Great Terror? They shouldn't be all that difficult to locate -- what with the archives having been opened up and all.

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Anyone who thinks that the fascist beast ruling America can be slain merely by cutting off its head is woefully misinformed. Even Marc Cooper is honest enough to admit that. Near the end of one of his recent disinformation-filled rants, he wrote: "Unfortunately, you don't

change the entire body politic of America by merely changing a president."  
(<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/03/27/dissonance-cooper.php>)

No, you certainly do not. Never before in recorded history has a country been as thoroughly infested with homegrown 'fifth-columnists.' They are everywhere. Their voices are called upon to shape public opinion on every conceivable topic. One has only to pick up any daily newspaper and read through it, or turn on any cable news program, or tune into any talk radio program, to see how completely information, and public opinion, is controlled in this country.

You cannot bring about any kind of serious political change in this country without first bringing about a radical change in public opinion, and you cannot bring about a change in public opinion until you break the state's monopoly control of information -- information disseminated through the media, academia, the church, and every other institution of any significance in this country.

You cannot affect significant change in this country, in other words, without purging the elements that seek to maintain the status quo at any cost. The good news is that we already have plenty of prison cells for the guilty parties. All we have to do is let out all the non-violent offenders who are currently occupying those cells, and we'll be good to go.

But don't look to anyone else to get the job done. What figure is there on the world stage today who will stand up to the fascist beast? Don't pin your hopes on poseurs like Shroeder, Chretien, Chirac or Putin. For my money, what the world needs today, more so than ever, is a man of sufficient stature to fill the shoes of Joseph Stalin.

[For those interested in alternative views of Stalin, 'Stalinism,' and the post-Stalin period, here are three books that cover those very topics. All are available as free downloads. You probably will not, and should not, agree with everything that these authors have to say, but it will cost you nothing but time to hear them out. And you have spent your entire life hearing the other side of the story:

1. Ludo Martens *Another View of Stalin*, <http://www.plp.org/books/Stalin/book.html>
2. Anna Louise Strong *The Stalin Era*, [http://www.plp.org/books/strong\\_stalin\\_era.pdf](http://www.plp.org/books/strong_stalin_era.pdf)
3. W.B. Bland, for the Communist League (UK) *The Restoration of Capitalism in the Soviet Union*, <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/wim/wyl/hoxha/bland/index.html>]

*The Center for an Informed America*

## **NEWSLETTER #39**

*June 12, 2003*

*Wild, Wild West Edition*

*[www.davesweb.cncast.com/nwsltr39.html](http://www.davesweb.cncast.com/nwsltr39.html)*

Due to the volume of responses that I received to the last newsletter, I had planned to devote this edition to reviewing and responding to many of your comments. But since those comments are still arriving, I decided to hold off on the follow-up until next week.

That decision left me in something of a dilemma, since I didn't have another topic waiting in the wings. There was, in other words, the distinct possibility that this newsletter would lack focus -- and we all know how much I hate it when that happens. Luckily then, I stumbled upon this reprint of a recent *New York Times* article: <http://www.iht.com/articles/98633.html>

The article concerns the legendary Wild West lawman Pat Garrett, who gunned down the legendary Wild West outlaw Billy the Kid -- except that it seems as though that story may not actually be true. According to the *Times* article, "modern science is about to touch Garrett's fame in a way that some say could expose him as a liar who covered up a murder to save his reputation."

The scenario being investigated is that Garrett killed the wrong man and then covered that fact up to save his own skin. A more likely scenario though is that Garrett actively conspired with the Kid to fake his death, after assisting him in making an escape. The *Times* piece acknowledges that one enduring story "holds that Garrett and the Kid may have been in cahoots for some reason and that Garrett had stashed a gun in the outhouse at the jail that the Kid used to kill the deputies and escape." Just weeks after that escape was when Garrett supposedly killed the Kid.

But according to sources cited in the *Times* article, and elsewhere, the Kid may have lived to the ripe old age of 90, after taking the name "Brushy" Bill Roberts. Roberts died in 1950, shortly after his photo appeared in the January 21, 1950 edition of the *San Antonio Express*:



Roberts is the gentleman standing in the center of the photo. To his right, seated, is Colonel James R. Davis, who claimed to be a former U.S. Marshal for the Cherokee Indian Nation. Davis was 109 when this photo was taken. To Roberts' left, lying in bed, is 102-year-old J. Frank Dalton. Dalton claimed to have been an even more notorious Wild West outlaw than Billy the Kid: Jesse James.

And that brings us to our topic for this outing: the strange and twisted tale of the man known as Jesse James. I actually started to write on this topic last year, but soon got distracted by some sort of Team Bush shenanigans. So let me now dust off that discarded missive and present it here for your reading pleasure.

But wait a minute, you're thinking, what does Jesse James have to do with gaining an understanding of twenty-first century U.S. politics? What does America's most famous outlaw have to do with contemporary 'conspiracy theory'? Where is the relevance? What, as my mother used to say, does Jesse James have to do with the price of tea in China?

I'm not really sure why mom used to say that, just as I am not sure why any statement by me or my siblings that began with the words "I want ..." would get the response: "That's too bad; people in Hell want ice water." Apparently during the 1960s and 1970s there was some sort of logistical problem with getting adequate supplies of ice water to Hell, but I never really understood why that meant that I couldn't have a BB gun.

But none of that really has anything to do with this story.

The question here is: what is to be gained from examining the life of Jesse James? If this was to be a standard recitation of the life of the Wild West's most notorious figure, then the answer would be: not much. But this isn't the account of Jesse's life that has passed into popular mythology; this is the account of Jesse's life that was told by his grandson.

If this account is accurate, and much of it does have a ring of truth to it, then it illustrates once again the extent to which the official history of this country is nothing but a tangled web of

lies. But how much of this story is true? That, alas, is difficult to determine. When the lies run so deep, when they have been repeated so frequently as to become a faux reality - a collective hallucination - then it is a daunting task finding anything close to the truth. But whether true or not, it is a story that is too good to not pass along.

This story was published nearly three decades ago, by Jesse James III and a writer by the name of Del Schrader, under the title *Jesse James Was One of His Names* (the title refers to the claim that James operated under some six dozen assumed identities). The book is all but impossible to find today.

Before we get to the alternative history, let's first review the facts of Jesse's life that are generally agreed upon. Jesse James was the second son born to a Baptist minister named Robert James and his wife, born Zerelda Cole Mimms. The couple's first-born son was Alexander Franklin James, better known as Frank. Frank entered this world on January 10, 1843, and Jesse followed on September 5, 1847.

Robert James died when the boys and a younger sister were still very young. In 1855, Zerelda married again, to a wealthy doctor, landowner, and slave owner named Rueben Samuels. Six years later, the South seceded from the Union, forming the Confederate States of America, and the bloody American Civil War began.

At the onset of war, Frank James joined an elite Confederate military unit known as Quantrill's Raiders, and brother Jesse, who wasn't yet 18 when the Civil War *ended*, soon followed suit. The 200-man force, led by homicidal schoolteacher William Quantrill, included an elite sub-group led by the possibly even more homicidal William "Bloody Bill" Anderson.

Anderson once reportedly lined up a group of captured Union soldiers and personally executed all twenty-six of them. Included in his elite unit were such luminaries as Thomas Coleman "Cole" Younger and, of course, the James brothers. These men, and the rest of the Raiders, made a name for themselves during the war by repeatedly perpetrating massacres of both soldiers and civilians. The Raiders' most notorious act was the August 21, 1863 burning and pillaging of Lawrence, Kansas that left more than 150 unarmed civilians dead.

After the war, the James brothers and various others embarked upon a life of crime in the Wild West, robbing banks and trains and stagecoaches and doing all the other sorts of things that the Wild West outlaws were supposed to have done, just like they do in the books that we have all read and in the movies and television shows that we have all seen.

In April 1874, Jesse's uncle, Methodist minister William James, officiated at the wedding of Jesse to his cousin, Zerelda Amanda Mimms -- not to be confused, of course, with his mother, Zerelda Cole Mimms. Frank took as his bride a young schoolteacher named Anna Ralston.

Meanwhile, local authorities and the notorious Pinkerton organization - forerunner of the modern FBI - relentlessly pursued the James Gang in a cat-and-mouse game that now captures the imaginations of millions of Americans who are prone to view the James brothers as romantic anti-heroes.

In an example of law enforcement excess from the days of yore, the Pinkertons once reportedly tossed a bomb into the Samuels' family home. Frank and Jesse weren't there, but the blast reportedly killed their disabled half-brother and blew off one of their mother's arms.



Missouri Governor Thomas Crittenden ultimately put a \$10,000 price tag on the James brothers' heads -- an unprecedented reward in those days. Jesse was allegedly shot in the back by the Ford brothers, Charles and Robert, on April 3, 1882. He was buried on the Samuels' farm. Frank reportedly attended the services, alongside a veritable army of law enforcement officers, even though he was wanted "dead or alive" at the time.

Frank later surrendered to authorities and was brought to trial for his crimes; he was twice acquitted of all charges brought against him. Frank James remained a free man until his death in 1915. Charlie Ford, meanwhile, caught a bullet to the head, while brother Bob met up with a fatal shotgun blast.

All of that, alas, can be found in official retellings of the legend of the larger-than-life Wild West outlaw known as Jesse James. But that isn't quite the whole story, at least not according to Jesse James III and a number of witnesses cited in the James/Schrader book.

Jesse, you see, was a member of an occult-based 'secret society,' The Knights of the Golden Circle, that formed the core of the massive intelligence apparatus assembled by the Confederacy. Other key members of the order were President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis, Albert Pike (a notorious occultist who has been credited with playing a key role in the creation of the Ku Klux Klan), and Captain William Clarke Quantrill, whose Raiders were essentially an early version of an elite, 'Special Forces' unit.

The South did in fact have an extensive intelligence infrastructure. And Albert Pike was a key figure in that intelligence network. The only real news here is the claim that Jesse James was a key figure within that intelligence community as well. And, of course, the business about The Knights of the Golden Circle.

Schrader claims, quite credibly, that the Confederate intelligence network did not simply disappear with the official end of the war; it remained largely intact and continued to fight the war from 'underground' for another two decades. And it continued to be under the control of the Knights of the Golden Circle. Jesse James remained a key figure.

The James Gang's train and bank robberies, it is claimed, were fundraising operations to finance the activities of the Knights of the Golden Circle, as well as to wreak general havoc with the plans of the Northern reconstructionists. James is also said to have been involved in supplying weapons and training to the Plains Indians, as a means of waging proxy war against the Union Army.

In 1861, at the onset of the Civil War, populist Benito Juarez had been legally elected president of Mexico. While his imperialist northern neighbor was preoccupied with waging a brutal war of self-destruction, Juarez set about instituting a number of reforms that proved to be popular with the Mexican people, but not so popular with the Western powers. In 1864, French forces dispatched by Napoleon III deposed Juarez and installed Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico. Maximilian, the brother of Austria's Emperor, Francis Joseph, had previously been the Archduke of Austria.

After the Civil War ended, Maximilian's unstable puppet regime continued to be threatened by forces loyal to Juarez. According to the Schrader book, a force composed of 2,000 Missouri cavalymen and a regiment of Confederate-led Red Bone Indians was dispatched to Mexico in support of Maximilian. When this force ran into stiff resistance, an elite force was sent to the rescue; that force was led by Captain William Quantrill and Colonel Jesse James.

History books say that Maximilian was executed by firing squad on June 19, 1867, after being captured by Juarez loyalists. Schrader and James claim that he was rescued by the James/Quantrill team and transported back to the States, where he lived out his life under the name John Maxi. The James' team also allegedly transported a vast amount of plundered wealth back to the States, for which they were richly rewarded by Maximilian.

James is said to have been one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in America, even before being rewarded by Maximilian. He is said to have invested heavily in the Texas oil boom, and to have provided financial backing for the Hughes Tool Company, founded by Howard Hughes, Sr., and the Ford Motor Company, founded by Henry Ford.

The most fascinating part of the Jesse James story, as presented by James III and Schrader, concerns another rather notorious figure in American history whose death has been called into question by numerous researchers: John Wilkes Booth.

An inconvenient and therefore unmentionable fact is that Booth was not acting as a lone assailant when he shot President Lincoln; he was acting as part of a larger conspiracy, as was openly acknowledged at the time. No fewer than six additional conspirators were brought to trial; four received death sentences and two were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Booth, of course, never stood trial. He was allegedly killed by agents who were attempting to capture him. Schrader and James, and numerous others, say that Booth's death was faked to allow him to escape prosecution and punishment. They also say that Booth, like James, was an agent of the Confederate intelligence services.

Booth is said to have functioned as a courier -- and his career, it must be said, would have provided the ideal cover for such activities. It will be recalled that Booth was one of the most popular actors of his day. As such, he traveled extensively with various productions, and therefore had the unusual ability to move rather freely between North and South.

The story goes that after killing Lincoln, Booth was given safe passage to Texas by the Confederate underground. Once there, he took the name John St. Helen and worked as a bartender. A problem arose, however, when Booth developed a drinking problem, and with it a tendency to shoot off his mouth about the life he used to lead.

Booth, in other words, became a liability that had to be dealt with. Sent to deal with the problem was none other than Jesse James, accompanied by William "Wild Bill" Lincoln, a distant cousin of the slain former president. The pair tracked Booth to Enid, Oklahoma, where he was poisoned.

Now I will be the first to admit that the claim that famed Wild West outlaw Jesse James was sent as an assassin to 'neutralize' notorious presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth seems a little, shall we say, iffy. Strangely enough though, the authors back that incredible claim up with a sworn statement by William Lincoln:

Our branch of the Lincoln family was never satisfied with what really happened to Booth, and I spent fourteen years of my life running down the true story. Strangely enough, I learned it from Jesse W. James, head of the Confederate underground. I was present at Booth's real death.

So there you have it -- the Jesse James story from a slightly different perspective than it is normally told. I leave it to each of you to decide for yourselves whether to file this one in the

'truth is stranger than fiction' file, or in the circular file. Meanwhile, I've got to move on to other things -- like the 1997 North Hollywood bank shootout, the modern version of the Gunfight at the OK Corral.

I have been reminded on several recent occasions of that notorious incident, first by a reader who had recently viewed the new television 'docudrama' allegedly depicting the event, then when I forced myself to view one of the endless repeats of the film on the *FX* channel, and then again when I happened upon this fascinating article buried deep within a recent edition of the *L.A. Times*:

One of the rifles confiscated from Buford O. Furrow Jr. on the day he killed a postal worker and wounded five people at a Los Angeles Jewish community center was sold at the same Tacoma, Wash, gun store linked to the rifle used by the Washington, D.C. snipers ... In 1997, the Tacoma retailer, Bull's Eye Shooter Supply, sold Furrow one of two .308 caliber Imbel rifles found in his van ... Authorities have also traced the Bushmaster .223-caliber semiautomatic assault rifle allegedly used by John Allen Muhammad and Lee Malvo ... to the same Tacoma gun store. After the manufacturer shipped the gun there, there are no records reflecting how it left the store, according to court records ... Authorities have traced guns involved in 52 crimes to Bull's Eye from 1997 to 2001 ... At least 238 guns - including the one allegedly used by the snipers - have "disappeared" from the store in the last three years ... (<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-jcc7jun07,1,3241028.story>)

Small world, isn't it? What are the odds that two high-profile, hopelessly contrived, stage-managed crimes, committed on opposite coasts, would have both been made possible by guns obtained from the very same gun shop located hundreds of miles from where either crime occurred? And what are we to make of the fact that that gun shop, as reported in a previous newsletter, is owned and operated by a former instructor at a U.S. Army sniper training center?

Here's another entry for the "it's a small world" collection: one of the rifles used in the North Hollywood shootout was the very same type of Bushmaster rifle that received so much media attention in the DC sniper case -- except that the North Hollywood version had been converted from semi-automatic to full-automatic function.

The recent television 'docudrama,' "44 Minutes: The North Hollywood Shootout," is, if I'm not mistaken, a *Fox* production ... and, true to form, it is a singularly bizarre and offensive piece of work. But despite being overstuffed with disinformation and deliberate omissions, the unabashedly pro-police production did refresh my memory on some of the telling details of what happened that day.

As the title of the film hints, the producers had no interest in providing any sort of context for the events that are depicted. No background on the gunmen is provided. In fact, they are never even identified, either in the film itself or in the closing credits, and their faces are covered by stocking caps throughout much of the film. They are presented as nameless and faceless representations of pure evil.

Virtually no one is identified by name in the film. The credits list such characters as "One of the Cops," "Another Cop," "News Anchor," "Uniform," and, my personal favorite, "Stud Guy." The focus is almost entirely on the shootout itself, with anonymous gunmen exchanging fire with anonymous police officers while anonymous bank employees and patrons huddle in fear and anonymous reporters provide breathless coverage of the unfolding events.

One thing that the filmmakers depict fairly accurately is the preposterously unlikely police response. Beginning the moment the robbers entered the bank, the police mobilized a massive force to surround the building. Literally within minutes (as the film title indicates, the entire incident lasted just 44 minutes from beginning to end), the LAPD had a fully staffed mobile command center up and running in a local furniture store. At the time that all of this manpower was being mobilized and coordinated, there was no indication that anything more significant than a routine bank robbery was in progress. And in L.A., that is hardly an earth-shattering event.

The last time I checked, Los Angeles was the bank robbery capital of the world. A *CNN* report concerning the North Hollywood incident revealed that in the prior year there had been "a total of 1,126 bank robberies in the Los Angeles area." Statistically speaking then, the North Hollywood robbery was but one of three that would occur in the county on that day alone. (<http://www.cnn.com/US/9702/28/bank.shootout/>)

Someone though apparently knew that this wasn't to be a typical L.A. bank robbery. Some 350 officers were ultimately dispatched to the scene, including a number of paramilitary SWAT teams. Also on hand were scores of police vehicles, fire engines, ambulances, and a 'military surplus' armored personnel carrier.

The gunmen also apparently knew that this wasn't to be a typical day in L.A. They came prepared not to rob a bank, but to wage war on the city. They were completely covered in heavy body armor, which severely hampered their movements and rendered them incapable of doing much more than standing as stationary targets throughout most of the gun battle.

In one of the most surreal spectacles ever televised, the gunmen stood fully exposed and seemingly oblivious to the hail of incoming police fire while calmly spraying the streets of North Hollywood with automatic weapons fire. One eyewitness reported that one of the gunmen looked like he was "in a trance. He was walking like there was nothing going on ... It was like he didn't have a care in the world."

(<http://www.amarillonet.com/stories/stories/030197/robbers.html>)

The suspects' vehicle held a seemingly endless supply of automatic weapons and ammunition, far more than would be required to pull off a bank robbery. After the battle was over, the gunmen's vehicle still contained some 2,000 rounds of live ammo, in addition to the numerous full ammunition clips found on the bodies of the downed gunmen.

On the scene from the very beginning, long before the robbers exited the bank with guns blazing, was a *Fox News* helicopter providing a live feed to the nation. The *Fox* helicopter was soon joined by other news choppers. Amazingly enough, with seemingly half the LAPD force mobilized at the North Hollywood Bank of America branch, the department's helicopters were nowhere to be seen, and the news choppers were given free reign over the skies.

Anyone who lives anywhere in the vicinity of the crime scene knows that this is a most remarkable fact. I happen to have spent the last few years living in the vicinity of North Hollywood - or NoHo as we hipsters like to call it - and I can tell you with absolute certainty that the LAPD is not shy about deploying air power in this area.

Rarely does a night go by that an LAPD helicopter does not make a pass or two over my house. Occasionally they will, for no apparent reason, thoughtfully light up my backyard in

the middle of the night. And that is not because they are 'out to get me.' It is because I happen to live in North Hollywood. All of my neighbors get the same treatment.

The truth is that the LAPD will call in air support to write a jaywalking ticket. They are obsessed with weapons and tactics and with the 'Powell doctrine' of overwhelming force -- and they have been for a very long time. It is inconceivable, therefore, that the airspace over North Hollywood was not quickly secured and filled with LAPD helicopters the day of the shootout.

Another of the more bizarre aspects of the incident was that, as one character in the film noted, hundreds of rounds of ammunition (1,100-1,200 by official police estimates) were fired and yet only the two bad guys died ... which, come to think of it, reminds me that there were actually at least three bad guys, as was widely reported on several local live telecasts from 'ground zero.'

Initial print reports of the shootout also made mention of additional suspects. *ENN* news service, for example, reported that in addition to the two robbers killed, "three suspects are reportedly in custody; some may be wounded. A tense search continues in nearby neighborhoods for additional suspects." That search continued for more than twelve hours after the two identified suspects had been killed.

(<http://www.emergency.com/lapdbank.htm>)

*CNN* reported that police "made several arrests in connection with the shooting, but the two dead gunmen are the only two suspects known to be involved in the robbery attempt, [Police Chief] Williams said. The L.A. police chief, however, could not confirm that all of the suspects had been captured or accounted for." Williams never explained what the other unidentified suspects were being held for, if not for involvement in the robbery.

(<http://www.cnn.com/US/9702/28/bank.shootout/>)

*CNN* also quoted Police Commander Tim McBride as saying: "We have *many* suspects who have multiple guns, and they continue to out-gun us and fire at us at will." Elsewhere in the *CNN* article, the gunmen are referred to as a "band" of bank robbers. Maybe it's just me, but I don't normally think of two guys as being a "band."

The film makes several oblique mentions of "multiple perpetrators" without ever specifically saying how many gunmen there were, although the filmmakers clearly want us to believe that there were only two, both of whom died that day. Unmentioned is that a lawsuit later filed on behalf of the children of one of the suspects claimed - based on, among other things, interviews with eyewitnesses, including employees and patrons of the bank who came face-to-face with the gunmen - that there were no fewer than six gunmen involved.

How the two acknowledged gunmen were killed is deliberately obscured in the film as well. One of them, whose name was Emil Matasareanu, was tried, convicted, sentenced and executed on the streets of North Hollywood by the LAPD.

Protected by body armor, the suspect sustained wounds only to his extremities, primarily to his legs. None of his wounds was life threatening. In fact, he was pictured on the frontpage of the *Los Angeles Times*, very much alive and alert, though obviously in pain, after being handcuffed by police. It took him somewhere around 30 minutes to bleed out on the streets of NoHo, if I remember correctly, while dozens of L.A.'s finest stood idly by. Emergency medical personnel were prevented from treating him. None of that is depicted in the film.

The death of the other gunman, Larry Eugene Phillips, Jr., is portrayed quite ambiguously. He is shown raising a handgun to his own head, while an LAPD detective simultaneously draws a bead on him from a position in front of the suspect. There were claims at the time of the incident that the suspect committed suicide, and that has apparently become a part of the official mythology. It is the overriding impression that the film creates -- in spite of the fact that live video feeds clearly and unequivocally showed that the suspect took a sniper's bullet to the back of the head as he was walking down the street.

Again, early media reports accurately reported that fact. A *CNN* reporter, for instance, wrote that "cameras were rolling as police shot one suspect in the head." Similarly, an *ENN* reporter wrote: "Suddenly out of nowhere, the suspect was shot in the head and killed."

(<http://www.cnn.com/US/9702/28/bank.shootout/> and <http://www.emergency.com/lapdbank.htm>)

It was, needless to say, rather odd that the LAPD failed to take credit for the justifiable killing of one of the suspects and chose instead to put out the blatantly fraudulent suicide story. You would think that police officials would be more than eager to take credit for doing their job, but you would, in this case, be mistaken.

Instead, the LAPD chose quite deliberately to portray themselves as hopelessly outgunned and almost completely helpless to stop the mayhem. Admitting that Phillips was taken out with a sniper's bullet to the head would have revealed that the police were not in fact helpless that day and could have stopped the rampage much sooner than they did. There are clear parallels here, by the way, with the downing of Flight 93 on September 11, 2001.

A former LAPD SWAT team member, now a weapons instructor, wrote a report on the lessons to be learned from the incident. That report indicated that SWAT units were well equipped to deal with the situation: "The LAPD SWAT officers were also able to select appropriate weapons because they have the choice in their car of MP5s, M26s, Shotguns, H&K .223 caliber assault rifles and AR 15s."

(<http://www.student oulu.fi/~hmikkola/shootout.html>)

The last ten minutes of the film is devoted to an utterly shameless salute to the allegedly heroic officers of the LAPD. It is difficult to sit through, but it is there, in those final minutes of the movie, that we begin to sift out the truth of what happened that day. An actor portraying a fictional and quite heroic LAPD detective speaks the following words to an off-camera interviewer:

It's kind of weird the way it happened. The morale in the LAPD was at an all-time low. The public was all over us. And then all of a sudden, out of nowhere, this happened. After that, even the media were calling us heroes.

True enough, although the media hadn't exactly been on the attack prior to that, but rather had been actively engaged in covering up the massive corruption and criminality of the LAPD. That task was much easier to accomplish in the aftermath of the North Hollywood shootout.

Fully militarizing the LAPD was a much easier goal to attain as well. At the very end of the film, the following words appear on screen: "As a result of the North Hollywood shoot-out, LAPD officers now have access to M-16 machine guns when on patrol in the field."

That's certainly good news. I for one feel much better knowing that LAPD officers, while on routine patrol, have access to fully automatic weapons. Nothing is quite so reassuring as



knowing that the next officer to pull me over for a traffic infraction could have an M-16 trained on my head as he approaches my vehicle.

The LAPD obtained 600 'surplus' M-16s for its officers. That is how the Pentagon described the guns that it gave to the department. I've never figured out though why it is that brand new, fully operational M-16s, or any other type of weaponry routinely used by U.S. servicemen, would be considered 'surplus.'

What are we, in the final analysis, to make of the North Hollywood shootout? The entire incident had a distinctively staged, surreal, made-for-television flavor. As one witness noted, it was "just like a movie." (<http://www.emergency.com/lapdbank.htm>) In fact, as one report mentioned, it was just like one particular movie:

The shooting recalled the bloody 1995 movie "Heat," starring Robert De Niro and Al Pacino, in which a band of meticulously organized but high-strung bandits hold up a downtown Los Angeles bank. The movie robbers burst into the bank in black clothes and full-body armor, then most are killed in a wild running gun battle through downtown traffic.

(<http://www.amarillonet.com/stories/stories/030197/robbers.html>)

Perhaps it was appropriate then that "the shootout occurred," as *CNN* noted, "not far from the Disney, Universal and Warner Bros. studios."

And now, before signing off, I must take time here to thank all of you who wrote in response to Newsletter #37, including Brendon, Jim, Mick, David, Mark, Henry, Brock, Vicki, Jean, Sandra, Peter, Tracey, Margie, Edward, Arlene, Sherry, Meria, Al, Larry, and a few anonymous others. My sincerest thanks to all of you.

Special thanks to Reuven, whose words rang so true; and to Bill, a local 'soapbox orator' extraordinaire; and to John and Reggie, who sent in links to two sites that I haven't had time yet to check out ([communistvoice.org](http://communistvoice.org) and [tvnewslies.org](http://tvnewslies.org)); and to David, for generously offering his assistance; and to Bruce, for informing me that, during my absence, The Smirk redesignated the international workers' holiday of May Day as "Loyalty Day."

I had seen that story circulate previously (as Bruce pointed out, Bush first signed such a bill last year, and then did so again this year), but had thought that it was a satirical piece, courtesy of some muckraking website like *The Onion*. I had forgotten, briefly, that this administration is so over-the-top that the dividing line between parody and reality has all but disappeared.

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/20030430-26.html>)

As a final note, to the reader who inquired, the answer to your question is, no, I did not travel to Tahiti on behalf of the CIA. I should have mentioned in the last newsletter, by the way, that the islands of French Polynesia are some of the most preternaturally beautiful islands in the world. And I must confess here that I have a weakness for lush tropical islands. So if the CIA is interested in funding an extended visit to Tahiti, all expenses paid, I wouldn't necessarily be opposed. Hawaii would be good also. Or maybe Fiji. I haven't been there yet.

And that, I suppose, will suffice for this week ... oh, wait a minute ... I almost forgot to mention one last thing: you know that story about how the famous inventor and statesman Benjamin Franklin flew that kite in the thunderstorm? Well ... it turns out that old Ben just sort of invented that story

(<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/06/01/1054406077856.html>). And now the Russians

are saying that we may not have actually landed on the moon ([http://english.pravda.ru/printed.html?news\\_id=9994](http://english.pravda.ru/printed.html?news_id=9994)). And the Finns are saying that Al Qaeda doesn't really exist (<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article.jhtml?articleID=396241>). Next thing you know, someone is going to be saying that Iraq didn't really have any weapons of mass destruction, or that the Jessica Lynch rescue story is an "amerikansk fiksjon." It's getting to where I just don't know what to believe anymore.

## **NEWSLETTER #51**

*March 1, 2004*

*Gay Marriage Edition*

It is becoming increasingly clear that the fraudulent recall election that brought Herr Schwarzenegger to power was just one aspect of a well-coordinated, 'bipartisan' effort to fundamentally transform the state of California. In the name of curing all the manufactured ills of the Golden State, a prescription has apparently been written, and Ahhnuld may just be the man to fill it.

That prescription was unveiled in a 'historic' television event that aired on *KCET's* "California Connected" program on February 19, 2004. Assembled to reveal and lend legitimacy to the agenda was a 'distinguished' group of former California governors: Jerry Brown, George Deukmejian, Pete Wilson and Gray Davis (Ronald Reagan was conspicuously absent).

Although two of the four are known as staunchly conservative 'Republicans,' and the other two are widely regarded as bleeding-heart liberal 'Democrats,' the Fab Four presented a remarkably united front while spelling out the plan for resolving California's woes. It was almost as if - though only a conspiracy theorist would suggest such a thing - they had all been studying the same script.

[Speaking of 'conspiracy theorists,' I need to pause here to note that White House liar Scott McClellan, desperate to dodge persistent questions during a recent press conference ([http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/week\\_2004\\_02\\_08.html#002555](http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/week_2004_02_08.html#002555)), trotted out that pejorative term in a pathetic attempt to dismiss the line of questioning. That got me wondering what McClellan would call someone who promotes a half-baked theory that holds that Lyndon Johnson was JFK's killer ... but then I remembered what he calls him: "Dad." ([http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0963784625/qid=1077612794/sr=1-1/ref=sr\\_1\\_1/103-9214591-3138267?v=glance&s=books](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0963784625/qid=1077612794/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9214591-3138267?v=glance&s=books))]

The members of the Former Governors Club unanimously agreed that the single greatest impediment to 'reforming' state government was the Legislature. No one on the panel had anything remotely positive to say about the state's lawmakers. In fact, as it turns out, it wasn't really Gray Davis' fault that the state is in crisis; it is actually the fault of the Legislature.

Deukmejian, no friend of 'Democrats,' praised the man he addressed as "my friend, Gray Davis," for attempting to govern "from the center." The problem, according to Duke, was that the Legislature just "kept pressuring him, and pressuring him, and pressuring him to spend more money," until Davis finally capitulated. Pete Wilson readily agreed, explaining that the real problem was not Gray Davis, but that "Gray had maybe the most irresponsible Legislature within memory."

The Pete Wilson who said that, by the way, looked very much like the Pete Wilson who just months ago played a prominent role in the recall effort as a key Team Ahhnuld operative.

One of the biggest problems with the Legislature, according to the Fab Four, is that lawmakers have managed to gerrymander their districts to create 'safe seats' for themselves, thereby insuring their continued incumbency. According to Deukmejian, "all the incumbents got together" and worked out this devious plan to permanently entrench themselves. As a result, according to Wilson, "the 'ins' stay in, and the 'outs' stay out." And since the 'ins' all feel safe now, they are very difficult to work with. All they seem to want to do is spend money the state doesn't have and pass laws the state doesn't need.

On that issue, the four members of the Former Governors Barbershop Quartet harmonized perfectly -- probably because all four are reprehensible liars. The truth of the matter is that California has very strict term limits that were enacted by the people of California through a ballot initiative. State assemblymen get exactly six years on the job and they're out the door, regardless of which district they represent. There is no such thing as a 'safe' seat in California. Districts can be gerrymandered to create seats for one party or the other, but there are no entrenched incumbents in the California Legislature. Not a one.

And that, from the point of view of those who matter, is the real 'problem' facing California. Simply put, the lack of entrenched and thoroughly corrupted incumbents has resulted in a Legislature that is entirely too independent. If you pay close attention as Deukmejian explains how to 'fix' the Legislature, you may detect a very convoluted, and quite revealing, argument: Virtually all [incumbents] are in safe districts, so we don't have real competition for those seats any longer. And in my opinion, there's two things we can do, structurally, to help to improve this situation. One is, we have term limits in California, and while I agree that term limits has a good purpose, especially for those who overstay their welcome, I think the terms are too short. And so I think we could have an initiative that would combine increasing the term limits to twelve years - have that as the maximum, rather than six years as it is now for the assembly, or eight years for the senate - but also, as a part of that, let's have an independent commission - independent from the Legislature - draw those district boundary lines ... [then] Legislators would get longer terms and, at the same time, there would be more competition for those positions.

Sounds great! Maybe we can get Tom DeLay to put together that 'independent' commission for us, if he isn't too busy. And maybe if the longer terms work out, we can just do away with the term limits entirely. That ought to fix the problem.

In case that type of 'reform' doesn't create a sufficiently corrupt Legislature, Gray Davis chimed in with another suggestion: "Let me give you another possible reform. Jess Unruh instituted a lot of reforms in this state. One of them that I think we ought to reexamine is the full time Legislature ... I really believe that we ought to limit the amount of time that people spend legislating." Deukmejian, Brown and Wilson, meanwhile, advocated bypassing the Legislature entirely through the use of ballot initiatives.

While weakening the Legislature is obviously a major goal, it is also important that we not forget to, at the same time, expand the power of the chief executive of the state. Jerry Brown twice tackled that subject, with Pete Wilson both times providing the 'bipartisan' consensus: Brown: California can be governed, but the executive has to take responsibility ... like Governor Schwarzenegger is doing now.

Wilson: I agree with Jerry -- I think that you need a strong executive.

Brown: I think that's the imbalance -- a weakened chief executive.

Wilson: What [Schwarzenegger] is gonna have to do is what Jerry Brown just said a governor should do: he should be an aggressive chief executive.

Pete Wilson also tossed out another suggestion for reforming the state: do away with the silly practice of actually electing various state officials. Sneaky Pete had a better idea: "I think that the governor ought to appoint most of the other constitutional - what are now constitutional - officers."

So there you have it, folks -- the prescription for 'reforming' California's political system. Let's quickly review, shall we? We need to: (1) expand the power of the governor's office, creating a "strong executive"; (2) bestow upon that strong executive the power to appoint most, or all, other state officials; and (3) weaken, corrupt, or, when all else fails, bypass the state Legislature.

I hate to rain on this parade, but that almost sounds like a formula for the creation of a dictatorship. But I guess we shouldn't expect anything less from the Former Governors Club. As Deukmejian candidly acknowledged, "the real truth is that every one of us would have preferred to be benevolent dictators in the office." Without a Legislature to hold them back, according to Sir Duke, "we could have really made tremendous improvements in California -- if we'd had all the power, you know."

Yeah, I do know, George. But I guess as long as we're talking about a "benevolent" dictatorship, then it won't be so bad. And Schwarzenegger seems like a benevolent kind of guy, so we probably have nothing to worry about. In case you missed it, by the way, Ahnuld revealed on *Meet the Press* that he is in favor of Senator Orrin Hatch's proposal to scrap the constitutional requirement that U.S. presidents be native born. So I guess the Plastic Man is hoping to take his 'benevolent dictator' act to Washington. Who would have guessed?

\* \* \* \* \*

I almost forgot to mention that the Former Governors Club had another idea: open all of California to legalized gambling, with the state receiving, according to Deukmejian, a "good, sizable amount of the revenue."

Another great idea from George Deukmejian! Why raise taxes when you can entice the economically desperate to just *give* the state money? Jerry Brown, who helms a city with some of the most impoverished "inner city" neighborhoods in the state, loved the idea. Oakland, he said, could sure use some casinos: "Give me a few billboards on scenic highways and a few gambling casinos, and we'll have no more fiscal challenges."

It's good to see that "Governor Moonbeam" is still thinking 'outside the box.'

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Before continuing, I really need to address the issue of spam. Actually, what I would like to do is make an open appeal to the spammers of the world. But first, let me say that I am doing everything that I can to work with you guys. I really am. For example, I have learned to live with your constant insinuations that I am neither adequately equipped nor functional. I have also learned to live with the constant solicitations for Vicodin, Vioxx and Oxycontin. In fact, I now put those to good use: instead of just deleting them, which would be such a waste, I forward them all to Rush Limbaugh. So as you can see, I am doing everything possible to drum up business for you. And in return, I ask only one small favor: could we please leave my colon out of this?

\* \* \* \* \*

Has anyone heard anything about Saddam Hussein lately? I'm just curious, since he seemed to be the talk of the town just a couple of months ago, and now he seems to have dropped completely out of sight.

I have to confess here that I was a little baffled by the capture. There is usually a certain logic to almost everything that Team Bush does, once one accepts the ugly reality of the world that we live in. But the capture of Saddam made no sense at all, since the primary accomplishment, beyond all the media spin, was depriving Washington of the last fraudulent justification for a continued American military presence in Iraq.

The 'weapons of mass destruction' thing obviously hasn't worked out. And the 'Al Qaeda connection' never really panned out either. The only thing we had left was our noble goal of freeing the Iraqi people from the tyranny of Saddam's cruel regime. So now that the King of the Evildoers has been captured, and both his sons have been killed, and all but ten of his 'Most Wanted' henchmen have been captured or killed (according to the Bush propaganda mill), isn't it about time for G.I. George to suit up, shove a sock down his pants, and unfurl that "Mission Accomplished" banner once again? Isn't our work done?

Several claims made repeatedly by the Bush administration were exposed by the capture as lies. We had been told, for example, that Saddam was leading the resistance movement. But the suggestion that an organized resistance movement was directed from a crude hole in the ground seems as preposterous as the notion that the September 11 attacks were planned in a cave in Afghanistan.

We had been frequently reassured that Saddam could lead us to those elusive 'weapons of mass destruction.' But in a strange turn of events, the weapons inspection teams were pulled just after Hussein's capture, after not only failing in their mission to find actual 'weapons of mass destruction,' but after failing to even find any facilities capable of producing 'weapons of mass destruction.'

We had also been told that many in Iraq were not yet willing to work with America in effecting 'regime change' because they feared that America was not going to 'finish the job,' and that Saddam would one day return. But it was immediately clear that the capture did nothing to lessen the resistance to the U.S. occupation.

Saddam was obviously of far more propaganda value when he was still at large. And that is why I, and I'm sure many others, were left scratching our heads over the unexpected turn of events ... until, that is, I discovered that it was actually Kurds who had captured Saddam. And they had, obviously without running the idea past the White House, loudly trumpeted that fact to the international media, before any announcements were forthcoming from the Pentagon or the U.S. media.

So Washington, as it turns out, really had no choice but to announce the capture of the not-so-elusive Hussein. Making the best of an unwelcome situation, the capture was spun as such a huge victory for Sir George that it all but insured him a second term in office. Saddam was then quickly shuffled out of the media spotlight.

I did hear something recently about Hussein having cancer, but then that story seemed to quickly disappear as well. Wouldn't that be something if Hussein were to die of natural causes before being held accountable for his alleged war crimes? It's kind of a shame, when you think about it, that our intelligence people didn't pick up on the cancer before the war, because



then they would have known that 'regime change' was coming even without the military assault. But I guess they blew that one, just like they blew the call on 'Weapons of Mass Destruction.'

Oh, didn't you hear? It was all the CIA's fault. None of the fine and noble public servants in the Bush administration lied. They just drew erroneous conclusions based on the faulty intelligence they got from those chronic bumbler over there at Langley. Those guys are always screwing something up. In fact, this isn't the first time they have blown a call on Bush's watch. You may recall that we already played the Blame the CIA Game after that little 9-11 incident. You may also recall that it is kind of a win-win game for Washington. The White House wins by shifting blame elsewhere, exonerating all key members of Team Bush. But then in a strange twist, Langley wins as well, since no one is fired, or even reprimanded, and the agency is showered with billions of dollars in additional funding and granted expanded powers, ostensibly so that we don't have these types of screw-ups in the future.

I'm feeling generous today, so I am going to offer to save a lot of time and taxpayer money by solving the great mystery of the Iraq intelligence failure: they lied. They lied repeatedly. And when I say "they," I don't mean just a few Team Bush players. I mean that the White House lied, the State Department lied, the Pentagon lied, the intelligence community lied, countless think tank 'analysts' lied, Representatives and Senators lied, 'Republicans' and 'Democrats' lied, and last but surely not least, the entire U.S. media establishment lied. And it was painfully obvious that they all were lying because they weren't even telling good lies, but rather recycled lies that had already been thoroughly discredited.

As for Saddam, his fate remains unclear. We all know that we won't likely see him surface in a public trial. The only thing we can be sure of is that America has lost a great bogeyman -- a great personification of the 'War on Terror' and a great justification for both waging it and expanding it. Luckily, we still have Osama bin Laden.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Los Angeles Times*, like the rest of the U.S. media establishment, missed the story about the extraordinarily violent police repression of the demonstrations in Miami outside the 'Free Trade Area of the Americas' meeting. If I remember correctly, some surgically altered member of the Jackson family was causing some kind of commotion at the time, and every reporter in the free world was on top of that monumentally important story.

Perhaps feeling guilty for the lack of initial coverage, the *Times* rectified the situation on December 21, 2003 -- by burying a story on page A36 in the "In Brief" section. The article, headlined "Police a 'Disgrace' at Protests, Judge Says," is reproduced here in its entirety: Police conduct was a "disgrace for the community" during demonstrations in Miami at the Free Trade Area of the Americas meeting, according to a judge presiding over several protesters' cases. In a court transcript, Circuit Judge Richard Margolius also said he saw at least 20 felonies committed by police. "Pretty disgraceful what I saw with my own eyes. And I have always supported the police during my entire career," Margolius said. "This was a real eye-opener. A disgrace for the community."

Judge Margolius' observations are indeed "a real eye-opener." Such was the level of open criminality by the Miami Police Department that a presumably casual observer of just a portion of the mayhem "saw at least 20 felonies committed by police." That would be, lest there be any misunderstanding, at least 20 felonies committed against peaceful, unarmed, lawfully assembled citizens, including a good number of senior citizens. At least 20 felonies committed by officers outfitted as faceless, anonymous, futuristic soldiers.

But we don't live in a police state, so don't go thinking otherwise. If we did, the *Los Angeles Times* would surely be the first to let us know.

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Speaking of underreported stories in the *Times*, another one turned up on February 29, 2004, in the "In Brief" section on page A4. The article, concerning the airplane crash that killed Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski on February 26, is reproduced here. Pay particular attention to the first sentence:

Weather, human error or technical failure may have caused Thursday's air crash that killed Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski in Bosnia, but foul play can be ruled out, Macedonian deputy public prosecutor Roksanda Krstevska said. Officials said they would wait for investigators to finish their work before setting a date for elections to choose a successor. The government set up a panel to work on meeting a requirement that the vote be held in 40 days.

Parliament Speaker Ljubco Jordanovski has been named interim acting president.

So here is the scenario: investigators are claiming to have no idea yet what caused the plane crash. It could have been a problem with the pilot. It could have been a problem with the aircraft. It could have been a problem with the flying conditions. The door is wide open -- to any sort of accidental cause. And yet "foul play" can already be definitively ruled out. Investigators do not yet know whether the aircraft experienced any technical failures, but they do know that no one deliberately caused the plane to experience any technical failures. They don't know if the pilot committed any fatal errors, but they do know that no one took any actions to cause the pilot to commit any fatal errors.

As a general rule of thumb, whenever "foul play" is categorically ruled out before any sort of real investigation has even begun, it is a fairly safe bet that there was "foul play" involved. But that sort of thing, of course, only happens in places like Macedonia -- never here in the good old U.S. of A. ... right? I mean, unless you want to be a nitpicker and bring up Wellstone. Or Carnahan. Or Boggs. Or Begich. Or ...

\* \* \* \* \*

The wife (who demanded that she be fully credited) happened to stumble across a legal "Motion to Suppress" filed by attorneys Owen Walker and Elizabeth L. Prevett in the case *United States of America v. Richard Colvin Reid, United States District Court, District of Massachusetts (Criminal Case #02-10013-WGY)*.

I did not follow the 'Shoebomber' case when it was being flogged mercilessly by the media, so I don't know if the information contained in the defense motion received much circulation. If this comes as old news to you, then I offer my apologies for the belated reporting.

One intriguing fact brought to light by the defense motion was that Reid, after being "restrained by several male passengers and tied up by members of the flight crew," was "forcibly medicated by an injection into his abdomen of 10 mg Diazepam (Valium) and 0.4 mg Narcan ... Approximately an hour before landing, he was forcibly injected with medication a third time, by an injection into his abdomen of 25 mg of Phenegren."

Pardon me for asking, but is it normal practice for airlines to carry powerful, injectable drugs on routine flights? And why is there no mention of exactly who it was that injected Reid? Who on that airplane had the expertise, the medical supplies, and the authority to forcibly drug someone? And why is it not a felony offense to repeatedly assault a man of unknown

drug tolerances and allergies with a potentially deadly weapon? And why, if Reid was already drugged and securely bound, and therefore no longer posing a threat to anyone, was he drugged again shortly before landing?

The American Airlines flight, bound for Miami, landed instead at Boston's Logan Airport at 12:55 PM. Reid was promptly taken into custody by Massachusetts State Police officers. While in a police cruiser awaiting transport to the State Police station at Logan, he had a brief, but interesting, conversation with an officer: "Defendant asked several times why no media were present and there was a short discussion about whether the event was a 'big deal' or not. At some point, defendant said: 'You'll see, you'll see.'"

How did Reid know that his arrest, apparently considered no "big deal" by arresting officers, would be inflated by Washington and the media into a major 'terrorist' event? Did Reid know that he was very soon to be immortalized as the "Shoe Bomber"?

After Reid had been held at the Logan station for a few hours, FBI agents summoned emergency medical technicians to assess his condition. The two responding EMTs, who arrived at 4:20 PM, "were told that defendant had been restrained and forcibly medicated in unknown dosages."

If officers had no idea what dosages had been administered to Reid, why did they wait three-and-a-half hours to seek medical attention? And how did they later arrive at the precise dosages listed in the defense motion? And, again, who administered those drugs, and on whose authority?

After contacting their supervisor, the EMTs "made it clear to the FBI that defendant should be taken to a hospital for evaluation ... At approximately 4:56 PM, the FBI permitted [the EMTs] to enter defendant's cell and take his vital signs." Reid's "vital signs were off," and the EMTs again stressed that Reid needed to be taken to a hospital. "The FBI told the EMT's that the agents needed to talk to defendant for about 15 minutes before the EMT's took him to a hospital." Reid was then taken to an interview room where he was questioned by two FBI Special Agents and a Security Service Agent from the U.S. State Department.

Reid never made it to the hospital. The EMTs remained at the station for at least the first three hours of the interrogation. Their requests to see the defendant and assess his condition were ignored by the FBI. At around midnight, seven hours after the "15 minute" interrogation of the heavily drugged, and unrepresented, defendant began, Reid was transported to a county jail.

It is probably safe to say that the Shoe Bomber case can proudly take its place alongside the DC Sniper case and the uninvestigated Anthrax attacks as yet another staged 'terrorist' incident. Let's cut to the chase here, folks: it's all bullshit. All you have to do is scratch beneath the surface a little bit to see that the official stories just never seem to add up.

\* \* \* \* \*

Coming in the next edition: I respond to an angry letter from Michael Ruppert in which he issues an unusual challenge. Who knew he even read this stuff? I guess one of his people must have alerted him that he was being blasphemed by some crackpot on the Internet. On the same day that Ruppert's e-mail arrived in my in-box, I received a missive from a prominent critic of his (which I will also respond to). Suddenly my opinion is so monumentally important that both sides are eager to point out the errors of my ways. And then, strangely enough, I received

requests for not one, but two, radio interviews! What can I say? A guy gets to feeling a little cranky, sends out a couple of contrary newsletters, and suddenly everyone wants to talk. Go figure.

[A final note: with the Columbine bloodbath back in the news, I received a few inquiries about my past musings on that subject. The postings that you are searching for are at <http://davesweb.cncost.com/littleton.htm> and <http://davesweb.cncost.com/nwsltr8.html> (scroll down; it is the last topic covered).]

## **NEWSLETTER #73**

**October 23, 2005**

***Katrina, Eugenics and 'Peak Oil'***

***<http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr73.html>***

So ... I thought that I'd try the old "fake my [death](#) and boost sales" charade, 'cause I heard that it worked great for the Beatles back in the '60s, but it hasn't worked out all that well for me, to tell you the truth, which is why, for better or worse, I'm back. Did anyone miss me?

I have a lot of catching up to do, so much so that I don't really know where to begin, but I guess I'll start with the following brief news story, which I happened to stumble upon while digging deep within a recent edition of the Los Angeles Times:

### **KATRINA'S AFTERMATH**

**Cuban Hurricane Preparation Offers Lessons in Organization**

*Los Angeles Times*

September 10, 2005; Page A30

HAVANA — Cubans have no Astrodome or cruise ships to house evacuees, and meals-ready-to-eat usually consist of rice and beans.

But they have weathered some of the most violent storms the tropics can churn up, with surprisingly low death tolls and almost perfect compliance with evacuation orders.

Last year, United Nations emergency relief coordinator Jan Egeland singled out Cuba for praise among Caribbean nations for hurricane evacuation planning. When Hurricane Ivan swiped the island last September, for example, Cuba didn't record a single death, but 115 people died regionally. The same month, Hurricane Jeanne killed more than 1,500 in Haiti, many drowning in floodwaters.

Now, as analysts and politicians examine how the U.S. government responded to Hurricane Katrina — and how to avoid a similar catastrophe — some say this communist island may offer a few lessons.

Cuban evacuations are mostly carried out by community groups that take cues from the government. The military assists, unarmed.

"Cuba views hurricanes as a top national security priority, and they know the drill," said Daniel P. Erikson, Caribbean specialist at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think tank. The storms not only imperil lives, he said, but threaten Cuba's economic underpinnings: agriculture and tourism.

"The drill" Erikson refers to includes yearly military exercises across the island, with two-day training sessions for emergency workers, simulated evacuations and reviews of emergency plans.

During hurricanes, Cuba's four state-run television stations run nonstop evacuation orders and weather reports. The coverage is anchored by President Fidel Castro, who coordinates response during live broadcasts as if waging battle against an invading army.

"It's an organized system, in a pyramid structure," said Dr. Gabriel Diaz Ramirez, a Cuban pediatrician dispatched to Indonesia this year to treat tsunami survivors. "We have our government's support."

Perhaps the most striking element of Cuba's disaster preparedness is that most residents obey evacuation orders without question. The government says it evacuated 1.5 million people in July ahead of Hurricane Dennis. Most went to safe zones, and 245,000 flocked to state-run shelters.

This contrasts starkly with New Orleans, where thousands decided to ride out the storm and were later plucked from flooded attics or perished. Others are still refusing to leave, even with toxic muck on the streets and armed forces moving in to carry out mandatory evacuations.

Erikson suggested that the smooth displacements were a product of the government's tight control over residents.

"It's still a police state," he said. "You could say one advantage they may have is the ability to move large numbers of people in a short amount of time."

"But of course the political environment in Cuba makes it difficult to resist those kinds of orders."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-cuba10sep10,1,3142651,print.story?coll=la-home-headlines&ctrack=1&cset=true>

Stupid fucking Commies! Can you imagine a government actually demonstrating concern for the health and safety of the people? What are they thinking over there? And what is this business of sending in the military *unarmed*, as if they were being sent in to do some sort of humanitarian work? How in the hell are you going to issue shoot-to-kill orders if your relief workers aren't even packing heat? Those pinkoes are just so damn backwards in their thinking. I mean, who the hell relies on "community groups" when you can just get on the phone and call in some professional mercenaries?



[\(Blackwater Mercenaries Deploy in New Orleans\)](#) Come to think of it, I bet they don't even have any 'private' paramilitary outfits in Cuba. They do though have an awful lot of medical doctors. So many that they offered to send over a veritable army of 1,100 of them to tend to the victims of Katrina. The Bush administration, however, realizing that the presence of swarms of qualified medical personnel could negatively impact their denegrofication project, declined the offer.

The writer and editor of the L.A. Times piece, after consulting their trusty copy of "Orwell for Dummies," concluded that Cuba is better at responding to disasters because "it's still a police state." But that much is rather obvious, since, as any fool knows, a "police state" is one that responds to natural disasters by sending in actual relief workers, while a "democracy" generally responds to natural disasters by militarily occupying the zone of destruction and criminalizing the survivors. Most of you probably remember learning all that stuff back in your Civics classes.

There is, of course, an alternative explanation for why the Cuban people willingly follow evacuation orders while the residents of New Orleans were reluctant to do so. Granted, the alternative explanation lacks the disconnection from reality so clearly on display in the *Times* article, but we should probably give it some consideration nonetheless, so here it is: *the Cuban people know that after the danger has passed, they will actually be allowed to return to their homes!*

The people of New Orleans, on the other hand, had good reason to fear that they would not.

It is painfully obvious that many of the former residents of New Orleans will never be going home. Many did not survive, though we will never know the true number since it was apparent from early on that the death toll would be covered up. Of those who did survive, many have seen the last of their family homes. Residents of New Orleans probably didn't realize it at the time, but the stage was set two months before Katrina came ashore, on June 23, 2005, when the U.S. Supreme Court, in its infinite wisdom, decreed that it was well within the 'rule of law' for the government to seize what is ostensibly privately held land so that that land can then be passed into the grubby, bloody hands of developers.

The stage was actually set earlier than that, in April 2005, when the United States Congress, in *its* infinite wisdom, opted to pass some bankruptcy 'reform' legislation. I'll defer to the L.A. Times once again for an explanation of exactly how that 'reform' will come into play:

After virtually every major hurricane of the last 25 years, bankruptcy filings have grown significantly faster than usual as victims sought to shake off old debts in order to rebuild their economically ruined lives.

But unless changes are made to an overhaul of the nation's bankruptcy law due to kick in next month, many of those affected by Hurricane Katrina and the resulting floods will have a substantially harder time

winning court relief from loans they incurred for homes and businesses that are now gone, according to a variety of judges, lawyers and policy experts.

“Just because your house or car is somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico doesn’t mean that your auto loan or mortgage went with it,” said Brady C. Williamson, who was appointed by President Clinton to head a national bankruptcy commission in the mid-1990s. ([Peter Gosselin “New Bankruptcy Law Could Exact a Toll on Storm Victims,” Los Angeles Times, September 7, 2005](#))

Imagine, if you will, this purely – *ahem* – ‘hypothetical’ scenario (which, as we all know, could never happen in the land of the free and home of the brave): under the pretense that conditions are far too dangerous for you to stay, you and your family are forced from your family home by heavily armed troops. You are then shipped off, against your will, to some distant, unspecified location, where your actions are monitored lest you decide to do something crazy, such as attempting to return to what you, quite foolishly, still think of as your home. That home, meanwhile, is condemned and quickly bulldozed, though the actual damage to the property was quite minimal. The ground that your house used to stand on is seized by the government and will soon serve as the home of the “Pirates of the Caribbean” ride at the new Disneyland New Orleans®. Having been stripped of everything that you once called your own – including your home and all its furnishings, the land it stood on, your vehicle(s), and your job – and having been separated from your friends and neighbors, you are now faced with the daunting prospect of completely rebuilding your life with little to work with other than a mountain of debt, which, you are quickly assured, you will be required to pay back. And guess what? This month’s payments are already past due.

If you were ever to find yourself in this ‘hypothetical’ predicament, which of the following would best describe your situation? (a) I live in some sort of hellish, Kafkaesque police state; (b) I live in the world’s greatest democracy; or (c) I’m Caucasian, so this doesn’t really apply to me – yet.

I have to admit that I am quite impressed at the amazing foresight displayed by the Washington gang in getting these new and vastly improved interpretations of “bankruptcy” and “eminent domain” on the books just in time to serve the needs of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. And I am also quite impressed with Washington’s propaganda unit, otherwise known as “Hollywood,” which continues to demonstrate an uncanny ability to serve up “product” that offers commentary on ongoing events, despite the fact that that product was filmed long before the events even took place.

Consider, for example, the new television series “Invasion,” which debuted on September 21, just a few short weeks after the flooding of New Orleans, and just three days before Rita came ashore. Two curious facts about this new show stood out even before the first episode aired: (1) ABC chose to premier it along with the rest of its slate of new Fall shows even though it was obviously in very poor taste to do so; and (2) there was not a whimper of protest from any avenue of the media over that decision.

For those who have not seen “Invasion” (and you are all excused for that oversight, since the series, shockingly enough, sucks), it concerns the rather strange goings-on in the aftermath of – are you ready for this? – a Gulf Coast hurricane. Prominently featured on the program are frequent allusions to governmental cover-ups. The hurricane that kicked off the series, you see, was apparently not your run-of-the-mill hurricane. According to one character on the show – a character who, as custom dictates, is portrayed as a paranoid ‘conspiracy theorist’ with a fondness for aliens – the hurricane was actually an elaborate “cover for a military operation.” Elsewhere in the premier episode, a young girl spoke cryptically about how “the truth will never come out” because the media wouldn’t hang around for long before they moved on to other things. (These may or may not be exact quotes; I wasn’t taking notes.)

Despite being a mediocre show at best, “Invasion” has received rave reviews from many supposed critics. The fact that the show is on the air at all, despite the obvious insensitivity shown to the tens of thousands of victims of Katrina and Rita, coupled with the fact that it is actually being praised, rather than questioned, would seem to indicate that some powerful folks in the Washington/Hollywood axis feel that it is important that “Invasion” be seen by the viewing public.

And that, of course, raises the obvious question: *why* is it important that this show be seen? My guess is that it is probably because at the very time when people of conscience should be asking questions not too dissimilar from those raised in “Invasion,” Hollywood has already, in its inimitable style, proactively relegated such concerns to the world of television fantasies. And, of course, thrown a bunch of aliens into the mix. Can anal probes be far behind?

Perhaps we should throw caution to the wind and have a quick look at some of the ‘conspiracy theories’ surrounding Hurricane Katrina. There certainly is no shortage of them out there. Probably the most elaborate theories are the ones claiming that the government actually *created* Katrina, using advanced, ‘black’ technology. Personally, I find that scenario to be highly unlikely. And yes, by the way, I am well aware that control of the weather has been, for some time now, an explicitly stated goal of the U.S. military. And yes, I am also well aware of the HAARP project in Alaska. However, there is a big difference between having the desire and willingness to do something, and having the technological ability to actually do it. And I seriously doubt that the technology to create and control manmade weather systems currently exists. I seriously doubt that mankind even has an accurate understanding of how naturally-occurring weather systems operate, which would seem to be a prerequisite for creating artificial systems.

A related theory is the one that holds that while Katrina was not necessarily artificially created, it was deliberately *steered* into New Orleans. Again, this seems very unlikely – more plausible than the creation theories, I suppose, but still very unlikely. And the truth of the matter is that what these almost entirely speculative theories primarily do is draw attention away from the real question that needs to be asked here, which is: *was Hurricane Katrina even the primary cause of the devastation in New Orleans, or did it just provide a convenient “cover for a military operation”?*

Already long forgotten, by both the media and the always well-informed American public, is that there was a bizarrely long gap between when Katrina came ashore and when the levees were breached. Also long forgotten is that the earliest reports out of New Orleans held that the city had been spared from a direct hit, and the storm had therefore done considerably less damage than anticipated.

Captain Nora Tyson – commander of the USS Bataan, a Navy ship that first rode out the storm in the Gulf of Mexico before following it to shore – perfectly summed up the initial feeling about the storm’s impact on New Orleans: “On Monday it was like, ‘Wow, it missed us, it took a turn east,’ and everything eased up. It was ‘Let’s open up Bourbon Street, have a beer, let’s go party,’ and understandably so. And then all of a sudden, literally and figuratively, the dam broke, and here we are.” ([Stephen J. Hedges “Navy Ship Nearby Underused,” Chicago Tribune, September 4, 2005](#))

According to the Los Angeles Times, Wall Street was feeling in a celebratory mood as well: “Hurricanes are never good news for insurance companies. But by veering east of New Orleans on Monday, Hurricane Katrina may have saved insurers a bundle. Major casualty insurers saw only modest losses on Wall Street ...” (Kathy M. Kristof “Insurers Reevaluate Hurricane’s Losses,” Los Angeles Times, August 30, 2005, Page C2) On the front page of the same newspaper, Katrina was said to have “delivered a hard but glancing blow to New Orleans, then spent its full fury on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, swamping beach resorts and inland towns.” (Scott Gold and Ellen Barry “Katrina Hits the Gulf Coast,” Los Angeles Times, August 30, 2005, Page A1)

That “glancing blow” would have serious repercussions – but not until the next day. Hurricane Katrina arrived on the shores of New Orleans on Monday morning, August 29. By the time night fell on the partially evacuated city, it appeared as though the danger had passed and New Orleans had successfully dodged a bullet. The Category 4 winds never really materialized, the rain was no match for New Orleans’ formidable pumping system, and all 350 miles of the city’s system of levees and canals held fast against the feared storm surges. Until, that is, the wee hours of the morning of Tuesday, August 30, when three canals (the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal, the London Street Canal and the Industrial Canal, *aka* the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal) suffered major breaches in no less than five separate locations.

The official story, for the first several weeks, was that storm surges from the mighty Katrina were simply too much for the overburdened levee walls to handle. The rising water first surged over the tops of the levee walls, we were to believe, sending the first floodwaters into New Orleans, and then the levee walls themselves ultimately succumbed to the surging waters. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Now, that’s a nice little story. It really is. It’s at least as good, I’d have to say, as any of the other stories cooked up in recent years to explain away unusual events. True, if you really give it some thought – like, say, for thirty seconds or so – then it doesn’t seem to make a lot of sense, but that has never stopped a

wild yarn from becoming a part of the new reality before, so it shouldn't be a problem now.

Once upon a time, in a more innocent era, people might have questioned how it was that storm surges could have caused the breaches in the levees nearly a full day after the storm had hit town. "How can that be?" they might have asked. "The storm came through here on Monday and the levees weren't breached until Tuesday. The wind and rain were pretty well gone by then, so it seems to me like it would have been kind of an odd time for a massive storm surge. And it seems pretty darn peculiar that all five of those breaches – all five of them! – occurred under cover of night some 18-21 hours after Katrina came ashore."

Today, in these much more enlightened times, we would never raise such foolish questions. Instead, we instinctively do what is expected of all refined, cultured men and women of the twenty-first century: we warmly embrace whatever nonsensical lies are thrown our way, and then we go and share those lies with others, only to find that everyone else already knows the same lies, which is okay, as it turns out, because that makes it easier for us to all sit around and discuss current events as though we actually know what we're talking about.

In this particular situation, however, we do not have to blindly accept the first official lie. There are slightly different rules at play here, because this is one of those cases where the official story has been officially repudiated. That official repudiation, however, was a rather coy one, which means that this is a situation where it is okay to believe either the first official lie or the second official lie. Either one will do just fine, just so long as you firmly believe in one of the two. The closest parallel I can think of here concerns the attack on the Pentagon on September 11. Readers will recall that at first it was claimed that the plane and everything in it was vaporized by the intense heat from the resulting fire. Later, however, it was claimed that the passengers were actually recovered and identified through DNA analysis, and that the plane had been largely reconstructed and was sitting in an unidentified aircraft hangar.

Obviously, both stories could not possibly be true, and, in fact, neither one of them was actually true. But that's not the point here. The point here is that it is perfectly okay to be a true believer in either official version of reality. What is not okay is trying to insert your own reality, or, worse yet, a relatively objective reality into the mix. That would be considered a major *faux pas*. The important thing to remember here is that, while you are not limited to a *specific* official reality, you must choose from one of the available official realities. And as I started to say, there is a new official story concerning the breached levees. It goes something like this:

The levee breaches along two major canals that flooded New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina resulted from massive soil failures under concrete storm walls, not from hurricane surges that sent water over the tops of the walls as Army officials initially said, according to teams of investigators who have examined evidence in the last week. The findings appear to chip away at the simple story that the storm surge was much larger and higher than the walls were designed to handle ...

Investigators have found no evidence of such overflow and foundational scouring at the breaches in the London Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canals, two main failures behind the central New Orleans flooding. In fact, in one case, water marks are a full 2½ feet below the tops of the walls. (Ralph Vartabedian “Soil Failure, Not Overflow, Cited in Levee Breaches,” Los Angeles Times, October 8, 2005, Page A26)

So it appears that it has now been officially acknowledged that there was no massive storm surge that sent water pouring over the levee walls, on either Monday or Tuesday mornings. Even at the height of the storm, the hurricane’s surges didn’t come close to overflowing the levee walls at either the 17th Street or London Avenue Canals, where water remained "more than two feet below the tops of the walls." (Ralph Vartabedian and Stephen Braun “System Failures Seen in Levees,” Los Angeles Times, October 22, 2005) But then, hours later, when the winds and rain had died down, and relative calm had returned to the waters of Lake Pontchartrain, the soil underneath the levee walls, in multiple locations, spontaneously failed. Along the London Avenue Canal, for example, “a 100-foot-long block of soil, about 15 feet deep, was pushed back 35 feet. As the earth berm shifted, the concrete storm wall on top collapsed into the hole left by the moving soil and disappeared into the water.”

I wonder what could cause that to happen? Why would there be such a tremendous lateral force exerted on the soil underlying the levee walls at that particular time? Is that the norm in the aftermath of a hurricane? I’m no expert in the dynamics of various types of natural disasters, but it seems to me that a phenomenon like that would more likely be the result of an earthquake than a hurricane. Another possibility, I suppose, is that some type of depth charges were responsible for undermining the levees. I’ll bet that the Pentagon has something in its catalogue that would do the trick. But I don’t recall reading any news reports of the levees being deliberately blown, so I guess we have to rule out that possibility.

Luckily, we have an alternative explanation. According to the most recent reports, the soil failures were caused by oak tress and burrowing rodents: "The triggering event in the catastrophic failure of the 17th Street Canal may have been the fall of a large oak tree planted at the base of the levee ... The tree's falling started a chain reaction that took out several hundred feet of flood wall. A similar scenario may have played out on the London Avenue Canal." In addition, "burrowing animals created large tunnels that undermined already weak foundations." Levee board officials, however, openly scoffed at such foolishness, noting that "there were no trees on the levees anywhere," and neither were there large concentrations of burrowing rodents. (Ralph Vartabedian and Stephen Braun “System Failures Seen in Levees,” Los Angeles Times, October 22, 2005)

Since it is pretty obvious that only a crazed 'conspiracy theorist' would buy into the notion that oak trees and rodents caused the massive flooding of New Orleans, let's turn our attention back to the more credible theory that the levees were deliberately breached. And, as it turns out, there were indeed some reports of deliberate flooding, albeit much later in the day Tuesday, many hours after the initial breaches: “authorities took the decision to flood [Crowder Road] district in an apparent attempt to sluice out some of the water that had submerged a neighbouring district ... The authorities had given people in the district until 5pm on Tuesday to get out – after that they would open the floodgates.” ([Jamie Doward “They’re Not Giving Us What We Need To Survive,” The Observer, September 4, 2005](#))



Do levees have floodgates? Gates that, if opened, allow neighborhoods to be flooded? That's a pretty odd feature. I hope they keep them locked, to keep the neighborhood kids from trying to open them. What really happened, I suppose, is that a levee was deliberately breached. But I wonder how they did that? I wonder if they undermined it by blasting away the soil underneath? I'm just curious because that seems to be a pretty effective technique. And it probably makes relatively little noise. But I guess in this case noise wasn't really a factor, since breaching the levee was an officially acknowledged act. No one was trying to hide anything. If you were trying to hide authorship of the breaches though, it might be a good idea to undermine the levee walls rather than just blasting them directly.

Does anyone find it curious, by the way, that the Crowder Road District was deliberately flooded? What was the thought process behind that decision? ... "Well, it looks like we have one neighborhood over here that is pretty well trashed. There's just water everywhere. So I think what we should do – and I've given this a great deal of thought – is try to drain some or all of the water into that neighborhood right over there. That way, we will have two flooded neighborhoods! Actually, truth be told, we're hoping that if we act quickly enough, the first neighborhood can be saved – at the expense, of course, of the second neighborhood. And I'm sure the people in the second neighborhood won't mind because, as a general rule, the black folks around here are always willing to lend a hand to help out the white folks."

The main point of this semi-digression, I suppose, is that as of Tuesday (August 30) evening, actions were being taken to deliberately cause flooding in certain neighborhoods, and no credible explanation was being given for these actions. Perhaps then it is not so unreasonable to ponder whether the initial breaches, all occurring under cover of night, all occurring many hours after the storm had passed through town, and all causing flooding primarily in the poorest sections of the city, were deliberate as well. And perhaps the additional flooding – occurring too long after Katrina's landfall to be credibly attributed to the storm, and so therefore officially, though quietly, acknowledged as a deliberate act – was undertaken to correct a 'problem' with the initial flooding, that problem being that a few of the targeted neighborhoods were spared while a few of the non-targeted neighborhoods were not.

Before moving on from this discussion of the levees, I should probably mention one rather curious incident that occurred in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. I realize, of course, that America is home to the largest, mightiest, 'freest' media machine the world has ever seen, and because of that, there is virtually no scrap of news that escapes the attention of the press corps and the American people. Nevertheless, in the unlikely event that some of you may have missed this story the first time around, I present it to you here in its entirety:

Police shot eight people carrying guns on a New Orleans bridge Sunday, killing five or six, a deputy chief said. A spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers said the victims were contractors on their way to repair a canal. The contractors were walking across a bridge on their way to launch barges into Lake Pontchartrain to fix the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal, said John Hall, a spokesman for the Corps. Earlier Sunday, New Orleans Deputy Police Chief W.J. Riley said police shot eight people, killing five or six. The shootings took place on the Danziger Bridge, which spans a canal connecting Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. No other details were immediately available. ("Police Kill Five Contractors on LA Bridge," Associated Press, September 4, 2005)

This was, of course, a huge story when it first broke. I mean, how often do groups of armed military personnel and groups of armed police personnel reenact the "gunfight at the OK

Corral” on an American street using live ammunition? This unprecedented event – the gunning down of half-a-dozen military personnel on American soil for merely going about doing their jobs – naturally generated a considerable amount of media attention. Bill O’Reilly alone spent the better part of a week hashing over the ‘talking points’ of the story. To the surprise of everyone, Greta Van Susteren and Nancy Grace even took a break from their relentless search for Natalie Holloway to focus attention on the big story. Oprah had on the wives of the fallen contractors to discuss how they were dealing with their loss. Investigations were quickly launched into the incident by the Army Corps of Engineers, the New Orleans Police Department, the Louisiana Governor's Office, the New Orleans Mayor's Office, the United States Congress, and various other concerned parties.

You all remember all of that ... right? If not, it’s probably because none of it actually happened. Except for the part about the shootout between the Army Corps of Engineers and the New Orleans Police Department. That part really happened. At least, I’m assuming that there was quite a shootout, since one would expect that when armed military personnel are being fired upon, they will generally fire back. But all the rest, I just made up. Kind of like the real media just makes stuff up.

It is difficult to determine, given the scarcity of details available, what really happened. When the two organizations involved are the New Orleans Police Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it’s near impossible to determine who might have been the good guys in this story. Was this a case of corrupt elements of the NOPD thwarting efforts to arrest the flooding of New Orleans? Or was this a case of honest police officers thwarting efforts to further sabotage the levee system? Or was it neither? Was it merely a tragic case of mistaken identity? Possibly so, but the fact that this story was quickly buried suggests otherwise.

Moving on then ...

Much less discussed than the breakdown in the levee system was the unprecedented breakdown in the city’s second line of defense, its imposing system of pumping stations. Given that New Orleans sits below sea level, an effective pumping system is absolutely essential to the city’s survival. Without it, New Orleans would flood every time a decent rain came through town. Luckily then, the city has a pumping system like no other in the world. (“How the Levees Failed,” Discovery Channel, October 9, 2005)

Built in the early 1900s, New Orleans’ pumping system is composed of 23 pumping stations that house a combined 140 pumps. Though nearly a century old, these pumps remain, to this day, the largest and most powerful of their kind in the world. And, since they were built before America became a society that reveres disposability, the pumps are remarkably reliable. Right up until the day that Katrina came ashore, every one of those 140 pumps were fully operational. But that all changed very quickly in the aftermath of the storm, when, for reasons that have never been adequately explained – and never will be, because no one in government or the media will ever bother to ask – the decision was made to shut the system down.

The explanation that was given was that, since the major levee breaches lay between the pumping stations and Lake Pontchartrain, the pumps were serving no purpose other than to circulate the water right back through the breaches. It was not the case, however, that all 23 of the stations were situated in that manner, and yet all of them were apparently shut down. And *all of the stations*, while they were running, were serving at least one crucial function: keeping the pumping stations themselves from being flooded.

Once the pumps were shut down, the stations were promptly, and quite predictably, submerged, thus doing major damage to all of the pumps' electrical components. With one incredibly stupid, or one incredibly malicious act, a system that had performed nearly flawlessly for almost a century was rendered completely inoperable. Before repairs could even be attempted, workers were faced with the uniquely challenging task of pumping out the pumping stations. The damage was so extensive that two weeks after Katrina hit New Orleans, over half of the stations still had no running pumps.

It is difficult to think of a reasonable explanation for why the pumping stations were shut down, just as it is difficult to think of a logical explanation for why at least some neighborhoods were deliberately flooded. It is difficult as well to explain the curious timing of the five major levee breaches, though I suppose that in a world where three steel-framed skyscrapers can spontaneously collapse on a single day, the nearly simultaneous appearance of five major levee breaches, many hours after the supposedly precipitating event, doesn't really require any explanation at all.

## **NEWSLETTER #74**

**October 23, 2005**

***Katrina, Eugenics and 'Peak Oil,' Part II***

***<http://www.davesweb.cncost.com/nwsltr74.html>***

(Continued from [Newsletter #73](#))

At least one fact seems indisputable: neither "incompetence" nor "lack of preparation" can even begin to explain the actions of national, state and local officials in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It is perfectly obvious that there *was* a planned response, and that plan *was* fully implemented. The confusion over this has apparently arisen due to the erroneous belief that that plan had something to do with rescuing and providing aid and comfort to survivors.

If the problem was just that FEMA had failed to adequately respond to the disaster, then maybe, just maybe, we could write it off as incompetence. Far more difficult to explain away is that FEMA, and/or the Department of Homeland Security, *actively prevented any other individuals or groups from responding*. And we're not talking here about a couple of anomalous incidents. No, we're talking about an undeniable pattern of criminal behavior.

Among numerous other crimes against the people of New Orleans, FEMA declined an offer from the city of Chicago to send "44 Chicago Fire Department rescue and medical personnel and their gear, more than 100 Chicago police officers, 140 Streets and Sanitation, 146 Public Health and 8 Human Services workers, and a fleet of vehicles including 29 trucks, two boats and a mobile clinic." Instead, FEMA asked Chicago to send just a single truck. (["Daley 'Shocked' at Federal Snub of Offers to Help," Chicago Tribune, September 2, 2005](#))

FEMA also refused to allow into New Orleans "up to 500 Florida airboat pilots [who had] volunteered to rescue Hurricane Katrina victims, transport relief workers and ferry supplies." Many of the pilots had "spent thousands of their own dollars stocking their boats and swamp buggies with food, water, medical supplies and fuel." ([Nancy Imperiale "Airboaters Stalled by FEMA," Sun Sentinel, September 2, 2005](#)) Meanwhile, "More than 50 civilian aircraft responding to separate requests for evacuations from hospitals and other agencies swarmed to the area a day after Katrina hit, but FEMA blocked their efforts" as well. ("After 9/11, a Master Plan for Disasters Was Drawn; It Didn't Weather the Storm," Los Angeles Times, September 11, 2005)

Not to be outdone, the Department of Homeland Security refused to allow the Red Cross to deliver food. Said Renita Hosler, spokeswoman for the organization, "The Homeland Security Department has requested and continues to request that the American Red Cross not come back into New Orleans." ([Ann Rodgers "Homeland Security Won't Let Red Cross Deliver Food," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 3, 2005](#))

In other news, FEMA opted to all but ignore an offshore Naval ship, the USS Bataan, that was equipped with a 600-bed hospital, six operating rooms, a 1,200-man crew, helicopters, doctors, food, water, and the ability to desalinate up to 100,000 gallons of drinking water per day. According to a report in the Chicago Tribune, the "role in the relief effort of the sizable medical staff on board the Bataan was not up to the Navy, but to FEMA officials directing the overall effort." ([Stephen J. Hedges "Navy Ship Nearby Underused," Chicago Tribune, September 4, 2005](#)) In a similar vein, FEMA passed on an offer from the University of North Carolina to supply a state-of-the-art mobile hospital. (<http://edition.cnn.com/2005/HEALTH/09/04/katrina.sick.redtape.ap/>)

On September 5, Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) blasted FEMA in a report carried by London's Financial Times: "Offers of medicine, communications equipment and other desperately needed items continue to flow in, only to be ignored by [FEMA]." Landrieu also criticized FEMA for "dragging its feet" (a rather charitable characterization of FEMA's actions) when Amtrak offered the use of its trains to evacuate victims. (<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/84aa35cc-1da8-11da-b40b-00000e>) On September 6, an Associated Press report carried the following quote from Ben Morris, mayor of Slidell, Louisiana: "We are still hampered by some of the most stupid, idiotic regulations by FEMA. They have turned away generators, we've heard that they've gone around seizing equipment from our contractors." (<http://www.wvlv.com/local/stories/WWLBLOG.ac3fcea.html>)

More than a week after Katrina came ashore, the *Associated Press* reported that "hundreds of firefighters who volunteered to help rescue victims of Hurricane Katrina" had instead been whiling away their time "playing cards, taking classes on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's history and lounging at an Atlanta airport hotel." The FEMA official in charge of the firefighters explained that the agency "wanted to make certain they were sent where the need was greatest." And since FEMA apparently hadn't yet determined where the need was greatest, a week after the need arose, it was best to just let the skilled rescue workers sit idle. ("Eager to Help, Frustrated Firefighters Wait for Orders," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 2005, page A26)

Next came a report that a "German military plane carrying 15 tons of military rations for survivors of Hurricane Katrina was sent back by U.S. authorities ... Since Hurricane Katrina struck the United States, many international donors have complained of frustration that bureaucratic entanglements have hindered shipments to the United States." (Claudia Kemmer "German Plane with 15 Tons of Aid Turned Back From U.S.," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 10, 2005) And then came one of the most appalling stories of all, courtesy of The Advocate: "In the midst of administering chest compressions to a dying woman several days after Hurricane Katrina struck, Dr. Mark N. Perlmutter was ordered to stop by a federal official because he wasn't registered with the

Federal Emergency Management Agency. 'I begged him to let me continue,' said Perlmutter, who left his home and practice as an orthopedic surgeon in Pennsylvania to come to Louisiana and volunteer to care for hurricane victims. 'People were dying, and I was the only doctor on the tarmac (at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport) where scores of nonresponsive patients lay on stretchers. Two patients died in front of me.' ... FEMA issued a formal response to Perlmutter's story, acknowledging that the agency does not use voluntary physicians." (Laurie Smith Anderson "Doctor Says FEMA Ordered Him to Stop Treating Hurricane Victims," The Advocate, September 16, 2005)

By September 11, Jefferson Parish officials had all but declared war on FEMA. As the Times-Picayune reported, "Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee said he has 'commandered' [sic] the Sam's and Wal-Mart stores in the parish and ordered them to open as soon as possible. Lee said he took the action after he learned that a Wal-Mart store wanted to open recently but was told by FEMA officials that it could not ... Lee said anyone from FEMA who tries to close either store will be arrested by deputies." In making the announcement, Sheriff Lee noted that he had the backing of Aaron Broussard, the president of Jefferson Parish. Several days earlier, on "Meet the Press," Broussard had angrily revealed some ugly truths about FEMA: "... the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will go down as one of the worst abandonments of Americans on American soil ever in U.S. history ... Bureaucracy has committed murder here in the greater New Orleans area, and bureaucracy has to stand trial before Congress now ... Let me give you just three quick examples. We had Wal-Mart deliver three trucks of water, trailer trucks of water. FEMA turned them back. They said we didn't need them. This was a week ago. FEMA – we had 1,000 gallons of diesel fuel on a Coast Guard vessel docked in my Parish. The Coast Guard said, 'Come get the fuel right away.' When we got there with our trucks, they got a word. 'FEMA says don't give you the fuel.' Yesterday – yesterday – FEMA comes in and cuts all of our emergency communication lines. They cut them without notice. Our sheriff, Harry Lee, goes back in, he reconnects the line. He posts armed guards on our line and says, 'No one is getting near these lines.'" (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9179790/>; see also [Scott Shane "Storm and Crisis: The Fallout," New York Times, September 5, 2005](#))

The Loudoun Times-Mirror provided yet another example of the 'assistance' that FEMA provided to Jefferson Parish: "Loudoun Sheriff's deputies and emergency personnel were on their way to hurricane-stricken Louisiana Thursday night but had to turn around when the federal government failed to come up with the required paperwork. Sheriff Steve Simpson and his staff spent 12 hours trying to get the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the state of Louisiana Emergency Operations Center to act. They didn't, and the 20 deputies and six emergency medical technicians – all volunteers – turned around and came back to Loudoun ... The deputies [had] packed up to head south after a request from the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department ... The relief team had gathered enough supplies to be self-sufficient for up to 14 days." (Shannon Sollinger "Loudon Relief Crew Turned Away," Loudon Times-Mirror, September 2, 2005)

Did I mention, by the way, that Jefferson Parish is (or at least was) populated primarily with African-Americans? Or had you already figured that out on your own? And did I also mention that what this country could really use is a whole lot more Aaron Broussards and Harry Lees?

To make sure that everyone got FEMA's message loud and clear, the agency issued a press release, available on their website, urging "First Responders" *not to respond* unless officially dispatched – which really meant, "don't call us, we'll call you ... but not anytime soon."



(<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=18470>) The truth of the matter is that many of the human and material resources needed to deal with the tragedy in New Orleans were readily available – trained rescue teams, skilled medical personnel, medical supplies, medical facilities, food, water, and all manner of transportation – and virtually all of it was offered free of charge. The American people, along with (though I hate to admit it) portions of corporate America, and with the backing of the international community, were poised to spontaneously mount an effective response to this disaster. If the government, particularly the federal government, had simply done nothing, then much of the death and suffering could have been avoided. Unfortunately, that is not what happened. Instead, FEMA worked to actively thwart all voluntary efforts to help the victims, thereby ensuring that not only would there be no federal response, *there would be no response at all*.

Such a deliberate course of actions cannot credibly be explained away as mere 'incompetence.' Neither can the punishing of two Naval pilots (Lt. Matt Udkow and Lt. Michael Holdener) for committing the apparently unpardonable sin of rescuing more than 100 hurricane victims "before returning to base from a cargo delivery." Their actions, you see, allegedly compromised the delivery of relief supplies, even though the Navy admitted that "no supplies went undelivered as a result of the rescues." A senior official claimed that the pilots were merely 'counseled,' not punished, but it was acknowledged that one of the men "was temporarily assigned to a kennel." I guess those years of training as a pilot come in handy when it comes time to clean the shit out of the cages at the kennel. ("Navy Pilots Are 'Counseled' After Unauthorized Rescues," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 2005, Page A26)

As most of us probably recall, the blocking of relief efforts was largely justified with claims that conditions in the city were simply too dangerous due to the rampant criminality that was inexplicably sweeping over New Orleans. Heavily-armed gangs had taken control of the ravished streets and were openly attacking both residents and stranded tourists. Looters were shamelessly exploiting the tragedy to stock up on flat-screen TVs. Murderers and, worse yet, baby-rapists lurked around every corner. Snipers had taken up strategic positions throughout the city, taking pot-shots at anyone who dared attempt come to the aid of hurricane victims. The only thing missing, it seemed, were reports of roving bands of Islamic terrorists, possibly 'sleeper' Al Qaeda cells. I'm kind of surprised, to be honest, that Karl Rove didn't think of tossing that into the mix.

In a truly shocking development, nearly all of those stories have turned out to be works of fiction – works of fiction that were fed to a media machine that dutifully reported them as fact ... over and over and over again. Remarkably enough, various avenues of that media machine have now admitted, rather quietly, that the sensational stories of rampant criminality were fabrications. Even without the admission, however, most of the stories were fairly obvious fabrications. For the record, the facts appear to be as follows:

- 1) There is no evidence that there was any "looting" of any significance occurring in post-Katrina New Orleans. Doing what is necessary, in times of crisis, to minimally provide for the needs of yourself and your family, is not "looting." And there is little indication that many residents took time from their busy schedules to swim over to the local Circuit City to pick up a new plasma TV. What would they have done with this loot once it was acquired? Take it back to their submerged homes? Lug it to the Superdome? ... "Honey, it looks like we're going to have to leave one of the kids here on the roof or I won't be able to carry the new flatty."

A month after Katrina hit New Orleans, the Acting Supt. of the New Orleans Police Department, Warren Riley, acknowledged that procuring items needed for survival in a crisis situation was not "looting." According to Riley, "[people] did actually go in and get jeans, get food in some locations. [They] were without food for some days. Those things are acceptable; they're acceptable to me."

Oh ... wait a minute ... my bad. I seem to have misread Riley's statement. What he actually said was "*our officers* did actually go in and get jeans, get food in some locations. We were without food for some days. Those things are acceptable; they're acceptable to me." So is, I suppose, the fact that "officers also commandeered Cadillacs from a car dealership." Riley's position would appear to be somewhat at odds, however, with the official position at the time the alleged looting was taking place, when there was much talk of a "zero tolerance" policy that called for 'looters' to be "shot on sight." ([Nicole Gaouette "New Orleans Police Investigate Possible Looting by Officers," Los Angeles Times, September 30, 2005](#))

- 2) It is extremely unlikely that there were violent gangs prowling the flooded streets of New Orleans. I know it's hard for some people to believe, but 'gang bangers' are human too. They have families and friends. And sometimes taking care of the needs of their loved ones actually takes precedence over gang rivalries and turf wars. If Indians and Pakistanis can temporarily put aside their differences in the wake of an earthquake, then I am reasonably certain that rival street gangs can do likewise in the wake of a hurricane. And if you think about it, it would be pretty hard to do a drive-by shooting in a makeshift rowboat.
- 3) There is no evidence indicating that there were civilian 'snipers' impeding the work of relief workers. Snipers have never, as far as I can determine, spontaneously appeared in the aftermath of a natural disaster. If there were any snipers at all, they were military/intelligence operatives sent in to provide a handy pretext for mounting a military response.

On September 27, the *Los Angeles Times* (along with several other newspapers) quietly admitted that the lurid stories of rampant criminality were entirely unsupported by any actual evidence: "newspapers and television exaggerated criminal behavior in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, particularly at the overcrowded Superdome and Convention Center ... unverified 'rapes,' and unconfirmed sniper attacks [were] among examples of scores of myths about the dome and Convention Center treated as fact ... Follow-up reporting has discredited reports of a 7-year-old being raped and murdered at the Superdome [and] roving bands of armed gang members attacking the helpless." ([Susannah Rosenblatt and James Rainey "Katrina Takes a Toll on Truth, News Accuracy," Los Angeles Times, September 27, 2005](#))

Since the *L.A. Times* has long been tasked with pretending to be a 'liberal' publication, the Rosenblatt and Rainey report took aim at the 'Fair and Balanced' reporting of *Fox News*: "Fox News, a day before the major evacuation of the Superdome began, issued an 'alert' as talk show host Alan Colmes reiterated reports of 'robberies, rapes, carjackings, riots and murder. Violent gangs are roaming the streets at night, hidden by the cover of darkness.'"

Colmes' little rant was pure bullshit, of course, but in all fairness to *Fox News*, so was just about everything that was being reported by every other avenue of the media, including the *Los Angeles Times*, which splashed lurid lies across its front page for days. The feeble

attempt to correct those lies, on the other hand, was buried in a single story that went largely unread -- which is why the majority of Americans still believe, and will always believe, that the only people to ride out the storm in New Orleans were looters, murderers, rapists, snipers, robbers, carjackers and rioters.

It was not by accident, by the way, that Alan Colmes – the token 'liberal' hired by *Fox News* after an exhaustive, nationwide search for the least credible fake-liberal in the country – was among those leading the charge to spread such viscous lies about people who would, in any civilized society, have been recognized as victims, not criminals. The goal of this propaganda campaign, you see, was to justify a massive military response – to justify placing a swath of the Gulf Coast under martial law. And when you're trying to sell an authoritarian, ultra-right-wing agenda, the favored strategy is to use salesman who appear to be from the political left. And when the agenda includes a little ethnic cleansing, it helps if the salesmen are from the targeted ethnic group, hence the prominent involvement of purported 'liberals' like Oprah Winfrey and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin.

The *L.A. Times* report placed blame for the “inaccurate reporting in large measure on the breakdown of telephone service, which prevented dissemination of accurate reports to those most in need of the information.” I have to assume here that the *Times*’ stellar “follow-up reporting” failed to uncover the fact that there probably would have been substantially better telephone service if FEMA hadn’t been running around deliberately cutting communication lines. The cutting of those lines no doubt greatly facilitated the control of information, ensuring that the stories coming out of New Orleans were largely the stories that the government wanted told. Like, for instance, the fictional stories of snipers and armed gangs running amok in the city.

Curiously missing from the *L.A. Times* report was any questioning of the overtly military federal response to the tragedy. After openly, though rather shyly, acknowledging that the pretext for turning New Orleans into a war zone was wholly fabricated, the *Times* offered not one word of criticism of the Bush administration's decision to send heavily armed troops into an American city on what was explicitly described as a "combat mission" to pacify "insurgents." Such an omission, from one of the alleged pillars of the 'liberal' media, would be shocking were it not for the fact that the very same *L.A. Times* long ago tacitly acknowledged that all of the justifications for turning the nation of Iraq into a war zone were lies, and yet still steadfastly cheerleads the war.

Also missing was any criticism of the widely-publicized decision to pull all NOPD officers off rescue and relief operations so that the department could focus all its resources on addressing the largely mythical crime wave sweeping the city. If any organization was in a position to judge the veracity of the lurid stories circulating in the press, it was the New Orleans Police Department, which had hundreds of pairs of eyes and ears on the streets of the city. Why then was the decision made to reallocate police resources? Was this yet another action taken by FEMA officials, working behind the scenes, to insure that no relief was available to hurricane survivors, and that the only responses to the tragedy would be armed responses?

Though not commented on by the media, the unjustifiable decision by the NOPD to suspend all rescue operations was rather remarkable, for it revealed, if only for a brief moment, the true nature of the beast. One of the Golden Rules of the Western corporate capitalist system stood naked for all to see, but few paid any attention. If they had, and if they had listened

closely enough, this is what they would have heard: “Property has value; human life does not.”

The other justification that was bandied about for preventing relief workers and supplies from getting to the victims was that the water covering the city had immediately transformed itself into a toxic stew so vile that it posed a grave threat to life as we know it. Not so toxic, of course, as to negatively impact the legions of hungry alligators (or crocodiles; I don’t remember, or care, which it was) prowling the city, or the schools of ravenous piranha, or, in at least one neighborhood, the Loch Ness Monster, but dangerously toxic nonetheless. Unfortunately, it appears as though those stories might have been over-hyped just a bit as well. Returning again to page A26 of the *Los Angeles Times* (where they hide all the good Katrina stories, just to see if anyone is paying attention), we find this from October 2:

Fish from Lake Pontchartrain, the source of much of New Orleans’ famous seafood, is safe to eat again after Hurricane Katrina ... Fetid floodwaters that filled 80% of New Orleans after Katrina struck on Aug. 29 were pumped into Lake Pontchartrain, but they turned out to be less polluted than had been feared. (“Pontchartrain Fish Are Declared Safe to Eat,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 2005, Page A26)

According to Chris Piehler of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, “There is no toxic soup.” Wow! That’s weird, isn’t it? Just the other day, when the water was in the streets of New Orleans, it was highly toxic, but now that it is back in the lake, it seems to be okay. What a difference a few weeks makes! It seems like only yesterday that New Orleans was, by all reports, both a literal and metaphorical cesspool. But now we know that that was all just a, uhmm, misunderstanding. Certainly no one is suggesting any malice here. We are all adults and we all know that the price we have to pay for having a ‘free press’ is that sometimes every single media outlet in the country – in print, on television and on the radio – mistakenly spend several days loudly and repeatedly broadcasting the same made-up stories.

Let’s assume, for the sake of argument – and because you wouldn’t be visiting this website if you weren’t seeking out ‘conspiracy theories’ – that everything that happened in post-Katrina New Orleans happened because powerful actors wanted it to happen: the breaching of the levees, the flooding of selected portions of the city, the suppression of any and all relief efforts, the establishment of a pretext for a military response through the introduction of fraudulent ‘news’ stories, and the relocation by force of the residents of New Orleans. What then would be the motivation for these actions? I can think of at least three motives:

1. To acclimate the American people to the presence of armed troops on American soil, which will soon be a familiar sight not just in southern Louisiana, but throughout the country. Even as you read this, the White House and Congress are hard at work drafting legislation and executive orders that will normalize the use of combat personnel to deal with any contrived situation.
2. To allow the city of New Orleans to be rebuilt and refashioned into what our fearless leaders no doubt see as a city of the future – a city that is much richer, and much whiter, than the city that stood before.
3. To solidify control over the Gulf Coast oil and gas industry, since a key goal of the perpetrators of the ‘Peak Oil’ charade, as I’ve noted before, is to achieve total control over all the world’s major oil and gas taps.

Speaking of 'Peak Oil,' my mailbox runneth over with inquiries concerning the scam. I suppose that is because the issue is getting a little hard to ignore, what with it popping up all over the mainstream media these days. I know this because I subscribe to only a handful of mainstream publications and every one of them have now promoted the 'Peak' lies. The cover of the August edition of *National Geographic*, for instance, reads: "After Oil; Powering the Future." The cover of October's *Esquire* reads, charmingly enough: "The End of Oil (& Life As We Know It); A Handy Guide."

Yes, friends, thanks to the tireless efforts of Mike Ruppert and company, the mainstream media have now been forced to acknowledge the 'reality' of 'Peak Oil.' That is, after all, the way that things generally work -- the truth first emerges in the fringes of the 'alternative' media, and then, within a few short years, through the hard and thankless work of dedicated researchers, some of whom might not even come from CIA families, their ideas gain mainstream acceptance. That is precisely why mainstream commentators and publications are now okay with, for example, spilling the beans on 9-11. And the sham election of 2000. And 2002. And 2004. And the war crimes being committed in Iraq and Afghanistan. And the rampant criminality of the Bush regime, on both the domestic and international fronts. And Paul Wellstone's plane 'crash.' And (insert the scandal of your choice here; I'm bored with it already).

Maybe we don't even need an 'alternative' media. We can just wait a couple of years for the real stories to seep into the mainstream. True, we'll always be lagging a little behind, but I'm the kind of guy who always waits for movies to come out on DVD before seeing them, so I'm kind of used to lagging a little behind. And to be perfectly honest, I usually feel ripped-off even at the DVD rental price, although that really has nothing to do with the current discussion.

By the way, since the Peakers in the 'alternative' media insist on taking credit for every 'Peak' story that appears in the mainstream, then I suppose that I will have to take full credit for an article by Sonia Shaw entitled "The Strange Heresies of Thomas Gold," appearing in the November issue of *Playboy*. Shaw's piece makes for interesting reading, particularly the discussion of how research that has supported Gold's theories on oil has never been published. But here I digress yet again.

What I really wanted to talk about was when I offended the 'Peak Oil' crowd by reporting that their real agenda was selling the necessity of a massive 'population reduction.' Remember that? Remember how all the Peakers got their panties in a wad and accused me of putting words in the mouth of their great and fearless cult leader, The Honorable Michael Ruppert? And remember how they nearly went into convulsions when I described their 'solution' to the alleged problem as a eugenics program, because, of course, no one in the 'Peak' movement advocated any such thing?

Well ... it appears that it is time to revisit that issue, even at the considerable risk of further offending the delicate sensibilities of the craven 'Peak Oil' proponents. This time, however, I won't be putting words in anyone's mouth. No, this time I will be quoting directly from a newsletter penned by the great Colin Campbell\*, founding father of ASPO (Association for the Study of Peak Oil) and guiding light of folks like Ruppert, Heinberg and Pfeiffer. Without

further ado then, let's hear what Dr. Campbell had to say this past July (with my own comments added in **red**, and with a shout-out to [Ty Brown](#) for directing my attention to this post):

Recent articles in the ASPO Newsletter have agreed that the explosion of world population from about 0.6 billion in 1750 to 6.4 billion today was initiated and sustained by the shift from renewable energy to fossil fuel (**sic**) energy in the Industrial Revolution. There is agreement that the progressive exhaustion of fossil fuel reserves will reverse the process, though there is uncertainty as to what a sustainable global population would be.

... a global population reduction of some 6 billion people is likely to take place during the 21st Century (**For the mathematically impaired, Campbell is talking about no less than a 94% reduction in the world's population. If you feel that you and all of your loved ones are among the lucky 6% who will be spared, then I suppose there is no cause for alarm and you can feel free to stop reading now.**)

... probably before 2010 ... uncontrollable inflation and recession will spread round the world ... (**Probably so, but this will be, of course, a deliberately induced condition.**)

In Third World nations ... a Darwinian struggle for shrinking resources of all kinds will be in full swing ... the imperative to survive will be driving strong groups to take what they want from weak ones. The concept of human rights will be irrelevant ...

It may well be that, in the West, the same argument will affect the thinking of militarily powerful nations ... Instantaneous nuclear elimination of population centres might even be considered merciful, compared to starvation and massacres prolonged over decades. (**You have to applaud Campbell's effort here; I doubt that even Orwell could have conceived of the concept of a humanitarian nuclear holocaust.**) Eventually, probably before 2150, world population will have fallen to a level that renewable energy, mainly biomass, can sustain ...

Probably the greatest obstacle to the scenario with the best chance of success (in my opinion) is the Western world's unintelligent devotion to political correctness, human rights and the sanctity of human life. In the Darwinian world that preceded and will follow the fossil fuel era, these concepts were and will be meaningless. Survival in a Darwinian resource-poor world depends on the ruthless elimination of rivals, not the acquisition of moral kudos by cherishing them when they are weak. (**Hmmm ... overt calls for the destruction of the weak by the strong? ... now, where have I heard that before? ... Adolf Hitler? Aleister Crowley? I can't quite place it ...**)

So the population reduction scenario with the best chance of success has to be Darwinian in all its aspects, with none of the sentimentality that



shrouded the second half of the 20th Century in a dense fog of political correctness ...

To those sentimentalists who ... are outraged at the proposed replacement of human rights by cold logic, I would say “You have had your day, in which your woolly thinking has messed up not just the Western world but the whole planet, which could, if Homo sapiens had been truly intelligent, have supported a small population enjoying a wonderful quality of life almost for ever. You have thrown away that opportunity.”

... The scenario is: Immigration is banned. Unauthorised arrives are treated as criminals. Every woman is entitled to raise one healthy child. No religious or cultural exceptions can be made, but entitlements can be traded. Abortion or infanticide is compulsory if the fetus or baby proves to be handicapped (Darwinian selection weeds out the unfit). When, through old age, accident or disease, an individual becomes more of a burden than a benefit to society, his or her life is humanely ended. Voluntary euthanasia is legal and made easy. Imprisonment is rare, replaced by corporal punishment for lesser offences and painless capital punishment for greater.

... The punishment regime would improve social cohesiveness by weeding out criminal elements.

... military forces should be maintained strong and alert ... Collaboration with other nations practising the same population reduction scenario would be of great mutual advantage.  
(<http://www.peakoil.ie/newsletters/588>)

I have to admit that Campbell did not once, throughout his entire rant, use the word "eugenics." But what he has described here - the destruction of the "weak," the "unfit," the sick and the elderly, the "handicapped," the "burdens" to society, and, of course, the "criminal elements" - is nothing short of a eugenicist's wet dream. The frequent references to Darwin, I have to say, are a nice touch as well.

I would hope that I don't have to point out here that it will be the all-powerful state that will decide who is a “burden” and who is a “benefit” to society, and who is “unfit,” and what is and what isn't a “handicap,” and who is too old, injured or diseased to go on, and what crimes are punishable by death. The good news, of course, is that the wealthy will be able to produce as many children as they desire, since the rest of us will likely be forced to barter away the only thing we will have left that will be of any value: our child “entitlement.”

Some of you are no doubt wondering what sort of complex formulas will be used to determine who stays and who goes when the Great Die-Off rolls through town. It's not really as mysterious as it seems. Basically, it will work something like this: you know how in virtually every country on the planet there is a very small percentage of the people – usually around five or six

percent – who seem to control the overwhelming majority of that country's wealth? Those will be the 'keepers.' And everyone else? Well, maybe you better sit down, because I have some bad news for you ...

I should probably point out here that when Campbell speaks of "weeding out criminal elements," he is really rather coyly referring to people that happen to have more pigment in their skin than he does. We know this because former Education Secretary and 'Drug Czar' William Bennett, who apparently gets his 'talking points' from the same folks as Colin Campbell, spelled it out pretty clearly on his radio show recently:

I do know that it's true that if you wanted to reduce crime, you could – if that were your sole purpose – you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down. That would be an impossibly ridiculous and morally reprehensible thing to do, but your crime rate would go down.

It's hard to say what is more remarkable about that statement – that someone with a relatively prominent voice in the media can casually discuss genocide without stirring up a firestorm of protest, or that someone from the religious right who is not averse to equating abortion with murder could nevertheless tacitly endorse forced abortion on a grand scale, so long as the program is targeting a 'criminal race.'

The bleating of Campbell and Bennett, and the actions taken in New Orleans, are not unrelated events. To conclude otherwise would be rather foolish. What we saw in New Orleans was a glimpse into the near future. And it was likely a relatively tame glimpse at that. An overtly military form of rule, ethnic cleansing, population reduction, the restructuring and rebuilding of major population centers, total control of vital resources, and the craven exploitation of disasters, both natural and unnatural – all of this and more is just around the corner.

Perhaps you are thinking that this type of future is not for you. You'd really prefer something a little different. That's unfortunate, because the future holds very few options. Here's Campbell again, concluding his mini version of Mein Kampf:

Another problem is likely to be the residual opposition to population reduction from sentimentalists and/or religious extremists unable to understand that the days of plenty, when criminals and the weak could be cherished at public expense, are over. Acts of violent protest, such as are carried out today by animal rights activists and anti-abortionists, would, in the Darwinian world, attract capital punishment. Population reduction must be single-minded to succeed.

So it appears as though those who fight back against the agenda will likely be summarily executed, while those who passively go with the flow stand about a 95% chance of being killed off anyway. With odds like that, I would think that fighting back might be a good idea. By any means available. And sooner rather than later.

\* Several readers have written to inform me that the ASPO post quoted in Newsletter #74 was actually penned by someone named William Stanton, not Colin Campbell. Authorship of the piece was rather ambiguous in the post that I read and linked to, but I nevertheless apologize for the error. However, as editor of the newsletter and head honcho of the ASPO organization, it is Campbell who is ultimately accountable for the rants that appear under his organization's banner. And I have been informed that numerous people have appealed to Campbell to disown the post and he has refused to drop his tacit backing for the ideas expressed therein. I'm glad we cleared that up.

# the Center for an Informed America

## NEWSLETTER #78

February 25, 2006

### *Cheney's Got a Gun*

<http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr78.html>

♪                    Cheney's                    got                    a                    gun                    ♪  
♪                    Cheney's                    got                    a                    gun                    ♪  
♪                    Harry's                    face                    has                    come                    undone                    ♪  
♪                    How's                    Karl                    gonna                    spin                    this                    one?                    ♪  
♪                    What                    would                    Kate                    Armstrong                    do                    ♪  
♪ If Cheney popped a cap in you? ♪

(I realize that this story is now old news, because when the Vice President of the United States shoots someone in the face from close range with a shotgun, it's only newsworthy for a few days at best. Even so, I didn't want to be the only irresponsible journalist in the country to fail to weigh in on this non-story.)

While I have never hunted live prey, I have, on one occasion many, many years ago, tried my hand at skeet shooting, which is similar to quail or pheasant hunting, but with inanimate targets. As best I can remember, I managed to make it through that day without shooting anyone in the face – and without actually breaking any clay targets. The latter may have been at least partially due to the fact that I was barely as tall as the gun was long. The photo below, by the way, was snapped just a split-second before the gun's recoil landed me squarely on my ass, eliciting howls of laughter from various family members. And yes, in case you're wondering, that is what all the cool kids were wearing that year.



Since I'm not much of a quail hunter myself, I decided to consult with some seasoned hunters to determine if a quail was in fact a bird, and if that was the case, if said birds weren't normally shot while in flight. They quickly confirmed my suspicions. The normal procedure, according to my resident experts, is to flush out the prey and then shoot at the elusive birds as they attempt to fly away. This will be important later on in our tale, but first let's have a look at the official story of the Cheney 'hunting accident.'

That story, which at first placed the blame for the shooting squarely on the victim - because this administration is, lest we forget, all about personal responsibility - holds that Harry Whittington came up behind Cheney unannounced and that Cheney then turned to take a shot at a fleeing bird and, as we all now know, blasted Whittington in the face and chest, causing an injury that - according to the White House and various media talking-heads - is roughly equivalent to stubbing one's toe.

Now, no one is suggesting that Cheney did anything wrong here, or that this was anything other than an obviously accidental shooting. At least, no one in the media is suggesting any such thing, even though no one in law enforcement or the media has bothered to conduct any sort of a real investigation to verify the

official version of events, and even though the official story is laced with very obvious lies and inconsistencies. It is a foregone conclusion, in this case, that taking such rudimentary steps as visiting the scene of the shooting, examining and testing the firearm used, or questioning witnesses (including the shooter and the victim) as soon as possible after the incident occurred, would just be a waste of everyone's time.

In this country, in case you haven't heard, we are all about "The Rule of Law." And The Rule of Law clearly states (*Article 7; Paragraph 12*): "No investigation shall be necessary when a man occupying one of the highest elected offices in the land shoots another man in the face with a shotgun under questionable circumstances, but a lengthy and costly investigation followed by Articles of Impeachment shall be mandated if someone occupying such an office receives a blowjob from an intern (though other, far more serious crimes committed by said blowjob recipient shall be ignored)." *Paragraph 14* goes on to say that "Anyone suggesting that an investigation is in order shall receive a public flogging; if such suggestions persist, repeat offenders shall, under provisions of the USA Patriot Act, be subject to immediate arrest and imprisonment as suspected terrorists."

Though not readily acknowledged, The Rule of Law also states the following (*Article 9; Paragraph 7*): "Those dedicated public officials engaged in the noble pursuit of drafting and passing laws to regulate the behavior of the masses shall, at all times, be held above the law, while mere mortals shall be subject to warrantless searches, illegal surveillance, indefinite detentions without access to legal counsel, extra-judicial torture, and, at times, such as when attempting to de-board a plane in the state of Florida, summary execution."

So clearly Mr. Cheney was in no way criminally negligent in shooting Mr. Whittington, regardless of the circumstances. If it had been a commoner doing the shooting, then things would be different. When my brother was shot in the face, for example (and yes, this is a true story), the working assumption among law enforcement officials was that a crime had been committed. Upon my brother's admission to the emergency room of the local hospital, the police were immediately contacted, as standard operating procedures dictated. Said officers arrived promptly to question the victim, and then subsequently detained and questioned the shooter. No charges were ultimately filed in the case, since it was, in fact, clearly an accidental shooting. *But it was investigated as a potential crime*, despite the fact that both the shooter and the victim were minors, the weapon involved was a pellet/BB gun (a real BB gun that is, as opposed to a shotgun disingenuously described as a BB gun), the wound was superficial, and the incident took place some thirty years ago, when the laws of the land were decidedly less Draconian than they are today.

The reality is that all gunshot wounds not inflicted by the Vice President of the United States are, as a general rule of thumb, treated as potential crimes, *until proven otherwise*. But as previously mentioned, The Rule of Law dictates that completely different rules apply here. Even so, it might be instructive to conduct a sort of citizen's investigation of the shooting – or at least of the official, apparently hastily constructed, story of the shooting.



The first thing that we can conclude is that all of the key sources of information on the shooting are lying their asses off. For example, the owner of the ranch, Katharine Armstrong, has repeatedly presented herself as an eyewitness to the shooting, despite the fact that her initial statements clearly indicated that she had not seen a thing. Since that fact seems to have slipped down the memory hole, readers are reminded that Armstrong initially claimed that when she saw Cheney's security personnel rush toward the scene of the crime, "The first thing that crossed my mind was he [Cheney] had a heart problem." According to her own account, Armstrong was in a vehicle some 100 yards away when the shot was fired.

It goes without saying that if Armstrong had in fact witnessed the shooting, she would certainly have known the reason for the emergency response, and hence we can safely conclude that she has misrepresented her status as a witness. Nevertheless, Cheney himself, during his friendly little chat with Brit Hume of the White House News Network, repeatedly identified Armstrong as not just *an* eyewitness, but as *the authoritative eyewitness* to the incident. On no less than four occasions during the brief 'interview,' Cheney held Armstrong up as an unassailable eyewitness:

"I thought [it] made good sense [for Armstrong to put out the story] for several reasons. First of all, she was an eyewitness. She'd seen the whole thing."

"[W]e were confident that Katherine was the right one, especially because she was an eyewitness and she could speak authoritatively on it. She probably knew better than I did what had happened ..."

"We had - she's the one who put out the statement. And she was the most credible one to do it because she was a witness."

"I think Katherine was an excellent choice. I don't know who you could get better as the basic source for the story than the witness who saw the whole thing."

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/print/20060215-3.html>)

It would appear then that the *only* person other than Cheney who has thus far publicly offered an account of how the shooting took place didn't actually witness the event. That is not to say, however, that Ms. Armstrong is not qualified to serve as the administration's spokeswoman for this affair. As Cheney noted, "The Armstrongs have been friends for over 30 years," and "Karl [Rove] has hunted at the Armstrong as well, and we're both good friends of the Armstrongs and of Katharine Armstrong." According to the New York Times, Armstrong is also "a lobbyist for Parsons, an engineering and construction firm that has done extensive work in Iraq." (Anne E. Kornblut and Ralph Blumenthal "No End to Questions in Cheney Hunting Accident," New York Times, February 14, 2006)

Since Armstrong, by her own initial account, didn't actually witness the shooting, and since she is a longtime friend of both Dick Cheney and Karl Rove, the only logical conclusion that can be reached here is that the story that Armstrong put out is the one that was spoon-fed to her by Cheney and Karl Rove, who Cheney acknowledged "did talk with Katherine Armstrong." According to the New York Times:

In the end, White House officials said Mr. Bush learned about the shooting accident at 7:30 p.m. Eastern time, about an hour after it happened, in a call from Andrew H. Card Jr., his chief of staff. But Mr. Bush did not find out that Mr. Cheney fired the shot until about half an hour later in a subsequent call from Karl Rove, his senior adviser and deputy chief of staff, who had called Ms. Armstrong to ask about the incident. (Anne E. Kornblut and Ralph Blumenthal "No End to Questions in Cheney Hunting Accident," New York Times, February 14, 2006)

In other words, by 8:00 PM Eastern time, or 7:00 PM Texas time – at the very latest – the Bush Administration's premier spin doctor and damage-control specialist had already been on the phone with Armstrong, gathering the information he would need to weave the official fable. According to Cheney's account, after tending to Whittington and sending him off to the hospital, the hunting party "loaded up and went back to ranch headquarters, basically. By then, *it's about 7:00 p.m. at night.*" So what we find is that, before the hunting party even made it back to the house, Rove was already hard at work writing the official script – nearly a full day before that script was released to the national media. And the script that he ultimately provided to Armstrong was, not surprisingly, filled with the lies, misrepresentations, and blame-shifting that are Karl Rove's trademarks.

The severity of Whittington's wounds, for example, was downplayed to the point of absurdity. Armstrong's depiction, delivered with a chuckle, was that Whittington had merely been "peppered pretty good," and that "his pride was hurt more than anything else." Armstrong even went so far as to boldly claim that she had been "peppered pretty well myself" on at least one occasion, the implication being that it is a common occupational hazard that all hunters must deal with "from time to time." Just as figure skaters know that they will occasionally make painful contact with an unyielding sheet of ice, hunters know that they will occasionally be blasted in the face with a shotgun. It just goes with the territory. Nothing to really be concerned about.

Armstrong also lied about Whittington's overall condition in the immediate aftermath of the shooting. Her 'eyewitness' account held that Whittington was alert and communicating with Cheney and others tending to him ("It knocked him silly, but he was fine. He was talking. His eyes were open."). But Cheney himself later acknowledged that Whittington was unresponsive, in a state of shock, and had only one eye open.

Armstrong isn't, by any stretch of the imagination, the only liar in this sordid affair. Cheney, as we have already seen, repeatedly lied about Armstrong's status as an 'eyewitness' to the shooting. Curiously enough, he did at least acknowledge his own status as a known liar – only so that he could then use it to justify his failure to notify the media. "Well, who was going to do that?" asked Cheney, in response to a question from Hume concerning his failure to do so. "Are they going to take my word for it? There is obviously..."

Since Cheney didn't finish that thought, allow me to do it for him: "There is obviously a credibility issue here." Indeed, Cheney seems to be such a pathological liar that he can't even decide on how long he has been a hunting enthusiast. He told buddy Brit that he has been a seasoned hunter "for the last

12, 15 years," and then later, in the very same interview, claimed that hunting is "part of my heritage, growing up in Wyoming. It's part of who I am."

In addition to Cheney lying about Armstrong's status as an eyewitness, and Armstrong lying about both the source of her story and the details of the shooting, the doctors tending to Mr. Whittington have consistently lied as well – primarily about their patient's condition. Only in bits and pieces have we learned that, far from being "bruised more than bloodied," as Armstrong claimed, Whittington was "bleeding profusely" from his wounds – to such an extent that his daughter noted that her father "didn't know at the time if he was going to the hospital or the mortuary." Only over time have we learned that the pellets plowed deeply into Whittington's flesh, penetrating at least two vital organs (his heart and his liver), and that, even now, as many as 200 pieces of shot remain embedded in Whittington's face, neck, shoulder and chest.

During the brief few days that the media paid attention to this story, reports of Whittington's condition remained unrelentingly upbeat, though common sense dictated that a 78-year-old man pumped full of birdshot probably wasn't (and still isn't) doing as well as we have been led to believe. Of course, prior to Whittington's brief, tightly choreographed media appearance, no one in the media seemed to make any effort to talk with him, despite the fact that he was allegedly in good spirits and able to regularly receive visitors while fielding phone calls from Cheney. Needless to say, no one has talked to, or about, Whittington since that controlled press appearance.

Am I the only one, by the way, who doubts that Whittington was actually released from the hospital following that prepared statement? Isn't it more likely that he was prepped and trotted out just as soon as he was physically able to stand and read the statement – for the rather obvious purpose of driving yet another nail into the coffin of this story – and then promptly returned to a hospital bed, most likely at an undisclosed private facility? After all, even if he hadn't been shot, what is the likelihood that an elderly man with enough money to afford the very best in medical care would be released directly from an intensive care unit so soon after suffering a heart attack? And how quickly, by the way, did the media drop this story following Mr. Whittington's highly-publicized 'release'?

In addition to following Armstrong's lead in grossly misrepresenting the severity of Whittington's injuries, the medical team tending to the wounded lawyer has refused to release information that is essential to any meaningful investigation of the shooting. Asked, for example, for the results of tests of Whittington's blood alcohol level upon admission, the only response has been "no comment." Questions concerning the number of pellets embedded in Whittington's flesh have been brushed aside with the claim that such concerns are not "medically relevant." Doctors have also "declin[ed] to say whether Whittington had had surgery." (Ian Urbina "Cheney Account Questioned," International Herald Tribune, February 16, 2006, and Nedra Pickler "Experts: Cheney Violated Cardinal Rule of Hunting," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006)



What still remains a mystery is exactly how this shooting occurred. Though there has been little mention of such unpleasant topics in the media, mainstream or otherwise, Mr. Whittington could not possibly have been accidentally shot in the manner described by Cheney and Armstrong. As I mentioned at the top of this post, quail are shot while in flight, which means that in order to actually shoot one, it is generally a good idea to have your gun pointed in an upward direction while firing, as that will greatly increase the chances of scoring a hit. The normal shooting stance can be seen demonstrated by the marksman in white at the top of this page, and can also be seen in these photos of Deadeye Dick himself lining up a shot at a bird in flight.

According to the initial story belatedly put out by Cheney and Rove via Katharine Armstrong, and then repeated by Cheney during his chat with Hume, Whittington was some 30 yards away from Cheney when he was shot. But how could a shot fired in such a manner possibly hit a man who was standing nearly 100 feet away. How could such a shot hit a man standing any distance away? And how, in such wide open terrain, could you fail to see a fellow hunter clad in a bright orange hunting vest and cap?

"Perhaps," you are thinking, "Whittington was at a higher elevation, possibly standing on a bluff or something of that nature." By all accounts, however, that does not appear to be the case. Cheney described the area of south Texas where they were hunting as being characterized by "wide open spaces," with "a lot of brush cover, fairly shallow." Not unlike, in other words, the field in which Cheney is standing in the photos above -- the photos in which Cheney's hunting partners are clearly visible to his right.

The *Texas Parks and Wildlife Hunting Accident and Incident Report Form* provides a more detailed account of the hunting conditions at Armstrong Ranch the day of the incident. The "topography" is described as "flat," "visibility" was said to be "fair," "type of cover" was described as "light," "lighting" was "sunny," and the "weather" was "clear." Again, this description provides no explanation either for the peculiar angle of Cheney's alleged shot, or for



| Witness Name        | Address         | City      | State/Province | Telephone   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Katharine Armstrong | Armstrong Ranch | Armstrong | TX             | (361) _____ |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |

activities  
in(s).  
n(s).  
other than

**\*ANIMAL BEING HURT BY SHOOTER**

|                                    |                                                     |                                           |                                           |                                          |                                   |                                     |                                   |                                  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Duck/Geese                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Dove/Pigeon      | <input type="checkbox"/> Antelope         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bear            | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cottontail | <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote   | <input type="checkbox"/> Crow    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moose     | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-game birds and mammals | <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quail | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox             | <input type="checkbox"/> Grouse   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hares      | <input type="checkbox"/> Javelina | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Boar | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Upland Game Birds    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Small Game | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:           | <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon/Opussum | <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |

**VI. MISCELLANEOUS FACTORS**

|                                                                      |                                           |                                           |                                  |                                |                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Topography: (Check one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Hilly          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat  | Unknown                                   | Describe                         | Describe                       | Describe                         |
| Visibility: (Check one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Good           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor             | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown | <input type="checkbox"/> Dense | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark    |
| Type of cover: (Check one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Open        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Light | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium           | <input type="checkbox"/> Dense   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| Lighting: (Check one only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sunny | <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dawn             | <input type="checkbox"/> Dusk    | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fog     |
| Weather: (Check one only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear  | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm             | <input type="checkbox"/> Windy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain    | <input type="checkbox"/> 101+  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| Distance from muzzle to victim in yards:                             | <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100  |                                |                                  |

is taken  
possible

**VII. \*CONTRIBUTING FACTORS—Mark major factor with an X. Mark additional factors with an A.**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Hunter's Judgement Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim moved into line of fire<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victim covered by shooter who was swinging on game<br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim out of sight of shooter<br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim mistaken for game                                                                                                                            | <b>Safety/Law Violations</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Running/walking with loaded firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Removing/placing firearm in vehicle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Using firearm as a club<br><input type="checkbox"/> Discharge firearm in/on vehicle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Firearm fell from insecure rest<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shooting from/across roadway<br><input type="checkbox"/> "Horseplay" while hunting<br><input type="checkbox"/> Apparent use of intoxicants/drugs | <b>Miscellaneous Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fall from watercraft<br><input type="checkbox"/> Improper powder substitution<br><input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Ammo/incorrect substitution<br><input type="checkbox"/> Faulty Equipment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ricochet<br><input type="checkbox"/> Obstruction in barrel<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <b>Skill and Aptitude Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Trigger caught on object<br><input type="checkbox"/> Loading firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unloading firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Improper crossing of obstacle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Dropped firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shooter stumbled and fell<br><input type="checkbox"/> Careless handling of firearm (please describe in detail) | <b>Archery Related Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Archery not matched to bow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Careless handling of bow/arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Carrying nocked arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Defective bow or arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Springing bow                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Treestand Related Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fall while climbing into or out of position<br><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to use haul line<br><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to use safety belt<br><input type="checkbox"/> Faulty/old material/equipment                                                                                             |

Unknown\*  
Other

**VIII. Summary:**

Whittington downed a bird and went to retrieve it. While he was out of the hunting line another covey was flushed and Cheney swung on a bird and fired striking Whittington in the face, neck and chest at approximately 30 yards. Cheney was using a 28 gauge shotgun loaded with 7 1/2 shot. Immediate medical attention was rendered from Cheney's staff.

Factory  
below.

78703  
78  
N/A  
Female

**IX. Attachments:** ☐ Continuation ☐ Photos ☐ Drawings ☐ Shooter's Statement ☐ Victim's Statement ☐ Witness' Statement ☐ Other  
 Note: Please attach a copy of local law enforcement/hospital report.

own  
own  
own  
own

**X.** Game Warden's Signature: *Jason Luke* Game Warden I Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Report: 02/13/2006

Unk  
S  
papers

Please return through proper channels to:  
 Texas Parks and Wildlife  
 Attn: Education  
 4200 Smith School Road  
 Austin, Texas 78744  
 512/389-4999

For education Division Use:  
 Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

X

Cheney's failure to see Mr. Whittington before pulling the trigger.

It should be noted here that Whittington would not have been in Cheney's peripheral field of view when that trigger was pulled. Contrary to the impression created by initial reports, the diagram included in the Accident Report Form, and more recent medical reports, clearly indicate that Whittington took nearly the full force of Cheney's shot. In fact, Cheney's shot was centered in the kill zone, with the tightly-grouped pattern of birdshot covering Whittington's lower face, neck, shoulder and upper chest. Cheney could not have scored a more well placed kill-shot if he had drawn a bead directly on Mr. Whittington's upper torso -- which in fact is exactly what he did, given that Whittington would have had to be lined up perfectly in the gun's sights when the shot was fired.

Cheney has rendered this story even more unlikely by claiming that Whittington was actually *at a lower elevation* than Cheney himself. He told Hume that, "there was a little bit of a gully there, so he was down a little ways before land level, although I could see the upper part of his body." The Kenedy County Sheriff's Department report repeats this claim: "the reason Harry Whittington sustained the injuries to his face and upper body was that Mr. Whittington was standing on ground that was lower than the one he [Cheney] was standing on."

By Cheney's own account then, he was not holding the gun in a level position, which would be curious enough, but was actually firing *in a downward direction*. That might be an effective technique for, say, shooting your own hunting dog, but it isn't a very effective technique for bagging quail.

Terry Erwin, the president of the International Hunter Education Association, criticized Cheney's alleged actions in the L.A. Times, noting that: "You would never turn around and fire behind you. If the bird comes back over you, you would not take that shot." But let's assume, for the sake of argument, that you would take that shot -- or, more accurately, that Dick Cheney would. Because he is, after all, the Vice President of the United States, and if someone of such relatively low stature as the governor of my state can ride a motorcycle without a license and, in doing so, cause an accident, and then suffer no legal repercussions, then by God my Vice President ought to be able to hunt without the proper license and recklessly shoot someone in the face while doing so! (Nicholas Riccardi and James Gerstenzang "Hunter Suffers Setback as Criticism of Cheney Grows," Los Angeles Times, February 15, 2006)

But there is, alas, a bit of a problem here, because *even if he did take that shot*, at a bird that had "come back over" him, he certainly wouldn't have been shooting in a downward direction. And if the bird had come not over but around him (which is extremely unlikely, but let's play along), then Cheney, being the seasoned, responsible hunter that we all know him to be, certainly wouldn't have swung his weapon around while tracking the bird on a horizontal course, since such a reckless action would clearly have endangered his fellow hunters, his security detail, and anyone else who happened to be standing beside or behind him. (As Cheney noted, he hunts with a large "entourage" -- which he described as "all the cars and so forth that follow me around when I'm out there.")



There is yet another problem with the official account of the shooting: both the tightness of the pattern of the shot and the depth of penetration indicate that Mr. Whittington was not, in fact, standing nearly 100 feet from Cheney when he was shot. The "30 yard" figure was apparently initially floated out there to minimize the perceived severity of Whittington's wounds. It will be recalled that when the story first belatedly broke, countless experts were quoted in the press offering up the opinion that the damage from a 28-gauge shotgun loaded with birdshot would be relatively minor if fired from that distance. This initial report from the Los Angeles Times was typical:

Dr. Marshall Morgan, chief of emergency medicine at UCLA Medical Center, said the severity of shotgun injuries depended on the distance between the gun and the person hit by it. "A shotgun injury to a person, unless it's at close range, is unlikely to produce a lethal injury that a handgun or a rifle would," he said. When a shotgun goes off, the pellets are in a relatively tight pattern, able to inflict severe damage within 20 feet, Morgan said. But as they travel, the pellets spread out and slow down. "The really controlling factor is the distance," he said. (Alan C. Miller and James Gerstenzang "Cheney Shoots Fellow Hunter," Los Angeles Times, February 13, 2006)

Since Mr. Whittington's injuries were considerably more severe than originally reported, we are left with two possibilities: either all the experts who weighed in initially to claim that Whittington's reported injuries were consistent with a shot fired from 30 yards were lying (or simply mistaken), or the shot was actually fired from a much shorter distance. And while it is not uncommon for the government and the media to trot out a series of scripted experts (consider, for example, all the 'experts' who have 'validated' various aspects of the official 9-11 story), that does not appear to be the case here. According to the gun owners and hunters that I have spoken with, Mr. Whittington's injuries *as initially reported* would have been consistent with a shot fired from 30 yards. His *actual injuries*, however, clearly are not, as was noted by the International Herald Tribune:

Veteran hunters and shooting experts said Thursday that they still don't understand how the vice president injured his fellow hunting partner so badly if he was actually 30 yards away as Cheney says. "It just doesn't add up," said John Kelly, a quail hunter from New York with more than 36 years of experience. "With a shotgun, the pellets spread out the further you get, and for that many pellets to hit such a small part of this man's body means that Mr. Cheney was far closer" than the 27-meter distance cited. (Ian Urbina "Cheney Account Questioned," International Herald Tribune, February 16, 2006)

## **NEWSLETTER #79**

**March 10, 2006**

### **Cheney's Got a Gun: Part 2**

<http://www.davesweb.cncost.com/nwsltr79.html>

*Aspects of Vice President Dick Cheney's quail hunt make ethical hunters and hunter safety instructors cringe. From reports, we know that this hunting party consisted of three hunters and, thus, three guns. This is highly unusual and generally seen as unsafe. Nearly every hunting preserve I know of here in the Southeast restricts upland bird hunt parties to two guns, for obvious reasons: one hunter takes the left side, one the right side. There is generally a dog and a guide (the dog handler), who is very careful to stay behind the guns after the dogs go on point ... Reports say the hunters were hunting by car. Too old and feeble to walk? Too lazy? An upland bird hunt by car is an offensive idea to any honest, ethical hunter. This sounds like irresponsible cruising for easy shooting, rather than the time-honored tradition of slowly walking the fields and brush, watching the dogs work, and -- if you're lucky -- finding a covey or two of quail ... The idea of hunting from a car is bad. It's dangerous because hunters would be getting in and out, guns pointing every which way, losing track of the wind, the weather, the angle of the sun, the energy level of the dogs. Hunting from a car is, for able-bodied hunters at least, completely antithetical to honest, ethical hunting. One of the cardinal rules of any bird hunt: Don't shoot low birds. Why? It is more difficult to see birds against the ground than against the sky. It is possible that something besides a bird might be on the ground, and thus in the way; generally this would be the dog ... As a hunter and conservationist, I feel misrepresented by Cheney and his ilk. They portray hunting as a sport for the rich, carried out on vast private lands, where pulling the trigger takes priority over everything else. (<http://www.charlotte.com/mld/observer/news/opinion/13866143.htm>)*

*Quail hunting for years has been called the sport of aristocracy ... Quail hunting is a gentleman's game and is often a spectator and participator sport at the same time ... most quail hunts involve a pair of dogs and a pair of hunters in the field at the same time. Each dog is competing to see which one can locate a covey of quail first. Once one of the dogs zeros in on his quarry, he will freeze on "point." The other dog is trained to "honor" the pointing dog by actually freezing and pointing that dog. This is when the excitement builds in anticipation of an explosion of whirring wings known as the covey flush. An awareness of all of the gunners responsibilities and location of each prior to the flush is an absolute necessity. Strict gun discipline is required. While wind conditions and proximity of escape cover for the flushing birds may alter what I am about to say, as a rule of thumb the hunters should approach their dogs from behind the dogs. The gun muzzles should be oriented skyward and the shotgun needs to remain on safety until mounted to one's shoulder. The two hunters should approach the dogs, one on either side, and in a straight line with one another. This*

*straight line is very important for the safety of each hunter. Prior to moving on up and allowing the birds to flush, each hunter should visibly and mentally locate: each other, both dogs, the hunting rig, and the hunting guide if on a guided hunt. Each hunter should know in advance where he can and cannot swing the muzzle of his gun to follow an escaping quail. Each hunter's range of gun swing should be from the mid-point between him and his partner and out to his side. He should never cross the mid-point to shoot at a quail flying on his partner's side. Not only is this poor shotgunning etiquette, it is dangerous. Additionally, a quail hunter should never take a shot at a low flying quail that would cause him to lower the muzzle of his shotgun below a horizontal plane with the ground. Taking a shot at a low-flying quail has ended the life of many fine pointing dogs since the inception of this great sport. If each hunter places safety and sportsmanship at a much higher priority than actually pulling the trigger, quail hunting is truly a unique hunting experience.* ([http://www.riverviewplantation.com/Quail\\_Hunting\\_Tips/quail\\_hunting\\_tips.html](http://www.riverviewplantation.com/Quail_Hunting_Tips/quail_hunting_tips.html))

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(The first quote above is from an op/ed piece that was published by the Charlotte Observer in response to the Cheney shooting incident. The second is from the website of the "Riverview Plantation," a private hunting reserve in Georgia that "Specializ[es] in Quail Hunting for the Corporate Account." In other words, it is a place not unlike the Armstrong Ranch in south Texas. While the above quote reads very much like a commentary on the Cheney shooting, and a condemnation of Cheney's stated actions, it actually is not. In an attempt to prompt some direct commentary on the incident, I sent an e-mail inquiry to the owners of the plantation. I'm still waiting for a response. I forgot to ask them, by the way, if they would consider hunting with Dick Cheney to be a good "spectator sport.")

One of the most amazing things about this case is that even if we accept without question the tale told by Cheney and Armstrong - if we accept that this 'accident' occurred exactly as we have been told it happened - it is perfectly obvious that the consensus media opinion that there was no misconduct or negligence is simply untrue. *By his own account*, Cheney was hunting by vehicle, a decidedly unsafe, and unethical, practice. *By his own account*, he was out in a three-man hunting party. *By his own account*, he made no effort to ascertain the whereabouts of anyone else in his party before firing away. *By his own account*, he was firing at a bird that would have had to have been flying ridiculously low. *By his own account*, he swung his gun far beyond "the mid-point" to take his shot. *By his own account*, he had been drinking that day (undoubtedly far more than he has admitted to). *By his own account*, he was hunting in flat terrain with a party that included a hostess, two other hunters, several guides and outriders (scouts on horseback), a medical team, and a Secret Service team -- and yet he swung his gun around blindly a full 180° to take a shot at an alleged bird that was supposedly flying just a few feet off the ground.

By his own account, Cheney actions were, without question, criminally reckless. And yet, remarkably enough, the media machine has beat a hasty retreat from this story, implying that there is really nothing left to talk about.

Every gun-enthusiast organization in the country, including the venerable National Rifle Association, knows full well not only that Cheney's story cannot possibly be true, but that even if it were true, it would expose Cheney as a recklessly irresponsible gunman who certainly should be held accountable for his actions. All of these groups, nevertheless, have chosen to put their partisan, knee-jerk politics ahead of any sort of search for the truth of what happened that day. Cheney and company have insulted the intelligence of every responsible hunter and sport shooter in the country, and yet the groups representing these gun owners

have                      conspicuously                      chosen                      to                      remain                      silent.

As previously discussed, there are unanswered questions about both the angle of the shot and the distance between the shooter and victim. In addition, there is yet another problem with the official story -- a problem that no one in the media, to my knowledge, has yet commented upon. This problem was brought to my attention by Mr. Lester Gregg, Jr., a conscientious hunter from east Texas with more than 35 years experience. Commenting on Cheney's claim that he was tracking a bird in flight as he swung his weapon around, Gregg had this to say:

When taking a wing shot, you are swinging the barrel and leading the bird. This causes the shot to form a "string," roughly a long narrow oval in the air. The almost circular shot pattern reported on Whittington is typical of a *stationary* shot, point and shoot! This is a *very* important fact completely overlooked or misrepresented in the media. On CNN I heard a person from Field & Stream magazine glossing over the details and *never* remarking on this. There is no way he could not know this simple fact known by hunters and shooters.

So now we have at least three major problems with the official story: the angle of the shot is entirely inconsistent with accepted quail hunting practices; the tightness of the pattern and the depth of penetration are incompatible with the stated shooting distance; and the outline of the shot pattern is not consistent with Cheney's claimed 'wing shot.' And yet another problem with the official story was raised by the Charlotte Observer, which posed the following question: "Why was the hunter, Harry Whittington, looking for a downed bird? Were there no dogs? A quail hunt without a dog? Absurd. If there were dogs, why not have them go after the dead bird." A perfectly reasonable question, but one which Brit Hume didn't bother to ask. (Scott Denham "Cheney Ignored Safe Hunting Procedures," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006)

By Cheney's own account, there were indeed dogs along on the hunt: "There were three of us who had gotten out of the vehicle and walked up on a covey of quail that had been pointed by the dogs. Covey is flushed, we've shot, and each of us got a bird. Harry couldn't find his, it had gone down in some deep cover, and so he went off to look for it. The other hunter and I then turned and walked about a hundred yards in another direction ... away from him -- where another covey had been spotted by an outrider." (<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/11373634/>)

According to published accounts, in addition to the guide and the outriders, the hunting party also brought along hired help to dress and pack their downed birds. In other words, these gentlemen hunters' participation in the hunt involved little more than pulling the trigger. Though they were too lazy to actually walk the terrain in search of prey, or to perform such menial tasks as dressing their own kills, we are supposed to believe that gentleman hunter Harry Whittington, at nearly 79 years of age, ventured off alone into some rough terrain in search of his downed bird, while the dogs and various hired hands busied themselves, I presume, with dodging wild shots taken by Dick Cheney.

But let's assume, for the sake of argument, that Whittington really did venture off to fetch his own kill. That would, alas, raise yet another problem with the official story. According to the Cheney/Rove/Armstrong version of events, Cheney was unaware of Whittington's position because Harry had been approaching Dick (shouldn't there be a Tom in this story?) from behind, unannounced. Leaving aside the fact that it would have clearly been Cheney's responsibility to know Whittington's position prior to taking his shot, since even a novice hunter knows that you *never, ever* pull the trigger without knowing exactly what is in your line of fire, there is an obvious problem with this scenario. This was not, you see, your run-of-the-mill hunting party; this was a hunting party that included Dick Cheney, Vice President of



the United States and possibly the most well-guarded man on the planet.

Though only the [World Socialist Web Site](#) seems to have noticed, it is simply inconceivable that someone with a loaded shotgun could walk up behind the Vice President without Cheney and his security personnel being aware of it. And if Whittington was close enough to catch a full load of birdshot in his chest and face, then he was obviously close enough to deliver

one as well, and normally Cheney's army of security personnel keep tabs on such things.

The Charlotte Observer, alone among the media, took note of yet another troubling aspect of the official story: "Cheney shot Whittington at 5:15 p.m. on Saturday [5:30 p.m., according to official reports] -- way too late to be hunting quail. Good hunters hunt early in the day, when the light is good, the birds are active, and the dogs are fresh. One should generally not be out for quail this late in the day." (Scott Denham "Cheney Ignored Safe Hunting Procedures," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006)

Yet another curious fact: this incident occurred very late in the hunting season, and as any hunter knows, locating and flushing coveys of birds becomes progressively more difficult as the season wears on, as the population of birds is reduced and the remaining quail become savvy to the ways of the hunters pursuing them. Flushing two coveys in rapid succession so late in the season, and so late in the afternoon, would be extremely unlikely, and yet that is exactly what the official story claims to be the case.

The preceding paragraph, it should be noted, would not apply if Cheney's party was shooting at pen-raised quail on a controlled-release 'hunt,' as he has done in the past. But Cheney claimed otherwise during his chat with Hume, stressing that they had been hunting "wild quail." Of course, that could be just another of Dick Cheney's numerous lies, one he constructed so as to avoid the same sort of mild criticism he has received in the past for his participation in what amount to turkey shoots.

Here's yet another curious fact: according to all reports, Whittington was purportedly wearing hunting gear at the time of the shooting. But it's difficult to believe that he actually was. According to Cheney, Whittington "was wearing hunting glasses, and that protected his eyes." But during Whittington's brief media appearance, it certainly appeared as though his right eye had sustained damage from the shot. Reports also hold that Whittington was wearing a blaze orange hunting vest over three layers of street clothes. But it is difficult to believe that #7½ birdshot fired from a 28-gauge gun could penetrate four layers of clothing and still plow through a considerable amount of skin, muscle and various other bodily tissues, even from a much shorter distance than 30 yards.

It should be noted here that, as shotguns go, a 28-gauge gun is not a particularly powerful weapon. The most popular shotgun sizes, in descending order of magnitude, are 10-gauge, 12-gauge, 16-gauge, 20-gauge, 28-gauge, and 410-gauge. None of these guns - and particularly the smaller caliber weapons, which are typically loaded with lightweight birdshot - are designed for maximum penetration. The intent is not to shred the bird, but to bring it down with a minimal amount of damage to the meat. It is therefore extremely unlikely that a

weapon designed to barely penetrate the flesh of a bird could propel birdshot through four layers of clothing and then through the skin, muscle and bone of the human chest wall. It is even more unlikely that a piece of shot could 'migrate' through the chest wall and into the heart muscle. A reasonable conclusion to draw then is that Whittington was probably not attired as reports would have us believe.

So what do we have here? We have Harry Whittington supposedly being shot while returning from performing a duty that is entirely incompatible with this aristocratic group's hunting philosophy, we have a shot pattern that is wholly incompatible with both the alleged shooting distance and the type of shot that was supposedly being taken (a wing shot), we have a shooting angle that appears to contradict the notion that Cheney was shooting at a bird, we have a hunting party having phenomenal luck despite being out late in the day and late in the season, and we have a shooting victim who was likely attired in some manner other than what has been reported.

Most of the questions surrounding the shooting would have been answered had a routine investigation taken place. We would know, for example, the exact distance between shooter and victim. Had the gun and ammunition been taken into custody, ballistics tests could have been performed that could pinpoint that distance through comparisons of test patterns with the actual shot pattern imprinted on Whittington's torso. And we know that taking such actions is standard procedure -- and we know that because the Hunting Accident Report Form advises officers quite explicitly on how to proceed with a hunting incident investigation:

*If possible, firearms, archery tackle, ammunition/powder or other equipment involved in a hunting accident/incident should be taken into the custody of the investigating officer for testing and/or evaluation.*





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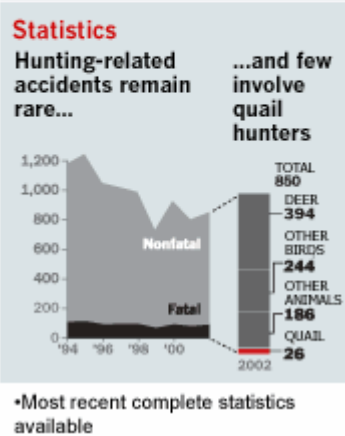
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Needless to say, that did not happen, so we do not know the precise distance from which the shot was fired. We know that "Whittington was hit with as many as 200 birdshot pellets." (Nedra Pickler "Experts: Cheney Violated Cardinal Rule of Hunting," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006) Doctors who tended to Whittington steadfastly avoided discussing the number wounds, though they did ultimately offer a ludicrously estimate of "between 5 and 200," leading many to conclude that the actual number was far closer to 200 5.

We also know that a 28-gauge shell loaded with the size that Cheney was using "would normally contain about pellets." (Ian Urbina "Cheney Account Questioned," International Herald Tribune, February 16, 2006) And know, from the diagram included in the Accident that roughly 200 of those birdshot pellets were tightly clustered within a fairly small, roughly circular area -- portion of the circle missing, from which we can deduce 25% or so of the pellets that missed their target likely over Whittington's right shoulder (though the illustration in the accident report erroneously shows the on his left side). We also know, from this photo and others, that Cheney to favor a shotgun with a fairly short barrel -- and likely open choke as well (the more open the choke, the larger diameter at the end of the barrel). And we know that the the barrel, and the more open the choke, the more scatter after exiting the barrel.

From all this we reach the inescapable conclusion that the shot that hit Harry Whittington was fired from considerably less than 30 yards. We cannot pinpoint the exact distance, but we know that it wasn't even close to the official claim. Alex Jones (who is not one of my preferred sources of information) has conducted a [test](#) that he claims proves the shot was fired from 15-18 feet away. Such a claim, however, overstates the conclusions that can be drawn from his test. Ideally, the test should utilize the very same gun and ammunition that Cheney was using -- or at least the exact same make and model of weapon, outfitted with a barrel of the same length and choke, and loaded with ammunition from the same manufacturer and with the same load and shot characteristics. Also, photographic or other evidence of the true extent of Whittington's wounds is required so that the shot pattern that the test is trying to match can first be ascertained.

Despite the problems with the test (and in fairness to Jones, there is obviously no way that he could have satisfied the second condition, since no such evidence has been, or ever will be, released), it does illustrate, rather convincingly, that it is inconceivable that *any* 28-gauge shotgun firing #7½ birdshot from anywhere near 30 yards away could have caused Harry Whittington's wounds. Both the concentration of pellets, and the depth of penetration, testify to the fact that the shot was fired from a much shorter distance.

Another hard and fast conclusion we can draw from the available evidence is that, contrary to

media reports and White House spin, hunting ‘accidents’ of this nature are virtually unheard of. According to the graphic to the right (provided by [Time Magazine](#)), there were only 850 hunting accidents throughout the country in 2002, and only 26 of those - a mere 3% - involved quail hunters. So we know that quail hunting accidents, in general, are quite rare. And this was no run-of-the-mill quail hunting accident. The Charlotte Observer has claimed that “hunting accidents like Cheney’s happened 34 times last year” in the state of Wisconsin.

(Robert Imrie "Hunting Accidents Like Cheney's Happened 34 Times Last Year," Charlotte Observer, February 13, 2006) The title of the Observer article, however, is very misleading, for the truth is that it is extremely unlikely that there were *any* hunting accidents "like Cheney's" last year in Wisconsin -- or in any of the other 49 states.

Of the three representative examples of "accidents like Cheney's" cited by the Observer, none

bears the slightest resemblance to Cheney's incident. James Manzke, for example, was hit in the hand with "one pellet that traveled 3 inches into the meaty part of his hand," while Gregory Horton "was wounded in the hand, arm, nose and head from eight 12-gauge shotgun pellets while pheasant hunting," and Joe Crosby "struck his father in the head, neck, chest and shoulder" with 15 pellets. These are the types of accidents that, while statistically not nearly as common as the White House spin team would have us believe, could reasonably be

expected to occur from time to time. *But there is, alas, an enormous difference between getting sprayed with a few pieces of stray shot, and getting blasted in the face and chest from short range with nearly a full load of shot.* That type of 'accident,' we can safely conclude, is an exceptionally rare event, enough so that should such an 'accident' occur, it would, under virtually any other conceivable circumstances, certainly be looked upon by law enforcement officials as a probable crime.

In this case, however, authorities didn't even bother to pretend that they had any intention of investigating the incident, as a quick read through the two-page Texas Parks and Wildlife Report readily reveals. Instructions to investigating officers *included right on the form* were willfully ignored. The weapon and ammunition, as previously noted, were not seized for examination and testing. A recommendation that "a copy of local law enforcement/hospital

| Witness Name        | Address         | City      | State/Province | Telephone   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Katharine Armstrong | Armstrong Ranch | Armstrong | TX             | (361) _____ |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |

| *ANIMAL BEING HUNTED BY SHOOTER                  |                                                     |                                      |                                     |                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deer                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Duck/Geese                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Dove/Pigeon | <input type="checkbox"/> Antelope   | <input type="checkbox"/> Bear             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moose                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-game birds and mammals | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Boar   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Upland Game Birds | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Small Game           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox        | <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon/Opossum  |
|                                                  |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cottontail | <input type="checkbox"/> Grouse           |
|                                                  |                                                     |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hares            |
|                                                  |                                                     |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel   | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey           |
|                                                  |                                                     |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown          |

| VI. MISCELLANEOUS FACTORS                |                                           |                                           |                                 |                                  |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Topography: (Check one only)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Hilly            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat  | Unknown                         | Describe                         |
| Visibility: (Check one only)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Good             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor   | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| Type of cover: (Check one only)          | <input type="checkbox"/> Open             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Light | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> Dense   |
| Lighting: (Check one only)               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sunny | <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dawn   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dusk    |
| Weather: (Check one only)                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm             | <input type="checkbox"/> Windy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain    |
| Distance from muzzle to victim in yards: | <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100 | <input type="checkbox"/> 101+    |

| VII. *CONTRIBUTING FACTORS—Mark major factor with an X. Mark additional factors with an A.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Hunter's Judgement Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim moved into line of fire<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victim covered by shooter who was swinging on game<br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim out of sight of shooter<br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim mistaken for game                                                                                                                            | <b>Safety/Law Violations</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Running/walking with loaded firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Removing/placing firearm in vehicle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Using firearm as a club<br><input type="checkbox"/> Discharge firearm in/on vehicle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Firearm fell from insecure rest<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shooting from/across road/way<br><input type="checkbox"/> "Horseplay" while hunting<br><input type="checkbox"/> Apparent use of intoxicants/drugs | <b>Miscellaneous Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fall from watercraft<br><input type="checkbox"/> Improper powder substitution<br><input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Ammo/Incorrect substitution<br><input type="checkbox"/> Faulty Equipment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ricochet<br><input type="checkbox"/> Obstruction in barrel<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <b>Skill and Aptitude Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Trigger caught on object<br><input type="checkbox"/> Loading firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unloading firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Improper crossing of obstacle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Dropped firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shooter stumbled and fell<br><input type="checkbox"/> Careless handling of firearm (please describe in detail) | <b>Archery Related Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Archery not matched to bow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Careless handling of bow/arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Carrying nocked arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Defective bow or arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Stringing bow                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Treestand Related Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fall while climbing into or out of position<br><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to use haul line<br><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to use safety belt<br><input type="checkbox"/> Faulty/old material/equipment                                                                                             |


  

| VIII. Summary:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Whittington downed a bird and went to retrieve it. While he was out of the hunting line another covey was flushed and Cheney swung on a bird and fired striking Whittington in the face, neck and chest at approximately 30 yards. Cheney was using a 28 gauge shotgun loaded with 7 1/2 shot. Immediate medical attention was rendered from Cheney's staff. |  |
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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| IX. Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Drawings <input type="checkbox"/> Shooter's Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Victim's Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Witness' Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Other |  |
| Note: Please attach a copy of local law enforcement/hospital report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |

|                                                                                                                   |                        |                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| X. <br>Game Warden's Signature | Game Warden I<br>Title | 02/13/2006<br>Date of Report |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|

Please return through proper channels to:

For education Division Use:  
Received by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
 Attn: Education  
 4200 Smith School Road  
 Austin, Texas 78744  
 512/389-4999

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

PWD-579-D0200-2/00



report” be attached to the form was likewise ignored. Other attachments are curiously absent as well, including a “Shooter’s Statement,” “a “Victim’s Statement,” and “Witness’ Statements.” Instead, all we find is a very brief summary of the incident that is simply a rote repetition of the official cover story. That story was supplied by the one and only witness listed on the form - Katharine Armstrong of Armstrong, Texas.

The shooter, Richard B. Cheney, was obviously a witness to the event as well, but it appears quite likely that he was not actually interviewed. In the brief section of the report reserved for information about the shooter, “Years hunting experience” is left blank and “Hunter Education Certified?” is marked “Unknown,” although such mundane information could have been quickly and easily gathered had the shooter actually been even briefly questioned.

The Kenedy County Sheriff’s Department also made no effort to actually investigate the shooting. And the department seemed to have a little trouble keeping its story straight initially, offering varying versions of the initial law enforcement response to the shooting. Sheriff Ramon Salinas III first told the New York Times that his deputy had questioned Cheney Saturday night, not long after the shooting. But other reports held that a deputy responding to reports of the shooting had in fact been turned away at the gates of the property (I wasn’t even aware that I apparently have the option of turning away investigating officers should a shooting ever occur on my property. Is the LAPD aware of this?)

Secret Service agents later claimed that they had promptly notified the sheriff of the shooting, and had, at that time, arranged an interview with Cheney for Sunday morning. Salinas then quickly changed his story and claimed that he had made the decision not to send a deputy on Saturday night. But on February 14, the Washington Post reported the following: “Secret Service spokesman Eric Zahren said *at least one deputy was turned away* shortly after the shooting because security personnel at the ranch were not aware of the agreement between the sheriff and the Secret Service.” That statement, it should be noted, was more than a little bizarre, given that the turning away of law enforcement personnel only makes sense if the “security personnel” *were aware* of the supposed agreement and had relayed that information to the investigating officer. (<http://mediamatters.org/items/printable/200602150014>)

The next day, Zahren added a few more modifications to the story, telling the New York Times that “some local police officers had heard about the shooting on a scanner when an ambulance was sent to pick up Mr. Whittington. They showed up at the ranch unsolicited. Private guards, not Secret Service agents, Mr. Zahren said, turned the police away because they did not know anything had occurred.” So now it was private security guards turning away police officers, rather than Secret Service agents turning away sheriff’s deputies, with the added caveat that the officers learned of the shooting independently when an ambulance was dispatched. That’s a nice story, I suppose, except for the fact that Cheney has claimed that the hunting party didn’t need to call an ambulance, since they already “had an ambulance at the ranch, because one follows me around wherever I go.” And then, of course, there is the decidedly dubious claim that real cops would defer to the authority of rent-a-cops.

Sheriff Salinas’ final report on the incident, issued on February 15, offered yet another version of events:

On February 11, 2006 at approximately 5:30 p.m., I, Ramon Salinas, III, and Sheriff of Kenedy County received a telephone call at my home from Captain Charles Kirk in reference to a possible hunting accident that had occurred at the Armstrong Ranch. Captain Kirk stated

that he was on his way to the Armstrong gate to get more information.

About 8 to 10 minutes later, I received another call from a United States Secret Service Agent; I believe his name was Martinez. He said the purpose of the call was to officially notify the Kenedy County Sheriff's Office of a hunting accident that had just occurred on the Armstrong Ranch and that it involved Vice-President Cheney.

After I hung up, Captain Kirk called me back and said that he'd made contact with a Border Patrol agent at the Armstrong gate and that the Agent told him that he didn't know anything about the accident. I then told Captain Kirk that it was fine and that I would contact someone on the Ranch.

After speaking with Captain Kirk I contacted Constable Ramiro Medellin Jr., former Sheriff of Kenedy County and asked him if he had any information about the accident. Constable Medellin stated that he would call me right back.

Constable Medellin returned my call and said, "This in fact is an accident." He stated that he had spoken with some of the people in the hunting party who were eyewitnesses and that they all said it was definitely a hunting accident. I also spoke with another eyewitness and he said the same thing, that it was an accident.

After hearing the same information from eyewitnesses and Constable Medellin, it was at this time that I decided to send my Chief Deputy first thing Sunday morning to interview the Vice-President and other witnesses.

A few minutes later, I received another call from the Secret Service asking if I was going to send someone to the Ranch. I told him that someone would be there first thing in the morning. The Secret Service said they would be at the gate waiting.

At approximately 6:15 p.m. I contacted Chief Deputy San Miguel and advised him of the incident and to be at the gate at approximately 8:00 a.m.  
(<http://www.caller2.com/2006/pdf/kcsr.pdf>)

There is certainly no shortage of irregularities in the sheriff's brief, poorly written report. First of all, we now find that Salinas was first informed of the shooting - and I couldn't make this stuff up if I wanted to, folks - by Captain Kirk. And the phone call from Kirk to Salinas came in at 5:30 p.m., which just happens to be the exact time that Whittington was shot, according to all official accounts. So what happened was that Whittington was shot, his wounds were tended to at the scene, an ambulance was summoned (even though there was already one there), which Captain Kirk picked up on via a scanner, after which he headed out towards the ranch while phoning Salinas. And all of that happened, of course, instantaneously, so that Salinas actually knew about the shooting the very second that the shot was fired.

By 5:40 p.m., just ten minutes after the shot was fired, a Secret Service agent had already contacted Salinas to again inform him of the shooting, but Salinas didn't bother to note the agent's name, because when someone calls to report a shooting involving the Vice-President of the United States, it's not really important to make a note of who that person is.

Immediately after that call, Captain Kirk called back to say that he had arrived at the Armstrong gate, where he encountered not a Secret Service agent, and not a private security officer, but rather a Border Patrol agent, who was, I'm guessing, patrolling the borders of the

Armstrong Ranch. That agent did not, however, turn Captain Kirk away, as previously reported. Instead, Kirk was called off by Sheriff Salinas, who then called Constable Medellin to see if he just happened to have any information on a shooting that had taken place just minutes before.

Constable Medellin then promptly called back to confidently inform Salinas that "This in fact is an accident," even though nobody that I've ever known actually talks like that, and even though Constable Medellin couldn't possibly have known the details of the shooting less than half an hour after it had taken place. Nevertheless, he boldly claimed to have spoken to multiple eyewitnesses, and Salinas added that he had also spoken to an eyewitness, though none of these alleged witnesses are named, undoubtedly because they don't actually exist.

By 6:15 p.m., just 45 minutes after the shot was fired - and while the hunting party was still focused on tending to Whittington, according to Cheney's account, and not yet concerned with notifying authorities or the media - both the Sheriff and the Constable had spoken to multiple witnesses and were satisfied that this was nothing more than a routine hunting accident. And they had, remarkably enough, talked to all those witnesses a full 45 minutes before the hunting party had even made it back to the house! That, I have to say, is some pretty impressive police work.

To be continued yet again ...

## ***NEWSLETTER #80***

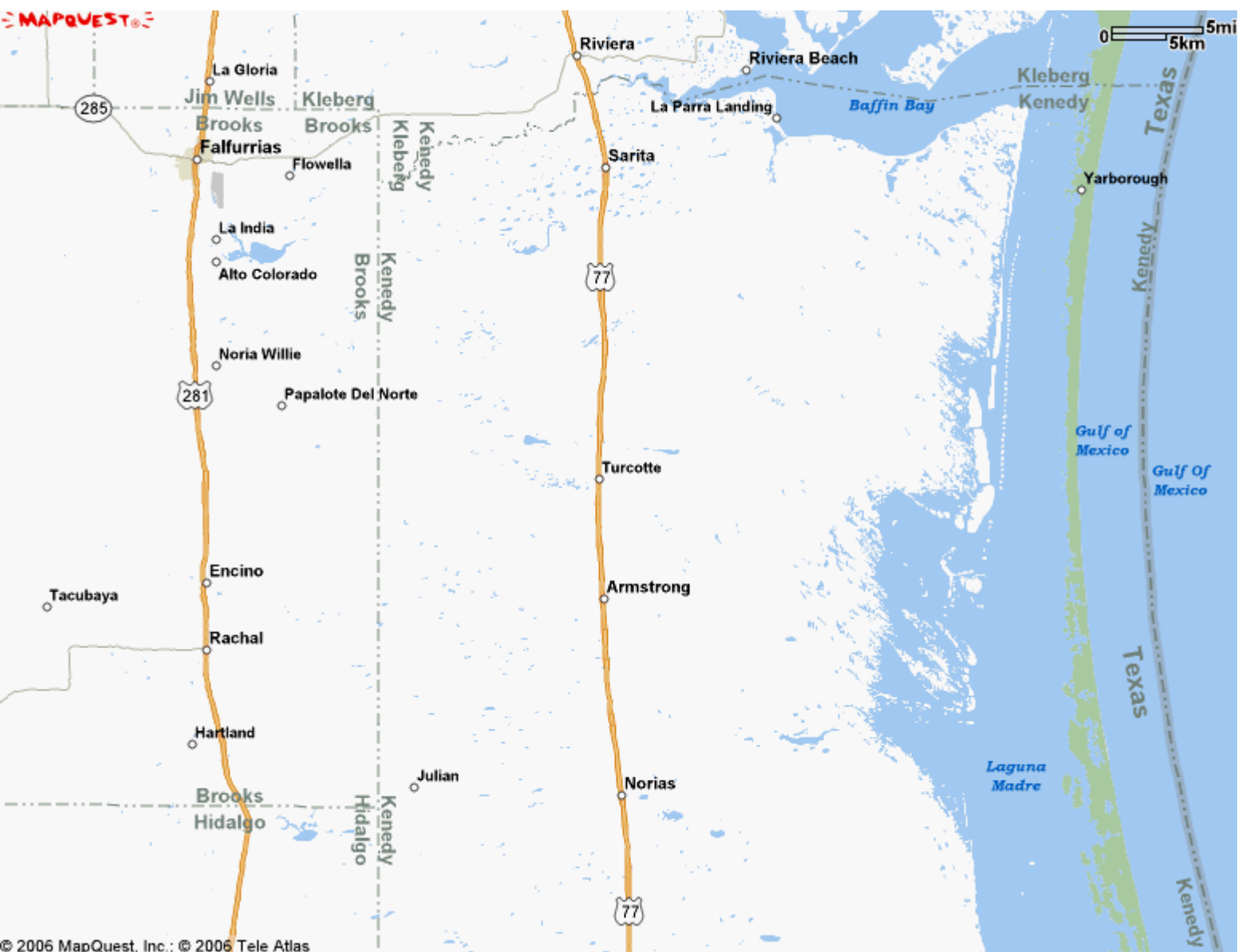
***March 10, 2006***

***Cheney's Got a Gun: Part 3***

***<http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr80.html>***

According to the report filed by Gilberto San Miguel Jr., the sheriff's deputy who allegedly questioned Cheney the day after the incident, potential witnesses to the shooting included: Richard Cheney, the current Vice-President of the United States; [Pamela Pitzer Willeford](#), the current US ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein; Harry Whittington, a wealthy Texas attorney and Republican Party operative; Katharine Armstrong, the hunting party's hostess and the daughter of the owner of the ranch; Sarita Armstrong Hixon, some random member of the Armstrong family; Michael Andrew "Bo" Hubert, the hunting guide; and Oscar and Gerardo "Jerry" Medellin, the outriders.

Curiously, there is no mention in the deputy's report of the Secret Service agents or the medical personnel who accompanied the hunting party, though they obviously were all potential witnesses as well. And even more curiously, no report on the incident has been released by the Secret Service, though you would think that they would weigh in on a shooting involving the Vice-President that occurred on their watch.



It's hard not to notice, by the way, that two alleged members of the hunting party just happen to have the same last name as the police constable who determined in record time that "this in

fact is an accident." Small world, isn't it? It's also hard not to notice that the name of another member of the party contains the names of two of the handful of towns that make up Kenedy County, Texas: Armstrong and Sarita. One wonders if Kenedy County is little more than the Armstrong family's private fiefdom. Perhaps this is a good time to take a quick look at some Armstrong family history.

The 50,000-acre Armstrong Ranch was established by John Barclay Armstrong, great-grandfather of star witness Katharine Armstrong. As Wikipedia tells it, "Armstrong was born in Tennessee, and moved to Texas in 1871. After a short experience as a lawman, *in 1875 he joined the Special Force under Captain Leander H. McNelly, a newly created quasi-military branch of the Texas Rangers that was to operate in southern Texas.* His role as McNelly's second in command and right hand earned him the promotion to sergeant and the nickname 'McNelly's Bulldog.'" Bulldog."

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Barclay\\_Armstrong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Barclay_Armstrong))

The Handbook of Texas Online provides some additional context to the story: "American settlement in the region [that was to become Kenedy County] was slow but increased after the Mexican War. New settlers were generally welcomed by the Mexican rancheros, and a number of the newcomers married into prominent local families. Ethnic relations began to change during the second half of the nineteenth century, however, when steadily growing numbers of Anglo-Americans began to settle in South Texas. Increasingly, Mexican landholding families found their titles in jeopardy in the courts or were subjected to violence. The so-called 'skinning wars' of the early 1870s were indicative of mounting ethnic and racial tensions in the area. Because of rising prices for hides and the large number of mavericks, or free-ranging cattle, some ranchers went on skinning raids, killing the animals and taking their hides, a practice that often pitted Mexican and Anglo ranchers against each other. *Tensions grew in 1875 after a group of Anglos attacked several ranches in the future Kenedy County in retaliation for raids made by Mexican ranchers. Vigilantes and outlaws from Corpus Christi raided the area, killing virtually all of the adult males on four ranches-La Atravesada, El Peñascal, Corral de Piedra, and El Mesquite-and burning the stores and buildings;* many of the remaining Mexican rancheros were forced out."

([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4_print.html))

Elsewhere in the Handbook, we find that "in 1874 the state Democrats returned to power, and so did the rangers. Texas was 'overrun with bad men,' with Indians ravaging the western frontier, with Mexican bandits pillaging and murdering along the Rio Grande. The legislature authorized two unique military groups to meet this emergency. The first was the Special Force of Rangers under Capt. Leander H. McNelly. In 1874 he and his men helped curb lawlessness engendered by the deadly Sutton-Taylor Feud in Dewitt County. *In the spring of 1875 they moved into the Nueces Strip (between Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande) to combat Cortina's 'favorite bravos.'* After eight months of fighting, the rangers had largely restored order, if not peace, in the area. *In 1875 the Special Force enhanced its fearful reputation by stacking twelve dead rustlers 'like cordwood' in the Brownsville square as a lethal response to the death of one ranger.*"

(<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/TT/met4.html>)

(Before moving on, a quick clarification is in order here: when The Handbook of Texas Online says that Indians were "ravaging the western frontier" and Mexicans were "pillaging and murdering along the Rio Grande," what they really mean, in a politically correct sort of way, is that indigenous peoples were doing their best to defend their land and their way of life from brutal and barbaric foreign invaders, much as the people of Iraq are trying to do today.)



Julian Borger, writing for the Guardian, informs us that "the Armstrong Ranch ... [was] founded in 1877 by John Barclay Armstrong." Borger adds that Tobin Armstrong, Katharine's recently deceased father, "helped get Cheney his job running the oil services company, Halliburton, and his backing ensured Karl Rove's fledgling political consultancy became a success." Other sources, it should be noted, claim that the Armstrong Ranch was established in 1881 or 1882. My guess is that the land was acquired in 1877 and the ranch was built on that land a few years later. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianweekly/story/0,,1715561,00.html>)

Let's briefly review what we have learned here thus far. In 1875, John Barclay Armstrong joined a Special Forces unit of the Texas Rangers (which was itself formed as something of a Special Forces unit, tasked with 'protecting' the Western frontier from 'marauding' Mexicans and Native Americans). Armstrong's unit proved to be a particularly brutal one, engaging in psy-war tactics such as building gruesome displays of dead bodies (can you say Phoenix Program?). In the spring of 1875, the unit was operating in the Nueces Strip, which just happens to be where Kenedy County is now located. That very same year, a group of unnamed Anglo terrorists laid waste to what would become Kenedy County, wantonly slaughtering the native residents and destroying their homes. Just two years later, John Barclay Armstrong took possession of a 50,000-acre chunk of that very same bloodstained plot of land.

Now, I'm not suggesting here that the Armstrong land was acquired through an act of mass murder ... well, actually, if we're to be perfectly honest, that is exactly what I am suggesting. There isn't likely to be any documentation in the official record to prove that the "vigilantes and outlaws from Corpus Christi" were in fact elements of John Armstrong's Special Forces unit, but the pieces of the puzzle certainly seem to fit together nicely.

Armstrong was certainly no stranger to the ways of the gun. During his checkered law enforcement career, he killed or assisted in the killing of at least a half dozen men, and probably considerably more. His biggest claim to fame was the capture of the nearly mythical figure of John Wesley Hardin in 1877, for which he reportedly received a \$4,000 reward, a considerable bounty in those days. It was with that money that he reportedly built the Armstrong Ranch. ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/AA/far10\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/AA/far10_print.html) and John Cloud "Inside the Shooting at the Ranch," Time Magazine, February 27, 2006)

Who John Wesley Hardin really was is difficult to determine, though we do know that he was also no stranger to the ways of the gun. As with other Western 'outlaws,' the true story of Hardin undoubtedly bears little resemblance to the grandiose legend. The fact that there was more to the Hardin story than what is revealed in the fictionalized accounts that pass for history was strongly hinted at when Hardin, credited with some 30-40 murders, including the killing of numerous soldiers and law enforcement officers, was ultimately pardoned and released from prison, after which he promptly was admitted to the bar and magically transformed himself into a successful attorney. But here, alas, I have digressed. ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/HH/fha63\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/HH/fha63_print.html) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Wesley\\_Hardin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wesley_Hardin))

Returning to The Handbook of Texas Online, we find that "most of the land [in Kenedy County] still remains in the hands of the Armstrong, King, Kenedy, and Yturria interests." Reading on, we find that these four families are closely interwoven through marriages and

business partnerships. The King Ranch was "founded in 1847 by Mifflin Kenedy and his partner Richard King, who acquired their vast holdings by both legal and questionable means. In the early 1880s, for example, Kenedy reportedly fenced in a lake that by tradition belonged to Doña Euliana Tijerina of the La Atravesada grant. To enforce their rule the Kings often called on the Texas Rangers, whom locals sometimes referred to as *los rinches de la Kineña* - the King Ranch Texas Rangers. Commenting on such practices, an anonymous newspaper article in 1878 averred that it was not unusual for King's neighbors 'to mysteriously disappear whilst his territory extends over entire counties.'" ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4_print.html))

So we see that the Kenedy and King families have been business partners for more than a century and a half. And so it is with the Yturria family as well: "Mexican-born Don Francisco Yturria founded the [Yturria] ranch and Brownsville's first private bank in the mid-Nineteenth Century. A Confederate war profiteer, Francisco Yturria formed a shipping company with several partners, including legendary King Ranch founder Richard King. The company monopolized the region's Civil War trade by registering ships in Yturria's name, sailing under Mexican flags and thereby moving through Union blockades." ([http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer\\_profile.cfm?pioneer\\_ID=772](http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer_profile.cfm?pioneer_ID=772))

In 1944, so as not to feel left out, Katharine Armstrong's uncle (Tobin's brother) "wed an heir of legendary King Ranch, linking two of the biggest ranches in Texas. The Armstrong Ranch has since gone global, with tracts in Australia and South America." ([http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer\\_profile.cfm?pioneer\\_ID=509](http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer_profile.cfm?pioneer_ID=509)) Thus we see that the four families that own Kenedy County are essentially just one big, happy family. And one extremely wealthy family. Among the "Armstrong, King, Kenedy, and Yturria interests" is oil; "between 1947 and January 1, 1991, a total of 31,800,494 barrels was produced" from wells in Kenedy County. At today's prices, that's roughly \$2 billion worth of oil. Not too shabby. ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4_print.html))

Some other interesting facts about this most unusual Texas county emerge on a website run by a guy who apparently has an obsession with visiting the highest point of land in each of Texas' 254 counties. Why? I have no idea, but here is a portion of his report on Kenedy County: "Kenedy County is one of those peculiar counties created at the behest of wealthy ranchers (in this case, the King Ranch) so that the county can be run as a sort of fiefdom. About 400 people live in the county, most of them in the little town of Sarita. Only one paved highway enters the county: US-77, which makes a straight shot north-south. Aside from the few roads in Sarita, the entire county is essentially company land, and access is not permitted anywhere without permission. The maps show virtually no realistic road network near the Kenedy highpoint from within Kenedy County ... One other interesting side note: Kenedy County is the only county out of the 254 in Texas not to have any secondary Farm to Market (FM) highways within its boundaries. Somewhere (I forget where) I read that there are only 7 miles of paved road in the entire county, not counting US-77." (<http://www.surgent.net/highpoints/tx/txattempts.html>)

And now, after that lengthy digression, it is time to return to where we left off with our story. In case you have forgotten, we were discussing the Sheriff Department's official report, as co-authored by Sheriff Ramon Salinas III and Chief Deputy Gilberto San Miguel, Jr.. And when we left off, Deputy San Miguel had just finished identifying for us the members of the alleged hunting party, whom he claims to have deposed, although no such written statements have

ever seen the light of day and probably don't actually exist.

There is little information of value in San Miguel's 2½-page "Incident Report." The first page contains an account of his arrival at the ranch, his greeting by Secret Service and Border Patrol agents, his meeting of Dick Cheney, and Cheney's one-paragraph account of the shooting, including the bizarre claim that "Mr. Whittington was standing on ground that was lower than the one he [Cheney] was standing on." (<http://www.caller2.com/2006/pdf/kcsr.pdf>)

On page two, San Miguel briefly describes the weapon Cheney was using. He then claims that he spoke briefly with Katharine Armstrong, "who told [him] pretty much the same story" as Cheney. San Miguel then parenthetically advises readers to "See her written statement for further details," which is, of course, rather difficult to do since no such statement is actually attached to the report.

San Miguel next describes his visit the following day with the hospitalized victim, Harry Whittington. The deputy claims, rather preposterously, that he "asked Mr. Whittington if we could record our conversation and Mr. Whittington requested not to be recorded due to his voice being raspy. It was then I requested a written affidavit be done and Mr. Whittington gladly agreed to do one as soon as he returned back to his office." There is, needless to say, no indication that such a statement has ever been taken.

According to San Miguel, "Whittington did speak of the incident and explained foremost that there was no alcohol during the hunt and everyone was wearing the proper hunting attire of blaze orange." Before Whittington could discuss how the shooting occurred, however, "a nurse came in the room and asked Lt. [Juan J.] Guzman and I to kind of hurry up so Mr. Whittington could rest. Mr Whittington again reiterated that this incident was just an accident." So Whittington apparently had enough energy to preemptively deny that there was any misconduct involved, but not enough to discuss what actually happened.

On the final page of the report, San Miguel gives a very brief description of his alleged visit to "the area were [sic] the incident occurred." The deputy reveals nothing of significance about the shooting site, offering only that he "was able to understand more how Mr. Cheney and Katharine Armstrong described the area in their statement." There was no need, of course, to take any photographs at the scene or attempt to gather any sort of evidence.

San Miguel ends his report with the claim that he had obtained, or planned to obtain, sworn statements from each of the named witnesses. But as we know, no such statements have ever been released, just as no sworn statements by the shooter and victim have ever been released, no Secret Service report has ever been released, no medical report on the victim's condition upon admission to the hospital has ever been released, and no evidence has ever been gathered and analyzed. There has been no mention by anyone, for example, of what became of Whittington's alleged hunting garb and other clothing, though such items would obviously contain evidence of the shot pattern and the amount of blood shed by the victim.

The report authored by San Miguel, and the supplemental report added by his boss, Salinas, are quite obviously tailored to accomplish several goals: absolve Dick Cheney of any responsibility for the shooting; deny that the Secret Service overstepped its authority by denying an investigating officer access to a potential crime scene; deny that the Sheriff's Department offered preferential treatment to the shooter; downplay the gravity of Whittington's wounds; and, finally, do all that while revealing as little as possible about the actual shooting.

There is little doubt that even if all the witnesses had been questioned, none of them would have deliberately contradicted the official account. In the vernacular of organized crime (which seems appropriate when dealing with members of the Bush Administration), these were all "made men." We know this because we know that only Cheney's most trusted friends and associates can get anywhere near him with a loaded weapon. So it seems a pretty safe bet that none of the alleged witnesses would openly contradict the tall tale told by Cheney and Armstrong. However, the official story is so sketchily defined, and so fundamentally absurd, that it is a given that if it were to be told in sworn statements by multiple parties, those witness accounts would contain numerous obfuscations and unintentional contradictions.

Unfortunately, we don't have access to those statements, which in all likelihood don't even exist. But from what little evidence is available, we can safely conclude that the official story of the shooting incident is yet another web of transparent lies being sold to the American people. Harry Whittington was not shot from 30 yards away and he almost certainly wasn't shagging a downed bird, and Dick Cheney wasn't likely shooting at a bird. Considering that Whittington was shot at fairly close range, and that the shot was apparently centered approximately on his right collarbone, it is inconceivable that Cheney could have thought he was firing at a quail at the time he pulled the trigger.

And yet, strangely enough, it seems safe to assume that Dick Cheney did not intend to shoot Harry Whittington. We know this because if he had intentionally shot Whittington in the face and chest from close range, it is a foregone conclusion that Harry would have never made it to the hospital alive. You just don't normally shoot someone with the intent to kill and then shuttle them off to the hospital to recover and tell their tale. It's considered bad form among criminals of the caliber of Dick Cheney.

So what really did happen at the Armstrong Ranch that day? How are we to explain a shooting that is difficult to interpret as being accidental, and yet doesn't appear to have been intentional, and that has been presented to the American people through a tapestry of obvious lies?

The most prevalent theory that briefly circulated in alternative media circles adds the consumption of alcohol to the equation. And to be sure, there are clear indications that the boys were doing some drinking that day. As with all other aspects of this story, the alcohol question has elicited contradictory answers from the 'witnesses.' Armstrong first claimed that there was no alcohol involved, "zero, zippo," and then later allowed that maybe some members of the party were drinking, but that the drinkers weren't doing the shooting. Cheney was initially said to have not been drinking at all, but he later acknowledged knocking back a beer at lunch, which of course contradicted both of Armstrong's versions of events. References to alcohol consumption mysteriously went missing from posted media reports and interview transcripts. Both the Parks and Wildlife Report and the Sheriff's Department Report proclaim Cheney to have been alcohol free, but he was not even questioned for more than twelve hours after the incident, so he was obviously never tested for drug or alcohol consumption, or even observed for signs of intoxication. And doctors, as previously noted, have refused to release the results of Whittington's blood-alcohol tests.

So was alcohol involved? There is little doubt that it was, possibly along with other intoxicants as well. And it is tempting to conjure up the mental image of a hopelessly drunk Dick Cheney recklessly swinging his shotgun around and blasting poor Harry Whittington in the face ... and then possibly slurring out orders for someone to clean up his mess while he

stumbled off in search of more phantom prey. Alternately, some have suggested that Cheney didn't actually shoot Whittington at all, but rather drunkenly dropped his gun, causing it to accidentally discharge.

Both of those are possibilities, I suppose, but I suspect that something darker and more sinister lies beneath this hastily assembled cover-up. If Cheney were inclined to get so drunk on hunting excursions that he could accidentally shoot a partner in the face and chest from close range, then you would think that he might have a bit of trouble finding hunting partners -- as well as guides, hosts, security personnel, and medical attendants. And if he had dropped the gun and it accidentally discharged, wouldn't it have been much easier to just go with that story, rather than cooking up an obviously fraudulent one? Would dropping the gun have cast Cheney in a worse light than spinning around and shooting someone in the face? After all, you don't have to be drunk to drop a gun -- just careless, which is certainly no worse than being reckless.

The fact that "Cheney was drunk" theories got a considerable amount of play on obviously fraudulent 'progressive' websites (Arianna Huffington's blog being a prime example) tends to indicate, to skeptics such as myself, that the alcohol angle is a classic case of a "limited hang-out." (I've probably explained this before, but as a courtesy to new readers, I'll do so once again: within the intelligence community, a "limited hang-out" is a damage-control tactic that basically involves pleading guilty to jaywalking in the hopes that the judge won't notice that you are also a mass murderer.)

So again we must ask: what really happened at the Armstrong Ranch that day? Perhaps what we need to do here in order to answer that question is think 'outside the box.' Perhaps we need to look beyond those aspects of the official story that have been universally accepted as true. Perhaps we need to question the basic premise that this shooting occurred while some gentleman hunters were out on a quail hunting expedition.

I have never quite believed that Dick Cheney has any real interest in hunting quail (and I have an even harder time picturing Karl Rove out on a quail hunt, though he is also said to hunt at the Armstrong Ranch). And though no one seems to have noticed, the official cover story spun by Cheney and Rove tends to strongly indicate that neither of the two knows the first thing about quail hunting. In fact, it would appear that I have learned more about the sport of quail hunting by spending a couple of afternoons on the Internet than Cheney has learned by allegedly spending a lifetime out in the brush.

Let's be honest here: Dick Cheney is a good-ole-boy quail hunter from Wisconsin in the same way that George W. Bush is a good-ole-boy Texas rancher. Like Bush, Richard Cheney was *born* a blue-blood elite. The media-crafted public persona has no basis in reality; it exists only in the collective mind.

Consider that Cheney and Rove had almost an entire day to craft some sort of credible cover story for the shooting. And they were free to invent virtually any scenario they saw fit to invent, since all the witnesses were going to go along with the charade, and the fully-owned Keystone Cops of Kenedy County were ready to close the case before Whittington had even hit the ground. And yet the Seasoned Hunter, working hand-in-hand with The Great Spinmeister, concocted what has to be about the lamest possible story they could have come up with. And incredibly enough, the pair actually thought that the fable they had constructed completely exonerated Cheney!

In fact, it is safe to say that portraying Cheney as blameless was the primary concern of our two script writers. And yet the story they produced, after mulling it over for quite some time, failed miserably in achieving that goal. The most likely reason for that failure is that the dynamic duo have virtually no knowledge of safe, time-honored hunting practices.

But if the party wasn't out on a quail hunt, then what were they doing that day, and how did Whittington end up with a chest full of birdshot? The best we can do is take an educated guess based on the following, which are the most reasonable conclusions that can be drawn from the available evidence.

- Harry Whittington was not shagging a downed bird when he was shot, and he probably wasn't wearing hunting gear.
- Cheney almost certainly wasn't shooting at a bird when he blasted Whittington.
- Whittington was hit in the kill zone from relatively short range with a stationary (point and shoot) shot fired from Cheney's gun, which strongly suggests that the shot was fired intentionally.
- Nevertheless, Harry Whittington was likely not the intended target.
- The incident took place in Kenedy County -- a sprawling, 1,500-square-mile patch of land in South Texas that is fully owned and controlled by a network of wealthy families, and that is - with the exception of a few public roads - completely inaccessible to the general public, and that is, by all appearances, beyond the reach of any law enforcement agencies.
- The Armstrong Ranch, and Kenedy County in general, would be the ideal place for a sociopath like Dick Cheney to indulge in his most depraved fantasies.
- Dick Cheney could not possibly have mistaken Harry Whittington for a bird.
- Cheney could, however, have easily mistaken Whittington for another person.

The scenario that best fits these facts, although it is an entirely speculative one, is that Dick Cheney shot Harry Whittington accidentally when he thought he was taking aim at someone else. As Whittington would have had to be directly involved in the activities being pursued, it was obviously in his best interests to go along with the Cheney/Rove story and discourage anyone from looking too closely at the facts of the case.

And that, my friends, is my best guess as to what occurred on the Armstrong Ranch at approximately 5:30 PM on February 11, 2006. Not that it matters, of course. As Time Magazine opined, "What took place in the hours before and after the shooting is a largely mundane tale that became extraordinary" only because Cheney, for several days, "seemed unwilling to tell it." Of course, there is, as Time acknowledged, "a small and geeky but persistent debate over whether Cheney might have been closer to Whittington than 30 yds., the figure in the sheriff's report." Luckily though, 'real' reporters don't engage in "geeky" debates, so the American people have been spared from exposure to such trivialities. (John Cloud "Inside the Shooting at the Ranch," Time Magazine, February 27, 2006)

After the passing of just a few short weeks, the shooting incident has become little more than an obscure historical footnote. It may provide fodder for an occasional late night joke, but it hardly merits any serious discussion. There is, however, one final observation that can be made here: if Cheney was destined to have such a hunting 'accident,' he could at least have had the decency to let it happen a couple of years ago, when he was out on an alleged duck hunt with a certain Supreme Court justice. Quack, quack.



# the Center for an Informed

## **NEWSLETTER #85**

*August 29, 2006*

### *Alien Nation Edition*

<http://www.davesweb.cncast.com/nwsltr85.html>

So it appears as though the word "burglary," though commonly understood to mean a break-in for the purpose of committing a theft, is actually defined as a break-in for the purpose of engaging in *any* criminal activity, so the incident at Ruppert's *FTB* offices does qualify, from a legal perspective, as a burglary. My bad. Sorry about that.

Also, before moving on to other things, I have to note here that several people wrote me to ask, confidentially, who the mystery dissident journalist was. \*Sigh\* I'm going to give you all the benefit of the doubt here and just assume that these were probably new readers who can, I suppose, be forgiven for failing to appreciate my rather demented sense of humor.

Now then, by a quick show of hands, how many of you read the title of this newsletter and got all excited thinking that I was going to be writing about alien abductions, shape-shifting reptilians and anal probes? I see a few hands up in the back of the room, which means that some of you are probably going to be disappointed. But that's okay, because there is always a certain percentage of you that are disappointed with anything that I choose to write about.

I was shocked to find, for example, that some of you were not the least bit interested in reading about Dick Cheney's penis. One of you actually wrote to tell me that not only is the subject of little interest, but that, in any event, Cheney's penis "couldn't possibly be any bigger than my husband's." Information sharing can be a good thing, to be sure, but for future reference, that was probably a little more information than I really needed.

Moving on then, I know that I have beat this particular horse before, on more than one occasion, but bear with me here because I feel that I need to point out once again, for the benefit of the slow learners in the crowd, that the basic principle by which this country's political establishment operates is - now pay attention! - *control through fear*.

Everyone understands that ... right?

I mean, it's pretty basic stuff – scare the hell out of people and they'll obediently follow whatever path they are told is the safe path to follow. Of course, it probably won't really be the safe path to follow, and there probably won't really be anything to fear – other than the motives and intentions of those directing you down the path. But if you really scare the bejesus out of somebody, none of that is going to matter to them at the time.

There is, to be sure, a whole lot of stuff to be scared of in the world today – or at least a whole lot of stuff that we are conditioned to fear: terrorists; immigrants; emerging viruses; natural disasters; violent criminals; Peak Oil; Iran; Iraq; North Korea; Osama bin Laden; Saddam Hussein; Hezbollah; water bottles on airplanes. All in all, it's a very scary world out there.

I was reminded of this recently when I was called upon, for the first time in my life, to serve jury duty. Actually, that's not quite true; I have been called upon before, but I was never able to serve because of, if I remember correctly, financial hardships and medical conditions. But this recent jury notice happened to find me in good health and financially sound – which is another way of saying that getting out of jury service has become much more difficult – so I diligently reported for duty, showing due respect for the sanctity of the courthouse by arriving only slightly late and with my “Fuck the LAPD” t-shirt only partly exposed, and then proceeded to sit idly by for several hours with little to do other than mentally calculate the odds that any prosecutor would actually seat me on any jury.

Midway through a very long day, I was sent to a courtroom along with about forty other potential jurors. Before entering the courtroom, a random draw was held and I happened to pick a fairly high number, so my fate, it appeared, would be determined by how many of the hapless souls ahead of me in line were accepted as jurors. It soon became clear that more than a few of them were going to make a play for rejection, so I figured that, if nothing else, I might sneak in as an alternate juror.

There seemed to be two different strategies employed by those seeking dismissal, by the way, one that we will call the “good strategy” and one that we will call the “really bad strategy.” The opposing attorneys, you see, are basically on a fishing expedition during the jury selection process, and what they are fishing for is bias. The defense attorney is basically looking for bias against his or her client, and the prosecutor is looking for bias against pretty much any form of authority. Toward that end, each side will ask a series of questions. It's pretty obvious what they are fishing for, which makes it pretty easy to make a play for dismissal.

The really bad strategy, employed by more than one potential juror that day, is to reflexively snap at every piece of bait that is dangled out there, even if doing so requires you to directly contradict a position that you took just a couple of questions ago. This strategy will likely provide some invaluable entertainment, but revealing to everyone in the room that you will go to hilarious lengths to avoid jury service will not necessarily get you booted.

The better strategy, by far, is to zero in on a single area of bias that the attorneys are looking for and then sell it as best you can. To greatly increase your odds of success, I would suggest playing to the prosecutor rather than the defense attorney, who is likely a public defender with little interest in actually defending his or her client. From what I observed, an anti-police bias will get you kicked loose in time for lunch, but a pro-police bias probably will not. Compare these two examples (which may or may not be exaggerated to some extent):

Prosecutor: Have you ever had any personal encounters with the police, and, if so, would you describe those encounters as positive or negative experiences?

Potential Juror #1: Well, I was pulled over once a long time ago by a cop who seemed like he might have had a little bit of an attitude, but overall ...

Prosecutor: Judge, I move that this juror be dismissed and then immediately taken to lock-up.

Public Defender: Have you ever had any personal encounters with the police, and, if so, would you describe those encounters as positive or negative experiences?

Potential Juror #2: Well, my brother is a cop, and my brother-in-law is with the highway patrol, and my dad is retired FBI, and my wife works part-time down at the station as a dispatcher, and I know from talking to all of them that the police have a really hard job, what with having to deal with all the scumbags out there, and with the ACLU-types crying every time one of the scumbags goes and gets himself shot. Speaking of shooting, by the way, did I mention that I've been the president of my local NRA chapter for the last ten years? And Grand Dragon of my KKK chapter? By the way, is that nigger over there the defendant in this case? 'Cuz I'll tell you what, that sumbitch looks guilty as all hell to me.

Public Defender: Your Honor, I think we may have found our jury foreman.

As a potential juror, you are not told what charges the defendant is facing. But if you pay attention to the questions that are asked, it's not that hard to figure out. In this case, a young boy, likely the son of the defendant, was apparently seriously injured or even killed while riding a small dirt bike. The boy was too young to ride legally, and so the state was charging the man with something along the lines of reckless child endangerment.

For the record, some of the potential jurors seemed horrified at the thought of a child possibly maimed or killed as a result of the negligence of an adult. Others seemed just as horrified that the state was prosecuting a grieving father who had likely already punished himself far more than the state ever could. Or maybe that was just me.

All of the prospective jurors were asked whether they had ever let their own children do something that was potentially dangerous, or whether they themselves had been allowed, as children, to do things that others would consider dangerous – possibly even reckless. A few of the jurors allowed that they had ridden dirt bikes and/or that they had allowed their own kids to ride dirt bikes or ATVs. None of the jurors' answers ventured much beyond that. My number, alas, never came up, and that's kind of a shame, because I sat there for several hours with nothing better to do than mentally compose my answer to that particular question. It would have gone something like this:

Was I ever allowed to do anything dangerous as a child?! Is that what you're asking me? *Are you serious?!* EVERYTHING I did as a child was dangerous. EVERYTHING!! If I allowed my own kids to do half of what I was allowed to do as a kid, the Department of Child Services would have taken them away from me years ago and I'd probably be locked away in prison. Negligence?! *You want to talk about negligence?* My parents must take the friggin' cake when it comes to negligence! As just one example, our family logged thousands of miles driving all over Hell's half-acre in the family car and never once - not once! - did they strap me into a child safety seat. Come to think of it, most of the time I didn't even wear a seatbelt. Here's another example: for most of my formative years, my primary mode of transportation was a bicycle, and *never once did my parents insist that I wear a helmet! I didn't even own one* (which is probably a good thing, because I'm thinking that if I had tooled around town on my bike sporting a helmet in the 1960s and 1970s, I would have gotten my ass kicked on a pretty regular basis). And get this: every year, on the Fourth of July, I was allowed to set off explosive devices and burn shit up right in front of our house! And my parents, if you can believe this, watched me do it *and even cheered me on!* And on Halloween, I was allowed to go out at night *with no adult supervision* to solicit candy from complete fucking strangers. Oops ... sorry there, judge ... am I allowed to say 'fucking' in this courtroom? Anyway, as I was saying, I was also allowed to ride a small dirt bike, or at least I would have been if my dumbass older brother hadn't crashed the damn thing into a chain-link fence before I got my chance to ride, deeply cutting his finger in the process. *Oh shit!* Maybe I shouldn't have mentioned that, since the prosecutor over there seems a little overzealous. Is there a statute of limitations on this child endangerment stuff? I mean, you're not going to extradite my dad from Arizona to answer for letting my brother ride that dirt bike back in 1970, are you? Anyway, like I was saying, when I was a kid I was actually allowed – forced, really – to *walk* to school, which is shameful, when you think about it, since everybody knows that any reasonably responsible parent lines up with all the other SUV-driving parents to drop off and pick up their kids, so that the little ones can be safely transported to their respective homes where they can interact with their peers in safe, modern ways such as with text messaging and instant messaging, rather than in the dangerous ways of the past, which generally involved leaving the house to play in the great outdoors. Believe it or not, we were allowed to do that. We were allowed to freely roam the neighborhood from a very young age, sometimes on bikes, sometimes on skateboards (with hard clay wheels that would stop cold if there happened to be a microscopic particle of sand on the sidewalk, hence the scar on my chin), and sometimes on foot. And do you know why we were allowed to freely roam the neighborhood? *Because we actually HAD a neighborhood!* Believe it or not, there was a real

sense of neighborhood and community in those days of yore. I don't live in a neighborhood today, your honor. Oh sure, I have 'neighbors,' I suppose, in the sense that there are other people who live all around me. But none of them know one another. We all live in our own little safehouses, shielded from the scary world. But in the old days, everyone knew each other and everyone's kids ran the streets together. And the school, well, that was the center of it all. There was always something to do at the school. There were bike safety classes and an annual bike rodeo. There was the wildly popular annual fair. There were various after-school programs. There were bake sales. There were paper drives. There was a very active PTA. There were people staffing the school on weekends who would gladly provide you with a carom table, or a basketball, or a football, or all the gear needed to put together a baseball game. And finding enough people to field a team was never a problem. But if you go by a school now on the weekend, or even fifteen minutes after the final bell rings on any given weekday, do you know what you'll find? Padlocked fences and barren asphalt. You won't see any kids playing. And you won't see any kids on the streets either. Where the hell are all the kids? And what happened, by the way, to the paperboys? When I was a kid, we were all paperboys. We were out riding the streets after school delivering the evening newspaper, and then once a month going up to the doors of the homes of random strangers, demanding money for providing a service, and being careful to always 'porch' the paper during the month of December in the hopes of collecting those big Christmas tips, and then returning to the usual erratic delivery pattern in January, while forever hoping that the one guy who never answers the door when you come to collect even when you can see him through the window sitting there watching TV and drinking a beer will eventually pay you for the last three months of service, so that maybe there will be some kind of financial reward for getting up every Sunday morning before dawn and overloading the handlebars of your bike with heavy Sunday editions of the local newspaper so that you can pedal around town alone and cold in the pre-dawn hours, because your parents – and I bet you were wondering where I was going with this, weren't you? – have no concern for the way they recklessly endanger your life on pretty much a daily basis. Can you imagine allowing a child to ride a bike with dangerously overloaded handlebars, with no helmet or other safety gear, alone and a couple miles from home at 5:00 in the morning in a neighborhood full of strangers, possibly sex offenders? But you know what, Judge? We kind of liked doing it, most of the time. And you know what else? While my kids have every goddamn electronic gadget imaginable – from I-Pods to cell phones to laptop computers to portable DVD players – they don't have what I had as a kid. They don't have it because it has been stolen from them and it can't be replaced with e-mail and digital cameras. What they don't have, your honor, is a sense of neighborhood. They don't have a sense of community. They have been deprived of meaningful human interaction. They have been conditioned to live in a world where trust in others has been replaced by fear of everyone and everything. Their world is a world built entirely on fear. But here I may have digressed a bit. What the hell was the question again?

As I have stressed before on these pages, one of the primary goals of the powers-that-be is the complete atomization of society – the destruction of all social, cultural, and familial bonds. It is the ultimate divide-and-conquer strategy: reduce the entire population to armies of one, each alone and isolated, unable to fight back against the rapidly encroaching police state. As I have also emphasized before, technology has played a major role in the process of atomizing Western society. Just as the egregiously misrepresented Luddites warned, the proliferation of advanced technology has led to a rapid process of depersonalization.

But just how successful have the puppet-masters been at fostering social isolation? I am sorry to have to report here that a landmark new study (all but ignored by the American media) provides chilling evidence that the psychological warfare campaign has been wildly successful. According to a Washington Post report:

Americans are far more socially isolated today than they were two decades ago, and a sharply growing number of people say they have no one in whom they can confide, according to a comprehensive new evaluation of the decline of social ties in the United States.

A quarter of Americans say they have no one with whom they can discuss personal troubles, more than double the number who were similarly isolated in 1985. Overall, the number of people Americans have in their closest circle of confidants has dropped from around three to about two.

The comprehensive new study paints a sobering picture of an increasingly fragmented America, where intimate social ties – once seen as an integral part of daily life and associated with a host of psychological and civic benefits – are shrinking or nonexistent. In bad times, far more people appear to suffer alone ...

Compared with 1985, nearly 50 percent more people in 2004 reported that their spouse is the only person they can confide in ... Whereas nearly three-quarters of people in 1985 reported they had a friend in whom they could confide, only half in 2004 said they could count on such support. The number of people who said they counted a neighbor as a confidant dropped by more than half, from about 19 percent to about 8 percent.

(Shankar Vedantam "Social Isolation Growing in U.S., Study Says," Washington Post, June 23, 2006;

read the full report here: <http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/June06ASRFeature.pdf#search=%22Lynn%20Smith-Lovin%20%26%20social%20isolation%22>)

The study found sharp declines in all non-kin relationships. In 1985, 29.4 percent of people reported a close relationship with at least one co-worker; by 2004, that figure had dropped to 18 percent. Even more alarmingly, the percentage of respondents enjoying a close relationship with a co-member of a group dropped from 26.1 all the way down to 11.8. Understating the obvious was the study's lead author, Duke University Professor Lynn Smith-Lovin: "This is a big social change, and it indicates something that's not good for our society."



Let's be a bit more blunt here and stipulate that a society in which 24.6 percent of the people *do not have a single close confidant*, and an astounding 53.4 percent have *no* close non-kin relationships, is a very, very sick society. It is debatable, in fact, whether it is actually a society at all, but rather an essentially random collection of strangers, unconnected to each other in any meaningful way, each going about their meaningless lives in conditioned isolation.

Just how sick is this society? That is difficult to say, since we don't have any data from a healthy society to provide a baseline for comparison. It is regrettable, to say the least, that the data available to the researchers only covered changes in America over the last two decades. Lacking earlier data, 1985 serves as a baseline for evaluating the data from 2004, but there is little doubt that America was already a very sick society by the mid-1980s and that social isolation had already increased immensely from earlier decades.

What would we find if we had data dating back to the 1960s, or the 1940s, or the 1920s? Does anyone doubt that that data would reveal a marked pattern of steadily increasing social isolation extending back many decades? When was America last a healthy society? What do the social isolation statistics of a healthy society look like? If someone were to finance a comprehensive *international* study of social isolation, how sick would the figures from 2004 America look in relation to the figures from the rest of the world? Where would America rank among nations? I'm guessing we'd be dead last.

And what does the future hold? If the last twenty years have brought such significant change, through a process that appears to be accelerating, then what will we find twenty years from now, or even ten years from now? If one in every four Americans now have no close relationships, even within their own family, can we expect to see that rise to one in every two Americans by 2020? Is this the kind of society you want your kids to grow up in? Because this isn't conjecture or 'conspiracy theorizing,' folks, this is the cold, hard reality of the society we live in. Take a look around as you go about your daily activities today; one of every four people you see have no one to turn to, no one to confide in, no one to really talk to. And fully half the people you see have no social network at all beyond their own family.

But fear not. A lot of them probably have I-pods and personal computers with high-speed internet access. So it's all good, I suppose.

Technology has, to be sure, played a major role in the rise of social isolation. But so too has the selling of fear, for we live in a world, as I may have mentioned before, where control through fear is the basic operating principle of our allegedly democratic government. I am not suggesting here, of course, that this is something new. There was, if I recall correctly, a fair amount of fear-mongering going on when I was a kid. Everyone seemed to be convinced, for example, that it was only a matter of time before "The Bomb" came raining down on America's cities. To insure that we never stopped thinking about the prospect of nuclear annihilation, public schools held regular "bomb drills" or "drop drills." When the alarm

sounded at my school, we were all expected to take cover under our desks, with our hands strategically placed over our heads. We held regular fire alarm drills as well, but those were a bit different in that they had a real purpose: acquainting students and staff with evacuation plans in the event that an actual emergency should arise. The drop drills, on the other hand, served no purpose other than to induce fear. And I say that because research that I have done as an adult has led me to the shocking conclusion that my hands and a wooden desk would not have offered ideal protection from a nuclear blast.

There were other things to fear in the '60s and '70s as well. Strangers bearing candy were a persistent problem, though I made it through my childhood without ever encountering one of these legendary figures – except on Halloween, when, for some unexplained reason, it was perfectly okay to accept candy from strangers, especially if they were strangers who passed out really good candy and not the shitty candy that some people handed out, almost as if they actually wanted someone to egg their house. And then, of course, there were the people who just left a bucket of candy on the front porch for trick-or-treaters to help themselves to, kind of on the honor system.

While we're on that subject, I'd like to take this opportunity to say, to all the kids down in Torrance, California who got to those houses after my brothers and I did, that we are very sorry for our youthful indiscretions and we plan on making it up to you someday. Also, we would like all our former neighbors to know that we no longer see the humor in setting off smoke bombs from the local fireworks stand on your front porches and then ringing-and-running your house. At the time, I'll admit, it seemed really damn funny, especially when you'd come stomping out through the cloud of colored smoke to try to find us, while we sat hiding in the bushes across the street struggling mightily to stifle our laughter. But now, looking back as a responsible adult, I find it only mildly amusing.

Anyway, let's now move on and take a look at the question that I am sure is on everyone's mind, which is: what the hell is your point here, Dave? Glad you asked. The point is that we are now in a better position to discuss the question posed in Newsletter #81 (April 7, 2006). As readers will no doubt recall, in that outing I basically asked what it was going to take to get a reaction from the American people. But as it turns out, I was asking the wrong question.

The problem, you see, is not that the American people are not waking up to the outrages committed by this administration. To the extent that they can be trusted, every public opinion poll in recent years - whether concerning the occupation of Iraq, the handling of Hurricane Katrina, the performance of the 9-11 Commission, or any number of other issues – has reflected the fact that the American people are indeed waking up. And among those who have woken up, there appears to be agreement that the problems we are facing require immediate action.

So the problem is not that the American people don't know what's going on. And it's not that they are too apathetic to care about fixing the problems once they recognize what those

problems are. No, the real problem is that what is required to correct the course of this ship-of-state is a massive and sustained social movement. And the real question that needs to be asked is: *how does a massive social movement arise in a nation that is almost completely devoid of any meaningful social networks?*

And the answer, it appears, is: it doesn't.

We are all products of what is surely the most socially isolated society that this planet has ever seen (except for those of you who are reading this in other parts of the world). And the harsh reality of the sick society that we live in is that the obtaining of real knowledge may be more of a curse than a blessing. With real knowledge comes the ability to see more clearly through the fog of lies, but with that increased awareness comes an inevitable feeling of helplessness. For how is someone to act upon that which has been learned when said person has no social networks to call upon and acting alone is clearly not going to prove effective? Hence the gaining of knowledge often leads, ironically enough, to yet further social isolation.

If I had it to do over again, I don't know that I would have burrowed down this rabbit hole as deeply as I have. Unfortunately, it's a one-way path; once you have dug your way in, there's no way back out. There's no way to unlearn that which has been learned. There is a certain satisfaction that comes with being able to understand how the world really works, and being able to more accurately process new information as it becomes available. But if you are powerless to right the wrongs in the world, is it better not to know? Is it better to live life comfortably numb?

I often get messages from some of you asking why I don't burrow deeper – why I don't address issues like, for instance, those mentioned at the top of this post. And the answer is that I don't find the evidence in support of these ideas very credible. Or maybe it's just that I haven't dug deep enough down all the various branches of the rabbit hole. Maybe the view from my current position is so unrelentingly bleak that I don't want to find out what lies beneath.

But then again, maybe if you dig deep enough, there is another way out.

# September 11 2001 Revisited

**David McGowan**



# September 11, 2001 Revisited: Prologue I

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Sep 12, 2001

## Welcome to the New and Improved Police State

*"We are going to see a great number of articles in the future from so-called experts and public officials. They will warn about more violence, more kidnappings, and more terrorists. Mass media, the armed forces, and intelligence agencies will saturate our lives with fascist scare tactics and 'predictions' that have already been planned to come true."* –Conspiracy theorist' Mae Brussell, 1974

I have a friend with whom I frequently disagree on matters of politics. He thinks that I am a crazed conspiracy theorist, and I think that he is a reactionary fascist. There was one thing that we agreed on though.

A few weeks ago, I told him that our fearless leaders seemed to be veering dangerously close to unleashing 'tactical' nuclear weapons upon the world. Although he seriously doubted that that was in fact the case, he readily agreed that such an action would be reckless and unconscionable. He stated that he couldn't envision any scenario under which such a strike would be justified and that we should avoid, at all costs, crossing that threshold. Opening that door, he believed, could only serve to escalate tensions and make this a much more dangerous world in which to live. He was one of several people who called me yesterday to discuss the alleged terrorist attacks upon America. During the course of that call, he stated flatly that when the perpetrators were identified, they and their backers should be nuked. When I reminded him of our conversation of just a few weeks before, he said that things have changed now. I asked him if he had considered whether that wasn't perhaps precisely the point of the attacks. Unfazed, he reiterated his belief that I am a crazed conspiracy theorist.

Excuse my cynicism here, but have we Americans completely lost our ability to think? Are we now so thoroughly braindead that we are completely reliant on our media outlets, with their endless supply of 'experts,' to make sense of events in the world? Are we really that stupid – or do our leaders just think that we are?

The actions taken on the morning of September 11 were crimes – horrendous crimes against humanity, to be sure, but in the final analysis, not so very different from any other crimes. And the first step in solving any crime is to look at who had a motive and who had the means and opportunity to commit said crime.

As for motive, we are being asked to believe that a band of Islamic terrorists are the most likely suspects. But is that really the case? Was it a state-sponsored terrorist group that had the most to gain by launching such an assault? Or was it our own political, corporate and military leaders? While the people of the Palestinian territories may well be dancing in the streets today in celebration of the blow struck against the United States, they certainly won't emerge as the winners in this national tragedy. When the bombs begin to rain down upon them, as they certainly will, the loss of life, property and hope will be far more profound for them than it will be for the people of New York. Their short-term 'victory' will be a hollow one indeed.

This is certainly not to suggest that there are no governments, groups, or organizations around the world – or within these borders – that have legitimate grudges against the United States government. The numbers of such entities are legion. Two hundred years of imperialistic covert and overt military ventures have created a lot of enemies of the American ship of state, and a

tremendous amount of residual bitterness. Yet none of these groups stood to gain by launching such an attack.

The United States, on the other hand, has much to gain in the aftermath of this chapter of American history. I am not talking here, of course, about the *people* of this country, who will pay a steep price for the carnage of September 11. Big Brother has assured us that we will be protected from future acts of this sort, and we will welcome with open arms the repressive, overtly fascistic ‘reforms’ that will be enacted.

The people of this country, and of the world, are always the ones to pick up the tab for acts of gross governmental malfeasance. The people of some hapless country (or countries) that is identified as the culprit will pay with their lives and the lives of their children. The people of America, and much of the Western world, will pay with the wholesale stripping away of their remaining human, civil and privacy rights.

Such a scenario only serves to benefit those who sit at the top of the food chain. Our elected leaders – who are elected only in the sense that every couple of years we are given a choice between two interchangeable candidates – will revel in the free reign they will be given to ram through legislation so appallingly reactionary that it would have been unthinkable just days ago. Military spending and the militarization of the country will escalate to a fever pitch.

Welcome, my friends, to the new and improved police state – the largest, most powerful, and most technologically advanced police state the world has ever seen. With the much-lauded U.S. economy tanking, and unemployment figures hitting their highest levels in years, this will come in very handy for the ‘powers that be.’

The ugly truth is that all ‘anti-terrorist’ measures are designed not to protect the American people from attack or to protect our ‘freedoms,’ but to protect wealth and power – specifically the unprecedented levels of wealth currently held by corporate America – and to restrict those very freedoms that threaten their hold on that wealth. This American tragedy, in other words, plays directly into the hands of the corporate and military elite of this nation, who have for years been propagandizing for a more belligerent and imperialistic foreign policy and for more repressive legislation here on the homefront. Having been presented with a pretext to enact such measures, it is our leaders – elected or otherwise – who stand to gain the most from yesterday’s bloodshed. As for the question of who had the means and opportunity to commit these crimes, the official story holds that they were the work of a well-organized foreign terrorist organization. Officials have acknowledged that the operation was an exceptionally well-planned and well-coordinated series of attacks that required months of planning and a large network of co-conspirators to pull off. So well-organized was the operation that government spokesmen and television talking-heads (which are really the same thing) have been at a loss to explain some of the day’s events. Many questions have been left unanswered and some haven’t been asked at all. Some of the answers that have been offered have strained credibility far past the breaking point.

One question that has gone unanswered is how a plane was able to penetrate so deeply into the Pentagon’s airspace – *even after* two other planes had already plowed into the World Trade Center towers. Despite the ridiculous current claims, the airspace surrounding the Pentagon is perhaps the most tightly controlled, militarily secure airspace in the world. This would be all the more true in the immediate aftermath of a large-scale ‘terrorist’ attack on New York City.

Claims have been made that even if the approach of the aircraft had sounded an alarm, it would not have been targeted due to the fact that it was a commercial aircraft with many innocent lives aboard. Nonsense. Anyone who thinks that U.S. military/intelligence personnel would hesitate to target a commercial airliner, particularly in light of the fact that two such aircraft had already



been used in suicide attacks, is living in a media-induced fantasy world. The question then of how this plane was able to 'elude' the Pentagon's formidable defenses is one that should receive close scrutiny from America's 'free' and 'independent' press. There is virtually no chance that that will happen.

Another question that begs for an answer is how teams of presumably armed hijackers were able to breach the security measures of no less than three major airports and successfully hijack four separate flights. Contrary to the claims now being made, security precautions currently in place in U.S. airports are anything but "lax." That fact was being implicitly acknowledged by this morning, as reports began to come in claiming that the hijackers had improvised weapons from razor blades and other items carried in their shaving kits. The network and cable news broadcasters reporting this story actually did so with straight faces.

This scenario would be laughable were this story not such a tragic one. According to the latest official accounts, three to five terrorists boarded each of the hijacked aircraft (all of these terrorists, of course, were such religious fanatics that they had agreed to give their lives for the cause they believed in, and none of them presumably had second thoughts about that decision once the operation was underway). Does anyone really believe that a few guys wielding toothbrush handles embedded with razor blades could quickly and efficiently gain control of a commercial airliner? I would think that such a group would have their hands full trying to hold-up a liquor store.

How could, as has been reported, such a 'terrorist cell' possibly simultaneously overpower the flight crews *and* corral all of the flights' passengers into the rear of the planes? I don't consider myself to be a particularly brave or heroic sort of guy, but I would not hesitate for a second to take on a couple of guys wielding toothbrushes, particularly if my life, or the life of my family, was on the line and if I knew that I had some sixty people (the average number of passengers on the flights) behind me who would back me up. Maybe that's just me, but somehow I think most Americans would rise to the occasion.

Nevertheless, these terrorist teams reportedly succeeded where so many other, better-armed terrorists have failed. The majority of hijacking attempts, as officials have acknowledged, end in failure. There hasn't been one to succeed in this country for a decade. And yet these teams succeeded, and on a spectacular scale, in four-out-of-four attempts and with only the most primitive of weapons. To what are we to attribute that fact? Don't look to the media for answers. Perhaps the most obvious question raised by the attacks, and one that officials have feebly attempted to answer, is how the planning for such an operation could have escaped the attention of the country's intelligence services. Whenever such an event occurs, the intelligence agencies rather predictably hang their heads, slump their shoulders and sheepishly grin as they explain their powerlessness to predict such things: "We did the best we could," they explain, "but our resources are limited, our adversaries formidable, and our sources not infallible."

That's a real nice story, but the reality is that the CIA – along with the FBI, ONI, DIA, NSC, NSA, DEA, and virtually every other three-letter acronym you could think of – constitutes the largest and most insidious intelligence network the world has ever seen. Its agents have fully infiltrated every foreign government on the planet, as well as every significant 'terrorist' group and every domestic resistance movement that has ever posed even a remote threat to the goals of those who helm the American ship of state. It is simply inconceivable that such an ambitious attack could have been planned, coordinated and launched without the knowledge of numerous members of the national security state.

That is the inescapable reality that no amount of media and government spin can erase, though politicians and their media puppets will work overtime to do exactly that. One need only to turn their television set off and their brain on though to see how preposterous is the claim that these attacks took the intelligence community by surprise.

Perhaps the most disturbing question raised by the attacks is what exactly caused the twin towers of the WTC to collapse? The impact of the planes affected only the upper floors of the towers; their foundations were unaffected. The UK's *Guardian* acknowledged that the initial impact of the aircraft would result in less stress on the building than is normally caused by high winds. The buildings were specifically designed to handle such horizontal movement.

The *Guardian* and its expert consultants conclude that the collapse of the buildings was the result of secondary explosions, attributed to the delayed release of the large supply of jet fuel carried by the aircraft. How though could the ignition of the jet fuel have occurred as a delayed, secondary explosion? As the endlessly played videotapes of the attacks graphically illustrate, the initial impacts resulted in enormous fireballs and the immediate engulfing of a portion of the buildings in flames.

It is inconceivable that the aircraft's fuel tanks would not have burst upon impact, with their contents then immediately ignited. Indeed, if that wasn't in fact the case, then how are we to explain the initial explosions and fireballs that were witnessed by the world? What exactly was it that created the spectacular initial blasts if it wasn't the jet fuel? But if that was the case, what was it then that created the secondary explosions that appear to have occurred? These secondary blasts were acknowledged early in the day by an *NBC* newsman. The correspondent stated on the air that he had just talked with the fire department's public safety commissioner who verified that large secondary explosions precipitated the collapse of the towers.

A radio broadcaster on WLS in Chicago (according to a correspondent), whose former colleague\* is a *CBS* journalist who was on the scene at the towers, said on the air that this colleague had witnessed an enormous fireball emanating from *beneath* one of the towers immediately before it came crashing down. What are we to make of these scattered reports, none of which received any follow-up coverage amidst the non-stop blizzard of media attention?

To be sure, the collapse of the towers, captured on tape for all the world to see, had the decided appearance of controlled implosions, facilitated by the precise placement of technologically advanced explosives. The world has never before witnessed such complete destruction of a targeted building by an act of war or a 'terrorist' assault. We have seen the United States target many a building for destruction. In the most recent military venture, we saw an embassy building and a television studio, among many others, take direct and multiple hits from state-of-the-art bombs and guided missiles. The buildings were devastated, to be sure, but the damage didn't come close to matching the pile of rubble that the Twin Towers were reduced to.

We also saw a highrise Israeli apartment building take a direct hit from an Iraqi Scud missile during the Gulf war (actually, most of us probably didn't see that, except for those who happened to be tuned in to CNN for the brief few moments when the footage was aired; as it turns out, that Scud missile was actually safely intercepted by a trusty Patriot missile, or so it was claimed, just as if the footage had never aired). The point though is that the building was hit and did suffer extensive damage, and undoubtedly at the cost of many lives. But again, the building – though sheared nearly in half – was in considerably better shape than the WTC towers.

It occurs to me then that perhaps America has invested entirely too much time and money in pursuit of creating ever more powerful and efficient weapons systems. Who would have ever thought that the best weapon with which to reduce an entire tower to rubble was the *plane itself*.

It doesn't even have to be a military plane – any old commercial aircraft will do. Someone obviously should have followed up on the early work done in this area by the Japanese during World War II.

In the final analysis, we must ask ourselves the following questions: Who had the means to get highly-trained commando teams onto four commercial aircraft flying out of three separate airports? Who had the ability to violate the Pentagon's airspace, completely unmolested and unchallenged? What weapons were really used to commandeer those aircraft and who had the means to get them on the planes? Who had the ability to plan and execute such an ambitious, multi-pronged attack without the interference of the U.S. intelligence services? Who had the means to staff each of the four teams with at least one well-trained, and suicidal, pilot? Who had the means and opportunity to plant secondary explosive charges, if in fact these were used? Finally, perhaps the most important question to be asked is: who stands to gain the most in the bleak aftermath? It is certainly not the American people, or any resistance movement within these borders. It's definitely not the still-to-be identified target(s) of the nation's wrath (which will likely include Iraq). That would seem to limit the remaining choices.

It is quite possible, indeed quite likely, that members of some 'extremist' group served as the foot soldiers of these attacks. But it is just as likely that they were used as pawns in the global chess game that serves as our collective reality. It is also likely that these 'terrorists' were motivated by legitimately perceived grievances with the U.S. government. Those motivations weren't likely shared by their puppeteers, however, who cynically manipulated those belief systems to serve their own ends. Most of the participants probably did not know that they were embarking on suicide missions. Quite likely only the pilots knew that, and they may very well have received a little more 'training' than your average pilot.

All of this is, by necessity, just speculation at this point. The true facts of the case will emerge over time in bits and pieces, mixed in with a healthy dose of disinformation. It matters little though in which direction those facts point. The official story has already been written.

\* It was previously mistakenly reported here that the woman making the call was the broadcaster's wife. She was actually a long-time colleague. The correspondent who alerted me to this report contacted the station to inquire about purchasing an audiotape of the broadcast for September 11, and received the following brief reply: "Legally, we're not allowed to provide program tapes."

## September 11, 2001 Revisited: Prologue II

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Sep 16, 2001

### Continuing Commentary on the WTC Attacks

*"Nothing just happens in politics. If something happens you can be sure it was planned that way."*

*Franklin Delano Roosevelt*

It seems as though more people have been watching the *Discovery Channel* than the planners of the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon may have accounted for. A good number of people are

questioning exactly why the collapse of the towers looked so much like controlled implosions. Anyone who has seen a documentary clip of a building being professionally demolished using explosive charges couldn't help but be struck by the remarkable similarity.

One demolition and explosives expert from New Mexico has already gone public with his suspicions that the buildings were deliberately imploded. Architects and engineers who designed the buildings were at a loss to explain how they could react in such a manner. One expert, prompted by his interviewer to comment on if more steel in the structures could have prevented the tragedy, could only say that it was hard to imagine how any more steel could have been incorporated into *any* structure.

And it was, as we all know, not just one tower that literally crumbled before our very eyes, but both of them – in an identical fashion. As I myself was pondering that rather curious fact, I stumbled upon yet another article giving a first-person report on the tragedy. This particular account concerned an architecture student who viewed the unfolding drama from across the bay. Some of his first thoughts – after the buildings had been struck, but before they disappeared – were that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to fight a fire at that height, and that it would without question be impossible to repair the damaged buildings. He found himself pondering what would become of the imposing towers, being no longer fit to be occupied. And then, of course, they just sort of vanished.

Suddenly a possible plan began to come into focus. The initial crashes and explosions, which were essential for the shock value of being so utterly audacious, would by necessity destroy the buildings. It would have therefore been necessary, at some time in the future, to implode the buildings. Why not then include it as part of the show?

To stir up as much outrage as possible, it was of course necessary to get footage of the implosions, as well as the crashes themselves, although it seems a little odd that the first crash was recorded so graphically – as if someone was waiting for it, camera in hand (at least two people, actually, according to a British correspondent who claims to have seen footage on the BBC taken from a different angle). That footage, of course, has incalculable propaganda value. Propaganda is certainly something that we have seen a lot of in the last week. The sheer volume of, and the monotony of, the media coverage has been astounding. Every station across the television dial playing the same footage and providing the same unquestioning commentary, continuously, around the clock, from the moment the first plane hit the tower. The media barrage is unavoidable. Absurdly large headlines scream out from every newspaper and magazine, and every radio station seems to sound the same. There is no escape. And there is likely a reason for that. Somewhere in the halls of power, there just may be an awareness that the official story of the 'terrorist' attacks isn't very convincing.

It isn't by chance that there is nothing else to be found on the television dial beyond images of planes crashing into buildings. It was reported on Saturday that the networks had been demonstrating what was said to be an unusually high level of cooperation during this crisis. They've actually been talking amongst themselves to decide how long the bombardment of the national consciousness should go on.

It has likely been deemed necessary to browbeat the country into accepting the unlikely scenario that is being passed off as fact. It is the media's job at this point to prevent the people, as much as possible, from actually thinking for themselves. And with such extensive coverage, haven't our news commentators already thought everything out for us anyway? Apparently not, as people seem to be scurrying about the Internet like cockroaches, trying desperately to snatch up any

little morsel of information that the media are holding back on – trying to make sense of a story that makes no inherent sense.

Some additional details have been added that appear to be an attempt to bolster some of the more flimsy aspects of the official story. After reports began to air that home-made knives were the weapon of choice, it was quickly added that bomb threats were made on at least some of the flights. But does that really add to the credibility of the story? If a guy waving a “knife-like” object claims to have a bomb in a box, would he be believed? Would it seem credible that someone who couldn’t get anything more threatening than a razor blade onto the plane had somehow smuggled aboard an unseen bomb? And if pulling off such a bluff was so easy to do, shouldn’t we have seen some other hijackings in the last decade?

Some reports have claimed that cellular telephone calls coming from the doomed flights, allegedly caught on tape, confirm the official story. If true, this raises a number of interesting questions. The first of these is: if these tapes in fact exist, then why haven’t we heard them (or, for that matter, the tapes contained within the ‘black boxes’)? Why, with wall-to-wall coverage of this great American tragedy, have these harrowing tapes not been burned indelibly into the American psyche? Such tapes would obviously have considerable propaganda value in further inflaming the passions of the masses and promoting the genocidal agenda being pursued. Strange then that we haven’t been treated to the poignant final words of some of the victims of this mass murder.

The media certainly weren’t shy about airing such gut-wrenching footage as the images of hapless victims leaping to their certain deaths. Why then haven’t we heard the farewell messages of the passengers aboard the suicide flights? Strange also that some of those alleged calls just happened to be placed to one of the most notorious members of the current administration, Solicitor General Theodore Olson (see “A Supreme Injustice,” Parts I and II).

There is also the question of how such tapes would even exist. There are two possibilities here, and both of them have rather disturbing implications. The first is that *all* cellular communications are routinely recorded, which would speak volumes about the state of ‘democracy’ in this country. The other possibility is that calls coming from the hijacked aircraft were specifically monitored. That of course raises the obvious question of why, if the flights were being so closely monitored, they were nevertheless allowed to proceed unimpeded to their intended targets.

It has been reliably reported that it was known fairly early on that the flights had been hijacked. It was also known (even though the transponders were disabled, by someone with a high degree of technical knowledge) that the planes had changed their flight paths. It is inconceivable then that the wayward flights were *not* being tracked and monitored.

According to the official timelines that have appeared in the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*, by 8:15-8:20 AM, air traffic controllers had received clear indications that flight 11 out of Boston, in flight for just twenty minutes, had been hijacked – the aircraft’s transponder had been shut off and the pilot was not responding to radio calls. By 8:28 AM, the aircraft had radically changed course and there was no question that the flight had been hijacked, a fact acknowledged by the FAA. By this time, flight 175 out of Boston and flight 77 out of Dulles were also in the air. Just two minutes later, flight 175 deviated from its flight path as well, indicating that it had also been hijacked.

It was still nearly thirty minutes before the first plane would plow into the WTC and there were already very clear indications that this wasn’t a normal day for air traffic in America; two

civilian passenger planes had been hijacked simultaneously, an unprecedented occurrence, and yet no action was immediately taken to avert the tragedy that was to come.

At 8:38 AM, the Air Defense Command was allegedly first notified of the hijacking of flight 11, twenty minutes after air traffic controllers first became aware of that fact. Reports give no indication that notification was given at that time that the second flight had changed course as well. Five more minutes passed before the military was informed by the FAA of the second hijacking. At 8:45 AM, flight 11 crashed into the north tower of the WTC. Ten minutes later, flight 77 abruptly turned around and turned off its transponder. Three flights were then known to have been hijacked, with two still in the air and one having already spectacularly crashed into a heavily occupied building. The most technologically advanced and militarily prepared nation on earth proceeded to sit on its hands.

After ten more minutes had passed, flight 175 crashed even more spectacularly into the south WTC tower. There was absolutely no question at that point that this was a serious national emergency. Flight 93 out of Newark had by then radically changed course as well, clearly indicating that yet a fourth aircraft had been hijacked and was a potential guided missile. It was allegedly then, and only then, that George W. Bush – the Commander in Chief of U.S. Armed Forces, the man entrusted with the defense of the nation – was notified that there might be a problem. According to the *Associated Press*, “Bush was reading to children in a classroom at 9:05 a.m. when his chief of staff, Andrew Card, whispered in his ear. The president briefly turned somber before he resumed reading.”

With New York’s most visible landmark in flames and two hijacked flights in the air, America’s formidable national security apparatus sat idle while its purported commander, according to the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, “listened to 18 Booker Elementary School second-graders read a story about a girl’s pet goat.” Are the American people really so blinded by propaganda that they can’t see the absurdity of this situation?

First of all, it is absolutely inconceivable that Bush would not have been apprised of the situation prior to 9:05. The first aircraft had been hijacked forty-five minutes prior to that. That very first action constituted the most serious ‘terrorist’ act to occur on these shores for a number of years. Yet we are to believe that Bush was not notified of the first hijacking, nor of the second hijacking, nor of the first crash into the World Trade Center tower, nor of the third hijacking, nor even of the fourth hijacking.

In the real world, or at least the one that we think we are living in, the President would have been notified immediately of the first hijacking and would have canceled his morning plans, particularly if they were of no more importance than providing a photo-op with a second-grade class to feign interest in an issue – education – that won’t be receiving any attention in Washington for a long, long time. But we don’t live in the world that we think we live in. We live in a world where, even after the President is informed of the magnitude of the problem, he chooses – in the most bizarre scenario imaginable – to continue listening to seven-year-olds read about a pet goat. And while Nero fiddled ....

According to the *Associated Press* report, “He addressed the tragedy about a half-hour later.”

Meanwhile, by 9:10 AM, the Pentagon’s radar had reportedly picked up flight 77, which was still a half-hour away from plowing into what is frequently described as the military’s nerve center.

At 9:25 AM, the FAA purportedly notified Air Defense that flight 77 was heading for Washington, though radar had determined that fact fifteen minutes earlier and it had been known for a full half-hour that the plane had turned around and was headed back east.



At 9:35, two F-16 fighter jets were scrambled, at least an hour and twenty minutes after the first flight had been hijacked and nearly an hour after it had crashed. The jets were dispatched, strangely enough, from Langley Air Force Base rather than the much closer Andrews Air Force Base. The Pentagon was struck just minutes later, some fifteen minutes before the F-16s arrived on the scene, but nearly an hour-and-a-half after the rash of hijackings began.

A steady stream of talking heads have taken to the airwaves to claim that no contingency plans were in place for such an attack. Despite decades of military planning for every possible type of attack on these shores, and despite hundreds of billions of dollars spent on civil defense measures, no one – we are to believe – ever envisioned such an assault. We are not talking here, it should be noted, about some type of technologically advanced ‘terrorist’ tactic that should have caught the supposed guardians of our national security off-guard. The use of aircraft as guided missiles has been a technique of warfare that has existed since airplanes became a part of the world’s military arsenal.

To no one’s surprise, the first name mentioned as a suspect, before the first shards of glass hit the pavement from the impact of the first plane, was everyone’s favorite bogeyman, Osama bin Laden. He is, as our media have been telling us for years, responsible for every act of barbarism committed in the last decade, so why wouldn’t he be behind this as well?

Though a mind-boggling amount of media coverage has been devoted to demonizing our all-purpose prime suspect, there seems to be a number of things about bin Laden that the media insist on ignoring – such as that he is almost entirely a creature of our own making. As any number of more honest journalists (as well as *MSNBC*) have pointed out, it was our very own CIA that armed, trained and funded his organization during our escapades in Afghanistan. In fact, there is certainly a possibility that we are still doing so today. After all, he makes such a great villain, and having a readily available villain is absolutely essential for scaring the American people into line and justifying obscenely high military and intelligence budgets. It’s not like we have the ‘Evil Empire’ anymore. And Fidel is getting a little long in the tooth to make much of a credible villain.

As some reports have noted, bin Laden has very close ties to the Saudi royal family. What none of these reports note though is that the Saudi regime was installed decades ago in a coup sponsored by lifetime U.S. intelligence asset Allen Dulles, working in tandem with British intelligence asset Jack Philby. The country, which is essentially a family-run oil cartel, and which was actively complicit with the fascist European powers during World War II, has largely been an American puppet-state ever since then. So if bin Laden is still functioning as a covert U.S. intelligence asset, he likely has a lot of company in his social circles, both in Afghanistan and in Saudi Arabia.

Speaking of oil cartels, Dick Cheney made his first appearance before the American people today. I hadn’t seen him all week and I was beginning to wonder if he hadn’t taken the opportunity to have another one of those minor little surgical heart procedures done. Then I realized that he was just laying low to give Bush a much-needed chance to try to look ‘presidential,’ as the press is fond of saying. Dick was on the airwaves claiming that the White House had received what he said was a “credible threat” that Air Force 1 was one of the potential targets that the ‘terrorists’ were aiming for. This has to be the most ridiculous claim that has yet been made.

How could any such threat, even if it were actually made, *ever* be considered credible? We are talking here, after all, about an unarmed, civilian passenger plane. Was there really ever any danger of it eluding Air Force 1’s military escorts (state-of-the-art fighter aircraft) and plowing

broadside into the presidential plane? First of all, the ‘terrorists’ would have had to know precisely where it was. Unlike the World Trade Center towers, Air Force 1 isn’t a stationary target. And it’s a really big sky out there. The last time I checked, it wasn’t standard procedure to post the coordinates and the flight path of AF 1 on the Internet. And even if it was, a civilian airliner doesn’t exactly have the capability to track and hone in on those coordinates.

So this little fable of Cheney’s was a rather obvious fabrication whose intent was clearly to create the illusion that an assassination attempt had been made on our president, thereby creating some kind of ‘rally around the flag’ effect – all part of the plan to herd the American people behind our fearless leader as he is given unprecedented authority to wage war anywhere in the world that suits the interests of corporate America.

The U.S. military response won’t be long in coming and will arrive with a vengeance. It’s always best to strike, as they say, while the iron is hot. There’s no sense in whipping up all this blood-lust among the American people if you don’t use that emotion that has been generated. What we will likely see is a massive, multi-pronged military venture. Who it is aimed at doesn’t really seem to matter. The headline above a column in the *L.A. Daily News* on Sunday read: “It’s Time to Strike, Not Compare: We Know Well Enough Who the Perpetrators Are.”

Well, I guess if we know *well enough*, then by all means let the bombing begin.

The funny thing is, this country’s military response will look for all the world as though it has been carefully planned and mapped-out over many years. But we will all know that that isn’t the case, because no one knew these attacks were coming until a few days ago. The other funny thing is, even as we are showcasing for the world exactly what a wholesale assault on human life years of bloated military/intelligence budgets can buy, commentators will continue to talk of how we left ourselves vulnerable to this attack by *neglecting* the military and intelligence sectors for years.

And the people will stare at their TVs and nod in agreement.

## September 11, 2001 Revisited: Prologue III

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Sep 21, 2001

### Welcome to the Fourth Reich

Let me see if I understand this situation correctly: in order to wage a war to promote ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ around the world, it is necessary to sacrifice those very democratic freedoms here at home.

That makes perfect sense to me, as it apparently does to all the flag-wavers out there who have fallen victim to the relentless war-mongering propaganda being spewed out by our ‘independent’ media. Some of you, by the way, may want to keep those flags readily accessible in the coming months and years. They will come in very handy to drape over the pine boxes that your sons and daughters will be being shipped home in.

It does seem a bit strange though that the man leading the charge to extend ‘democracy’ to all corners of the globe didn’t actually assume office through anything even remotely resembling a democratic process, but was rather appointed by five men who themselves were appointed to office. I guess that’s unimportant though, as none of our politicians or their fully complicit media hacks have bothered to comment on it.

Still it should be noted that while Sir George rants and raves about how Osama bin Laden hates democracy and freedom, it was Bush and his appointers who showed complete contempt for the most basic tenets of democracy just ten short months ago. The Supreme Court decision signed by Rehnquist did state, in no uncertain terms, that: “The individual citizen has no federal constitutional right to vote for electors for the President of the United States.”

So now we are treated to the repellent spectacle of a man who we had no right to vote for *even indirectly* – according to the interpreters of our Constitution – teaching the world by show-of-force exactly how democracy is practiced. It does seem funny though that none of the supposed ‘liberals’ in Washington or in the press corps have had a goddamned thing to say about any of that. Not a ripple of dissent on Capitol Hill or from the press corps could be heard in reaction to Bush’s absurd statement to Congress and the people Thursday evening that “[The terrorists] hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government.”

Of course, it would be difficult to argue with the first part of that statement. It is certainly true that many of the world’s people hate the men and women that were in that room, and with good reason. It is not, as Bush indicated, because “They hate our freedoms,” but rather because they have been driven to unthinkable levels of hatred by having been denied *their own freedoms* for decades – thanks in large part to the military interventions designed and implemented by the men in that room.

It is frequently said that those who forget history are condemned to repeat its mistakes. George Bush though has not likely forgotten the history that is now being repeated. It was, after all, his grandfather Prescott Bush and his great-grandfather Herbert Walker who had their assets seized by the Alien Property Custodian under the Trading With The Enemy Act for operating Nazi front companies during World War II. But that didn’t stop Bush from declaring, in his Thursday night speech, that: “We have seen their kind before. They’re the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century ... they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism.”

Quite a remarkable statement coming from the grandson of one of the men who financed the rise and genocidal reign of those ideologies. Even more remarkable is that he made that statement immediately after declaring that: “We’re not deceived by *their* pretensions to piety.” Not surprisingly, his trademark smirk could be detected lurking just beneath the surface of his feigned earnestness.

The script that his forebears helped bring to life many decades ago has now been dusted off and resurrected by the chosen son. All of the elements are already in place: an unelected leader has seized control of the country through ‘legal’ means, though the legality was predicated solely on the fact that those interpreting the law were fully complicit conspirators; the legislative branch of government has abandoned all pretense of being anything other than a single-party entity, and has bestowed upon the Chief Executive sweeping powers to wage war, both at home and abroad, in any way his administration sees fit; the Office of Homeland Security has been created, although it may as well have been dubbed the Department of the Fatherland; the burning of the symbol of the German ship-of-state, the *Reichstag*, has been replaced with the burning of the symbols of the American ship-of-state – the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon.

The effect, both then and now, has been to rally unprecedented support for a vacant, demagogic pawn of international corporate fascists. The devolution of America into an overt police state has already begun. War of unthinkable proportions has been declared against a wide swath of humanity. The scapegoating and victimization of a religious minority has already begun, this time with Muslims filling the role previously filled by Jews. A severe economic downturn has begun as well, to further inflame the passions of the American people.

Wake the fuck up, America! Your enemies are not hiding in caves in Afghanistan; they are hiding in plain sight. Your enemies are not the Arab-Americans who walk among you; your enemies look just like you. They do not live half a world away, but are right here in Washington. Their faces can be seen daily populating the cable news shows, right alongside of their craven propagandists in the U.S. media.

Their names are Bush, Daschle, Lott, Clinton, Hastert, Byrd, Cheney, Rehnquist, Scalia, Powell, Rumsfeld, Ashcroft, Gephardt, and all the rest of the human refuse who make up the one-party power structure in Washington. They are assisted in their goals by a cast of shitbag propagandists named Brokaw, Rather, Jennings, Koppel, O'Reilly, Matthews, Russert, and too many others to list here.

These are the people who would rob you of your freedoms and liberties. These are the people who have nothing but the most thinly-veiled contempt for democracy, for civil liberties, for human rights, for racial tolerance, and for the right of self-determination for people everywhere. These are the people who, without so much as a hint of shame, would wage genocidal war around the world while spouting platitudes about 'democracy.'

Bush has pledged that, "We will direct every resource at our command ... every necessary weapon of war." Make no mistake about it, the United States has the capacity and the willingness to kill on an unthinkable level. Before we even resort to our 'tactical' nuclear weapons, which is a near certainty, America has any number of 'unconventional' warfare techniques guaranteed to kill millions, all of which have been used in the past.

There is the low-grade nuclear war that was waged against both Iraq and Yugoslavia by means of depleted uranium shells fired by U.S. tanks and warplanes. The radioactive fallout from such weaponry lasts for decades, and is continuing to claim lives today in the parts of the world where it has been deployed. There is also the 'food warfare' made possible by the development of self-terminating crop seeds by corrupt international seed cartels – technology that could conceivably cause massive levels of starvation. Then of course there is weather warfare, which some researchers claim America has taken to a whole new level with technology such as the HAARP facility in Gakona, Alaska. Then there is the type of environmental warfare that was also deployed against Iraq and Yugoslavia, where chemical facilities were deliberately targeted so as to wage what amounted to indirect chemical warfare. In the Serbian city of Pancevo, and in many other places, environmental catastrophes of previously unseen proportions were deliberately created.

All of these are quiet killers. The media makes no mention of them and their victims go uncounted. The massive environmental damage that has poisoned the food and the water goes unreported. The 100,000+ children who continue to die in Iraq every year remain out of sight of the American people, just as do those who die every time the United States launches a cruise missile or drops a 'smart' bomb. While actively promoting an unprecedented level of national mourning for the victims of the September 11 attacks, our leaders steer attention away from the fact that every time the United States flexes its military muscle, somewhere in the world a nation mourns. And while the death toll in New York and Washington indeed constitutes a national tragedy, it pales in comparison to the mourning we have caused around the world.

How much more will we cause now? How many bodies will be added to the millions left dead in Vietnam, Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yugoslavia, the Philippines, Guatemala, Haiti, Chile, and elsewhere? And how many of the Americans who were enraged at footage of Palestinians dancing in the streets will cheer and wave their flags when the bombs begin to fall and the body parts begin to fly?

How many will stop to wonder who is actually on the receiving end of the bombs? How many will realize that the scene in New York that so horrified them is being reproduced elsewhere on an unimaginable scale, and that it is civilians, once again, who are being buried in the rubble? And how many will occasionally stop to ponder how the German people could have been led like lambs to support such atrocities?

# September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act I

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Sep 15, 2004

*Get comfortable, folks, this one runs a little long ... but there's a lot of cool pictures to look at along the way, especially in Acts II and III.*

## **ACT I**

It's anniversary time once again, dear readers, and that means that it is time to take yet another stroll down memory lane and revisit the infamous day when "everything changed." We do so not because we want to, but because it is what the Republican Party, the party of our honorable leader, has asked us to do.

From my perspective, there have always been three particularly productive avenues of research into the events of September 11, 2001, each of which has yielded a compelling body of evidence that strongly suggests that the attacks that day were a production staged by the Washington establishment, and certainly not a surprise attack by Islamic 'terrorists,' nor an anticipated attack by Islamic 'terrorists,' nor a 'terrorist' plot that was co-opted by elements of our intelligence agencies, nor the work of some foreign government (*e.g.*, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Pakistan or China), nor any other explanation that invokes incompetence, neglect, limited U.S. involvement by some 'rogue cabal,' or desperate finger pointing at others.

Those three evidence trails have led to three nearly inescapable conclusions, each of which poses serious problems for those with a vested interest in selling the official mythology of what happened that day:

1. The perfectly symmetrical and total collapse of three commercial highrise office buildings that day (WTC1, WTC2, and WTC7), the first such collapses in history, can only be explained as controlled demolitions, requiring a considerable amount of advance planning, preparation, expertise and access.
2. The nation with the world's most formidable military apparatus, and with the world's most advanced air defense system, failed in every way imaginable to respond to the attacks, and failed to follow the most basic, routine, automatic procedures for responding to emergency situations. Not only did the Air Force and civil defense systems fail to respond, despite having more than ample time to do so, but the purported commander-in-chief also failed to respond, as did his staff and security detail, and all of his underlings.

3. It is impossible to reconcile the documented damage to the Pentagon with the notion that it was struck by a 757 passenger jet. Evidence instead indicates that it was either struck by a missile (and not one launched from a cave in Afghanistan), or taken out with explosives planted within the building.

From the beginning, many of the most prominent 9-11 researchers have labored to either discredit, or ignore and direct attention away from, these three key areas of research. [\*From the Wilderness\*](#), for example, considered by many to be the preeminent 9-11 site, avoided commenting on the Air Force stand-down for many long months; dismissed the notion of controlled demolitions in a short, unsourced post just two days after the towers had fallen; and still has not, to this day, ever reviewed or addressed the photographic evidence from the Pentagon.

Many other researchers and websites followed suit in the months following the attacks. The evidence, however, has proven to be far too compelling to easily discredit or ignore, and far too indicative of direct government planning to allow to go unchallenged. With the efforts to bury or disparage the incriminating evidence failing, a new plan of action has emerged, this one seeking to neutralize the evidence in other ways.

There are two basic strategies currently being employed to undermine the most compelling 9-11 evidence. The first involves inserting a new legend into the 9-11 literature that will, ultimately, provide a plausible, and relatively benign, explanation for evidence that had previously defied a rational, innocent explanation. Thus we see heavy emphasis now being placed on a number of alleged 'war games' that were supposedly being conducted on September 11 — enough 'war games,' in fact, to account for the lack of an Air Force response, the bizarre responses of George Bush and his security detail, and even the reported presence of FEMA on the scene in New York the day before the attacks.

What was once a highly incriminating stand-down of the US Air Force and the White House and Pentagon anti-missile batteries, and what was once a response by Bush and his entourage that revealed foreknowledge, will now be magically transformed into simple confusion over 'war games' having been co-opted and exploited by those crafty 'terrorists.' And just like that, complicity becomes incompetence. And as everyone knows, the cure for incompetence is to divert massive amounts of money into ever more repressive 'security' measures.

The other new, emerging line of defense involves introducing 'new,' easily discredited, and at times patently absurd, physical evidence, and then associating that 'evidence' with the legitimate physical evidence, thus hopelessly tainting the entire mix. Hence we see the sudden popularity of bizarre theories concerning the two flights — American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175 — that, according to the official narrative, smashed into the World Trade Center towers.

These theories are based on the assertion that there were strange 'pods' affixed to the undersides of one or both of the planes. In some scenarios, these 'pods' are said to be napalm bombs or missiles that were launched into the towers a mere fraction of a second before the moment of impact — a feat that would require superhuman timing and, more importantly, serve no purpose whatsoever. Other theories contend that the 'pods' were part of a remote guidance system, although I have no idea why the system would have been mounted externally, which would, you would think, have a bit of an effect on the aircraft's aerodynamics, and on the operation of its landing gear, which I hear plays a key role in getting the plane off the ground.



The 'pod' theories either explicitly or implicitly reject the idea that the planes that hit the WTC towers were the American and United flights. Some theories claim that the attack planes had no windows. Other theories claim that the planes that hit the towers were shadowed by other, presumably military, aircraft. And some theories claim, remarkably enough, that there actually were no planes at all, and that the whole thing was essentially a high-tech hologram show!

As several researchers have lamented, these theories can only serve to damage the credibility of the 9-11 skeptics' case. To be perfectly blunt, I can't think of too many things that would be more counterproductive than trying to convince people that they didn't see what the entire world is pretty sure it saw (*i.e.*, planes crashing into tall buildings). The effect is the same as if, in the years following the Kennedy assassination, while skeptics were presenting the case for Kennedy having been shot from the front rather than from behind, a group of researchers suddenly began arguing that he wasn't actually shot at all!

This 'emerging' evidence seems to be specifically designed to discredit, through the time-tested method of guilt by association, the evidence indicating that the Pentagon was damaged by something other than American Airlines Flight 77. Since the Pentagon evidence can't be discredited directly, it must be tainted indirectly, and the best way to do that is to introduce into the skeptics' literature dubious claims about the attacks on the towers.

[We have just seen, by the way, a classic example of how this technique is employed, in the case of CBS and Bush's National Guard records. In case anyone missed it, CBS's Dan Rather presented, probably knowingly and deliberately, forged copies of Bush's records, which were then quickly revealed to be forgeries. The effect, of course, is to discredit all the *legitimate* documentation of Bush's lack of service.]

There is no question that concerted efforts are being made to closely link Pentagon theories and 'pod' theories. Most 9-11 skeptics' sites fall into one of three camps: those that simultaneously promote 'pod' theories and Pentagon theories (<http://www.LetsRoll911.org>, for example); those that equate 'pod' theories and Pentagon theories and then denounce both (like <http://www.oilempire.us/bogus.html#podpeople> and <http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/ppfinal.html>); and those that largely steer clear of commenting on either issue (like the aforementioned *From the Wilderness*). A new 9-11 film making the rounds, *In Plane Sight*, also links 'pod' theories and alternative Pentagon theories.

There is a key difference, however, between theories concerning the crash at the Pentagon and theories concerning the crashes into the Twin Towers: everyone has seen, more times than they care to remember, video footage of airplanes crashing rather spectacularly into the WTC towers; *no one*, on the other hand, has ever seen any footage of an airplane, or anything else, crashing into the Pentagon. Tens of millions of people feel as though they were eyewitnesses to the tragedy in Manhattan. Only a few locals witnessed the Pentagon 'crash.'

If theories involving what hit the Pentagon can be successfully tied to theories proclaiming that it was really missiles, military jets, and holograms that hit the World Trade Center towers, then the general public, which bore witness to the tower attacks, will certainly not bother to take an objective look at the evidence concerning the attack that they didn't see — which just happens to be the one that didn't involve an airplane crash.

With the Pentagon evidence thus marginalized, and the Air Force stand-down evidence explained away with incessant talk of 'war games,' the best remaining evidence is the controlled demolitions of the Twin Towers and WTC7. And sure enough – wouldn't you know it? – there are indications that a campaign may be underway to explain that evidence away as well. The 'theory' being developed seems to involve an acknowledgment that the towers were indeed brought down deliberately, but that acknowledgment is coupled with a cover story about the necessity of avoiding the extensive damage and mass casualties that would have resulted if the towers had toppled over. It was, you see, a choice of the lesser of two evils, and our leaders, God bless 'em, chose to sacrifice the few for the benefit of the many. Of course – wink, wink, nudge, nudge – Washington has to officially deny it, just as they have to officially deny downing Flight 93.

The obvious problem with this not-so-clever 'theory' is that very few buildings, as far as I know, come pre-packed with explosive charges and pre-wired for an implosion. Most people, I would think, would not feel completely safe living or working in a building that might, at any time, self-destruct into a pile of rubble. I myself would, at the very least, look into getting renters' insurance before occupying such a building.

To compensate for the tiny little gap in the 'theory,' we can look forward to the incorporation of some kind of futuristic, top-secret, laser-assisted pulsed energy weapon (or something along those lines). As I recall, the seeds were sown long ago in the skeptics' literature.

The campaign to neutralize the most compelling evidence in the 9-11 skeptics' case is not the only disturbing trend in the '9-11 Truth Movement.' Also of concern are the concerted efforts (which I think I may have commented on previously) to co-opt the movement and rename it the 'Peak Oil Movement.' And then there is the insistence by many researchers on continuing to devote an inordinate amount of time dwelling on the issue of 'forewarnings.'

The American people have had more than enough time to draw conclusions about attack 'forewarnings,' since that is the only aspect of the skeptics' case that has received mainstream media coverage. For the most part, we have divided into four camps: those who choose to believe that the 'forewarnings' were simply lost in a sea of intelligence 'chatter'; those who believe that the 'forewarnings' weren't acted upon due to incompetence; those who believe that the 'forewarnings' weren't acted upon due to embarrassing ties between the Bush family and the Saudis; and those who believe that the 'forewarnings' were deliberately ignored to allow the attacks to occur.

The truth, however, is that all of those positions, sold by various avenues of the mainstream and alternative media, are incorrect, and all of them ultimately lend support to the official lie that states that the attacks of September 11 were a plot cooked up by, and carried out by, Islamic 'terrorists.' And that is precisely why the 'forewarnings' issue has received extensive media coverage, while other, far more incriminating, avenues of investigation have been entirely ignored.

The real issue is not 'forewarnings,' it is *foreknowledge*. They are not the same thing. Simply stated, those who are complicit in the planning and execution of an event do not generally need to be 'forewarned' that that event is on the horizon. They already know. And continuing to focus on 'forewarnings,' three full years after the fact, serves only to obscure that fact.

\* \* \* \* \*

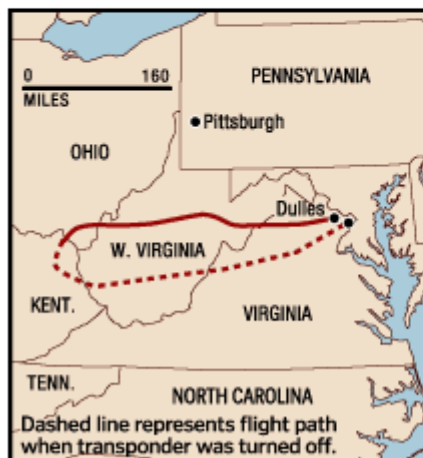
Well, folks, now that there is an excellent chance that I have already successfully pissed off the vast majority of 9-11 researchers out there, I think we are ready to begin our stroll down memory lane. The goal here will be to focus attention on the most critical evidence of direct U.S. government complicity in the attacks of September 11, and while doing so, to construct a reasonably comprehensive, semi-coherent theory of what really happened on that infamous day. Specifically, we will speculate about what went wrong, and how that lead to damning evidence being left behind.

When I just said “we,” by the way, I really meant “I,” since I am really doing most of the theorizing, while you are primarily just doing the eye-rolling and guffawing. Nevertheless, I use the collective “we” in case this theory, for whatever reason, turns out to be really stupid, in which case you can be pretty sure that I will try to blame the whole thing on you.

We will begin with a timeline of the key events of that fateful morning. As visual aides, we will be using graphics that were provided three years ago by the ever-helpful folks at the *Washington Post* and at *Time* magazine. Note that in both of the graphics, the departure time listed for each flight is the scheduled departure time, not the actual departure time.

## American Airlines 77

- **Scheduled flight:** Dulles International Airport to Los Angeles International Airport, departed at 8:10 a.m.
- **Crash:** West side of Pentagon, 9:40 a.m.
- **Those on board:** 64 people, including four flight attendants, two pilots



## American Airlines 11

- **Scheduled flight:** Boston Logan International Airport to Los Angeles International Airport, departed at 7:59 a.m.
- **Crash:** World Trade Center North at 8:45 a.m.
- **Those on board:** 92 people, including nine flight attendants, two pilots



## United Airlines 175

■ **Scheduled flight:** Boston Logan International Airport to Los Angeles International Airport, departed at 7:58 a.m.

■ **Crash:** World Trade Center South at 9:05 a.m.

■ **Those on board:** 65 people, including seven flight attendants, two pilots



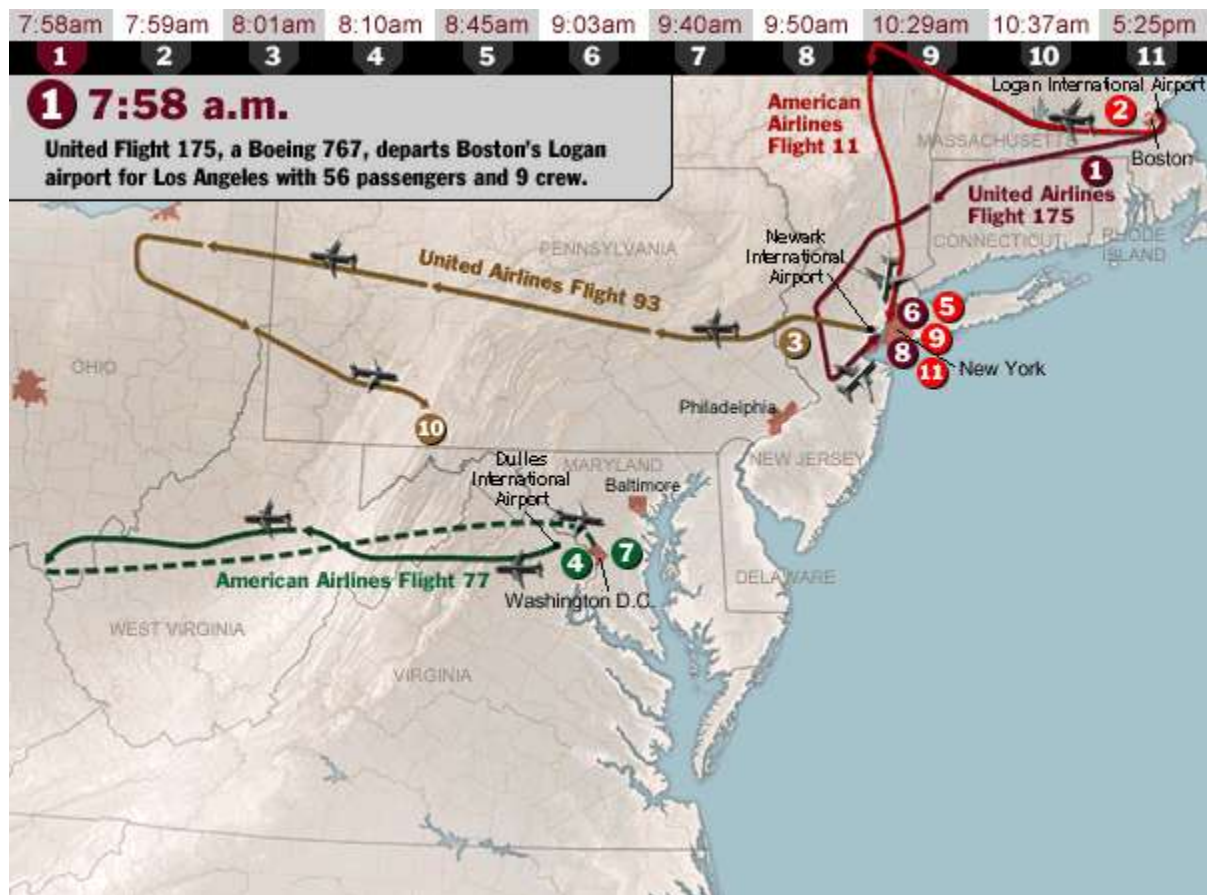
## United Airlines 93

■ **Scheduled flight:** Newark International Airport to San Francisco International Airport, departed 8:01 a.m.

■ **Crash:** Stony Creek Twp., Pa., which is 80 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, at 10:10 a.m.

■ **Those on board:** 45 people, including five flight attendants, two pilots





The theory that will be presented here assumes that the plot initially called for the four identified passenger airplanes to be used in the attacks. It also assumes that those four flights were in fact hijacked, likely by human actors. Remote control theories, as we all know, have been circulating since shortly after the attacks took place. I've never been a big fan of them, however.

It should be clarified here that endorsing the notion that the planes were hijacked is not the same thing as endorsing the government fairy tale that says that they were hijacked by 19 positively identified Islamic 'terrorists' who snuck box cutters through airport security. The real hijackers were undoubtedly very well-trained teams that were allowed to board the planes armed with more than just box cutters. Their ethnicity, while largely unimportant, is anyone's guess.

At 7:59 AM, on the morning of September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 11, a morning commuter flight from Boston to Los Angeles, lifts off from Boston's Logan International Airport. Curiously, and fortuitously for any potential hijackers, nearly 3/4 of the plane's seats are empty. Fifteen minutes later, at 8:14 AM, United Airlines Flight 175, another morning commuter flight from Boston to Los Angeles, takes off from Boston's Logan International Airport. Curiously, and fortuitously for any potential hijackers, over 80% of the plane's seats are empty. The United flight is about 16 minutes late getting off the ground.

At the very same time that Flight 175 is getting airborne, someone aboard Flight 11 shuts off the plane's radio and transponder, cutting off all communications to the aircraft. At this time, 8:14 AM, longstanding procedures call for air traffic controllers to notify NORAD. Established and routinely

followed procedures call for NORAD to be notified of any potential trouble in America's airspace. NORAD's responsibility, upon notification, is to issue scramble orders for interceptor aircraft.

These procedures are followed to deal not just with hijackings, which are obviously quite rare, but with routine air emergencies such as when an aircraft departs from its approved route, or fails to respond to radio requests, or switches off its transponder, or experiences serious mechanical difficulties.

Interceptor aircraft, on call 24/7 at military bases all across the country, deal with all of those situations and more. They are, in a very real sense, the policemen of the skies. And like their counterparts on land, they use varying levels of force depending upon the situation they are confronted with. The vast majority of errant aircraft, as with the vast majority of police calls, do not warrant a hostile response.

The initial goal is merely to reestablish communications with the errant plane, first by radio, and, failing that, by establishing visual contact, typically by flying into the other plane's field of view and rocking the interceptor's wings to see if the errant craft responds. If necessary, the pilot of the interceptor can fly up close enough to take a look in the cockpit of the other plane and attempt to assess the situation. If all attempts at contact are rebuffed, available options include attempting to force the plane to land and/or firing warning volleys of tracer fire in the targeted plane's flight path. If all other options have been exhausted, and if it is deemed necessary, then downing the aircraft is an option, but it is one that will be undertaken only as a last resort.

Unfortunately, this needs to be rehashed here to illustrate that the argument that is frequently offered in response to criticism of the failure to dispatch interceptors on September 11 – the argument that says that the government can't just go around shooting down airplanes full of innocent people – is an entirely false argument, because the skeptics' argument has never been that the planes should have been summarily shot down; the argument has always been that standard, non-lethal procedures were not followed to deal with errant aircraft.

Imagine, if you will, that there is a hostage situation on the ground somewhere in America. Let's say that a bank robbery attempt has gone bad and a band of armed thugs are holding employees and patrons hostage. An hour or more has passed since the hostage ordeal began. The police know that the hostages are being held, and they know where they are being held. In fact, everyone with a television or a radio knows that the hostages are being held. And yet, curiously enough, police have not responded and there are no officers at the scene. When questioned, the police chief says: "Well, we can't very well just go in there and shoot up the place! They have hostages!"

The chief would be right, of course; you can't just go in guns blazing. But his response fails to address the fact that what they could have done was have officers on the scene, attempting, in every way possible, to gain control of the situation and minimize the loss of innocent life. And so it is with the policemen of the skies as well — on every day other than September 11, 2001. Once a scramble order is issued, by the way, it takes just minutes to get aircraft off the ground. And once in the air, F-15 and F-16 interceptors can hit 1,500+ mph in just a few more minutes. Keep that in mind as we proceed. Meanwhile, back to our timeline ...

At 8:20 AM, six minutes after the first sign of trouble, Flight 11 veers off course, heading not toward Manhattan, but toward upstate New York, as if possibly stalling for time (see graphics). At this time, the FAA strongly suspects that Flight 11 has been hijacked. At the very same time, American Airlines Flight 77, a morning commuter flight from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles, takes off from Dulles International



Airport. Curiously, and fortuitously for any potential hijackers, over 3/4 of the plane's seats are empty. The flight lifts off approximately ten minutes after its scheduled departure time.

At 8:21 AM, a stewardess reportedly calls to report that Flight 11 has definitely been hijacked. There is now no question that this is not just a relatively routine case of an errant aircraft. Seven minutes later, at 8:28 AM, Flight 11 changes course yet again. It is now headed for New York City. Two minutes later, Flight 175 veers off course as well. Both flights are now off their approved routes and headed for New York City. One of them has been confirmed as a hijacked flight. Military interceptors are noticeably missing-in-action.

At 8:42 AM, United Airlines Flight 93 takes off from Newark International Airport bound for San Francisco, California. Curiously, and fortuitously for any potential hijackers, nearly 85% of the plane's seats are empty. The flight is 41 minutes late taking off from Newark. This poses serious problems for the plan of attack, as we shall see. By the time Flight 93 is in the air, Flight 175's transponder and radio have been shut off.

Twenty-eight minutes have now elapsed since the first sign of trouble in the air. Twenty-one minutes have elapsed since a hijacking was confirmed. Two flights are wildly off course and cut off from communications. According to the official story, NORAD is notified a minute later, at 8:43 AM (another version of the official story claims the time of notification was a bit earlier, at 8:38 AM). It is inconceivable, however, that notification would not have been made at least twenty minutes earlier, when the first hijacking was confirmed. But even if we accept this aspect of the official timeline, the events that follow are still inexplicable.

At 8:46 AM, thirty-two minutes after the first signs of trouble, Flight 11 plows into the side of the north World Trade Center tower. At that same time, Flight 77 suddenly veers north, possibly preparing to turn back toward the D.C. area. But it is, alas, already too late. By 8:50, Flight 77 is back on course as if nothing had happened, but radio contact is not reestablished.



This graphic, also published circa 9-11-01, placed much greater emphasis on Flight 77's brief side trip than did the *Washington Post* or *Time* graphics. What caused the pilot's change of heart? Why did the hijacked flight return to its approved route? As I first proposed in Newsletter #16 (posted on the first anniversary of the attacks, more or less), it seems entirely plausible that the original plan called for Flights 77 and 93 to strike simultaneously, or nearly so, at targets in the D.C. area — likely at the Pentagon and the White House, for maximum psychological impact and to allow the administration to claim that the nation's defenses were crippled in the initial surprise attack, thus preventing a response.

Had Flight 93 got off the ground on time, it could have reached its target at or before the time that Flight 11 was smashing into the World Trade Center. Flight 77, scheduled to depart at 8:10, was only 23

miles from its target when it left the ground at about 8:20 AM. It merely needed to kill time until Flight 93 was in position. When Flight 93 failed to get off the ground, however, Flight 77 opted to proceed along its scheduled route — until Flight 93 finally got off the ground at 8:42 AM, at which time Flight 77 almost immediately changed course.

But, as I previously indicated, it was too late. Flight 93 was still some distance from its target, while Flight 11 had already found its target in New York City, and Flight 175 wasn't far behind. The New York attacks were most likely supposed to coincide with, or follow shortly after, the attacks on the political and military nerve centers. Had things played out that way, there would not now be questions raised about the failure to muster a timely military response.

At approximately 8:56 AM, Flight 77, with its transponder shut off, reportedly disappeared from radar. Some reports have claimed, erroneously and likely deliberately so, that disabling a plane's transponder will cause it to disappear from radar. That is a patently absurd claim. Shutting off the transponder will certainly make positive identification more difficult, but it hardly renders an aircraft invisible to radar. If that were the case, foreign bombers could slip past U.S. radar at any time merely by switching off their transponders.

At about the same time that Flight 77 became a phantom plane, George Bush, purported President of the United States and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, arrived at the Booker School in Sarasota, Florida for a planned, and well publicized, photo-op. At that time, one commercial airliner had already crashed into WTC1, killing and gravely injuring hundreds of innocent victims. A second airliner, wildly off course and cut off from communications, was just minutes away from a second spectacular crash. A third airliner had cut off communications, was flying erratically, and had just disappeared from radar. There was clearly a massive, coordinated, unprecedented attack upon the country underway.

It should go without saying that only those who were involved in the planning of the operation had any idea, at that time, what the full scope of the attacks would be. No non-conspirator could have known, for example, whether any bombings on the ground were planned. But one thing could certainly have been assumed: George Bush was at serious risk of being targeted, especially since he was scheduled to be in an unsecured location that had been announced in advance and that was located, amazingly enough, less than five miles from an international airport.

Upon arrival at the school, Bush reportedly told the principal that although "a commercial plane has hit the World Trade Center," they were going to "do the reading thing anyway." Bush and his entourage proceeded into the unprotected school. No one mentioned that the plane that had crashed had been hijacked, or that a second hijacked flight was screaming toward Manhattan, or that a third hijacked plane was allegedly missing-in-action.

At 9:03 AM, just as Flight 175 was plowing into the south World Trade Center tower in a telegenic pyrotechnic show, and just as Flight 93 became the *fourth* commercial airliner that morning to veer off its approved route, George Bush began his extended photo-op in an elementary school classroom. Forty-nine minutes after the first danger signs, and seventeen minutes after the first crash, the skies were free of interceptor aircraft and the commander-in-chief was quietly sitting in an extremely vulnerable location reading a book about a pet goat.

Just a few minutes into the reading, presidential adviser Andrew Card approached Bush to inform him of the second crash. My guess is that he added something along these lines: “The attacks in Washington have not taken place yet. We’re not sure what went wrong. Sit tight while we figure out what to do.” And that, of course, is exactly what Bush proceeded to do.

[As a brief aside, I should mention here that when Michael Moore opted to present (incomplete) footage of Bush at the Booker School in his film “Fahrenheit 911,” the filmmaker felt compelled to add a narrative track that is clearly intended to shape the audience’s perception of Bush’s actions. According to Moore, Bush’s actions revealed incompetence and dereliction of duties. In truth, however, Bush’s actions were more indicative of specific foreknowledge and consciousness of guilt.]

At about 9:09 AM, with Bush still practicing his reading skills, there are reports of a plane crash in a remote area along the Ohio/Kentucky/West Virginia border. According to several published versions of its flight path, that is exactly where Flight 77 is at the time of the reports. These crash reports will later disappear down the memory hole. Flight 77 will, as if by magic, reappear on radar later, nearly a half-hour after it disappeared.

Meanwhile, at 9:16 AM, Bush leaves the Florida classroom and – after taking time out for questions and photos, as if he has nothing better to do – meets with his staff. More than an hour has now passed since the hijackings began, and there is still no sign of a military response, even though Manhattan is in flames and at least two hijacked aircraft are known to be still in the air. With the nation under attack, Bush and his Secret Service detail had been sitting for some twenty minutes in a location that could not be defended against an organized attack and that had been publicized in advance.

At 9:25 AM, ‘Flight 77’ appears on radar at Dulles International, but the plane is moving very fast and air traffic controllers quickly ascertain that it is not maneuvering like your run-of-the-mill commercial airliner. Two minutes later, according to reports, a passenger reports the hijacking of Flight 93. Three minutes after that, at 9:30 AM, Bush delivers an address to the nation, at a time and location scheduled, and publicized, in advance.

Seventy-six minutes have now passed since the first sign of trouble emerged, sixty-nine minutes have passed since the first hijacking was confirmed, at least forty-seven minutes have passed since NORAD was notified, forty-four minutes have passed since the first crash, and twenty-seven minutes have passed since the second crash — and two errant, and presumably hijacked, aircraft are still at large. No interceptors have been scrambled and the commander-in-chief still sits at an unsecured location that had been advertised in advance. Following the speech, Bush and his entourage head to the airport, following a scheduled route and with no added security.

At 9:36 AM, Flight 93 turns toward Washington (see graphics). Approximately two minutes later, ‘Flight 77,’ cruising along unhindered, despite flying through the most closely monitored, secure airspace in the world, and doing so during the highest possible state of alert, purportedly plows into the side of a newly refurbished portion of the Pentagon.

Notice that in all the graphics, it is only the return portion of Flight 77’s route that is shown as a broken line, indicating, supposedly, that the aircraft’s transponder had been shut off. But as everyone knows, the transponders on all four flights were actually disabled. Why then aren’t portions of all four routes depicted with a broken line? One reason for the use of the broken line is surely to create the impression

that it was not possible to track that particular flight, thus hopefully defraying questions concerning how an enormous commercial airliner could freely violate the Pentagon's airspace during a national emergency. But there is another reason for the broken line as well: for most of the return route depicted by the dashed line, Flight 77 did not exist, at least on radar.

The most likely explanation is that Flight 77, having missed the window of opportunity to launch its intended attack, was shot down in some unpopulated area along the Ohio/Kentucky border. The only shred of evidence that Flight 77 ever made it any further than that is an extremely dubious report from Bush Administration insider Theodore Olsen, who claimed that he was the recipient of an unlikely, and unrecorded, phone call from his wife, Bush Administration insider Susan Olsen, who happened to be, conveniently enough, an alleged passenger on the plane, and the only passenger, coincidentally, who was able to allegedly make a phone call, even though, according to Ted Olsen, who is the only witness to the alleged call, all the passengers were encouraged by the hijackers to phone home.

Not only did Flight 77 fly without registering on radar, it crashed without leaving behind any aircraft debris (as we shall see in Act II). As I previously suggested, it is entirely possible that someone, in a misguided attempt to create a retroactive explanation for the complete lack of a military response, and to provide some political cover, made a decision to attack the Pentagon by other means after Flight 77 was shot down.

If the attacks had gone according to plans, in other words, Flight 77 very likely would have crashed into the Pentagon. There would have been physical evidence of the crash of a commercial airliner at the scene, and we probably would have been treated to endless replays of video footage of yet another spectacular plane crash. Instead, what we have is some very incriminating photographic evidence that strongly suggests that Flight 77 never made it to the Pentagon.

At 9:55 AM, Air Force 1, with Bush and his entourage aboard, lifts off with no military escort. For an entire hour, with the country under attack, Bush has stuck to his prearranged, and well publicized, schedule. No effort has been made to protect the life of the President and commander-in-chief. And at no time has the commander-in-chief made any effort to take control of the situation. Neither has Vice-President Cheney, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, or anyone else in a position of authority in the Bush administration or the military establishment.

At 9:59 AM, the south World Trade Center tower inexplicably suffered a total, and perfectly symmetrical, collapse. Just minutes later, Flight 93 reportedly crashed in Pennsylvania. At 10:10 AM, the damaged portion of the Pentagon suffered a partial collapse. Eighteen minutes later, the north World Trade Center tower inexplicably suffered a total, and perfectly symmetrical, collapse. The show was officially over.



Flight 93 was almost certainly shot down. Just as at the Pentagon, there was nothing at the purported 'crash' site that indicated that it had been hit by a 100-ton aircraft. Wreckage from the aircraft, notably absent at the 'crash' site, was scattered as far as eight miles away, indicating that the plane had exploded in the air and not on the ground. Witness statements, media reports, and even statements by Washington officials indicated that Flight 93 was being shadowed by military aircraft just before it 'crashed.'

It is possible that Flight 93, now seared into the collective American memory as the "Let's Roll" flight, was shot down precisely because passengers had taken control of the aircraft, or were attempting to. While recently reading an online version of David Ray Griffin's new book on the attacks, I was surprised to find that that is the theory that he is floating. I was even more surprised to find that Griffin credits that theory to "9-11 Timeline" assembler Paul Thompson. Before reading that, I had foolishly believed that that theory first appeared on my own website, under the title "What Really Happened to Flight 93," posted on November 7, 2001, just eight weeks after the attacks.



Looking back now, however, three years after the fact, it occurs to me that my initial theory may have been off the mark. There is little doubt that Flight 93 was shot down, and it most likely was shot down because, like Flight 77, it had become a liability rather than an asset. But it had become a liability regardless of whether there really was a passenger revolt, so it is possible that the tale of passenger heroics was fabricated to explain the 'crash' of the aircraft — and to provide a patriotic, feel-good story. Whether the heroics were real or scripted, one thing seems clear: Flight 93 would have been downed either way. How else were all those witnesses going to be silenced?

The response to the attacks — by NORAD, by the U.S. Air Force, by the President, by his security detail, and by all his cronies and underlings — looked nothing like the response that would have greeted any real 'terrorists' brazen enough to attempt an ambitious attack on the home turf of the world's most

feared military machine. It looked, instead, like a deliberate non-response. But it was a strange non-response, entirely lacking in consistency, credibility and plausibility.



Much of the cover story had a decidedly improvised feel to it. Critics of the skeptics' case have asked why, if this was an inside job, a better cover story wasn't scripted in advance? Why were there so many contradictory, and at time incriminating, statements by key players? Why did elements of the official story change over time (e.g., "there were no aircraft scrambled" changed to "they were scrambled but they arrived late.")? Why stage an obvious stand-down of the nation's air defenses? And why risk hitting the Pentagon with something other than Flight 77?

All of these questions, and many similar ones, have been posed by critics of alternative 9-11 theories. We (there's that "we" again) have suggested here that the answers to such questions may be found in the fact that the attacks of September 11 were, in reality, a botched operation. Had things gone according to plans, there would have been no extended stand-down and no incriminating lack of evidence at the Pentagon, and all the key players would likely have followed their scripts.

According to this scenario, those scripts went out the window when Flight 93 and Flight 77 failed to successfully coordinate their initial attacks. In other words, many of the inconsistencies and obvious cover-ups that plague the official story may very well be due to the lack of improvisational skills of various key members of the Bush administration and the military and intelligence establishments.

## September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act II, Part I

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Oct 2, 2004

*[Oops: in Act I, I incorrectly identified Ted Olson's wife as Susan Olson, rather than Barbara Olson. I think Susan Olson was actually Cindy Brady, sister of Marcia, Jan, Greg, Peter and Bobby. As far as I know, she was never married to a reactionary member of the Bush team.]*

### **ACT II: PART I**

Theories proposing that something other than Flight 77 was responsible for the damage done to the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 have been harshly criticized in some quarters. Two of the most frequent criticisms that I have read are: (1) the researchers promoting such theories have never been to the D.C. area to view the crime scene, so they don't really know what they're talking about; and (2)



promoting such theories can only serve to alienate people in the D.C. area, since so many of them allegedly saw the errant aircraft.

I don't find either of these criticisms particularly valid. Millions of people, after all, have never visited Dallas to stand in Dealey Plaza, but they have still been able to objectively review the evidence and conclude that the official story of the JFK assassination just doesn't add up. Likewise, millions of people have never visited the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, and yet they have been able to draw conclusions about the RFK assassination after reviewing the evidence. I fail to see why the same rules shouldn't apply to the attack on the Pentagon.

As for the witnesses, there were actually relatively few, and an unusually large percentage of those who lent support to the official story were either career military types or media representatives. Some of the witnesses reported seeing an aircraft much smaller than a 757, possibly even a missile. Mike Walter, for example, told *CNN* that what he saw "was like a cruise missile with wings, went right there and slammed into the Pentagon. Huge explosion, great ball of fire, smoke started billowing out, and then it was just chaos on the highway."

(<http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/pentagon.terrorism/>)

Witness Tom Seibert told the *Washington Post* that he "heard what sounded like a missile, then we heard a loud boom." The same *Post* article revealed that "Ervin Brown, who works at the Pentagon, said he saw pieces of what appeared to be small aircraft on the ground." Needless to say, a Boeing 757 would hardly be considered a "small aircraft."

(<http://a188.g.akamaitech.net/f/188/920/5m/www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/daily/sep01/attack.html>)

The *Post* also spoke to a Steve Patterson, who said that he saw the plane from about 150 yards away, "approaching from the west about 20 feet off the ground." He described the plane as having "the high-pitched squeal of a fighter jet," and he said that it "flew over Arlington cemetery so low that he thought it was going to land on I-385. He said it was flying so fast that he couldn't read any writing on the side." Patterson also said that the aircraft that he saw "appeared to hold about eight to 12 people" — hardly an aircraft of sufficient size to be a 757. And a bulky 757 is certainly not the type of aircraft that you would expect to be observed approaching the Pentagon "below treetop level," as this one purportedly was.

The UK's *Guardian* began its initial report on the Pentagon attack with the words: "It sounded like a missile at first, the air above Washington filled with the terrifying roar of displaced air." One witness questioned by the *Guardian* claimed, strangely enough, that "the blast had blown up a helicopter circling overhead." Of course, since no photographic evidence of the crash has been produced, there is little hope of either confirming or disproving this claim.

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4254934,00.html>)

Yet another witness account of the attack, this one from a reporter for *Space.Com*, reads as follows: "At that moment I heard a very loud, quick whooshing sound that began behind me and stopped suddenly in front of me and to my left. In fractions of a second I heard the impact and an explosion. The next thing

I saw was the fireball. I was convinced it was a missile. It came in so fast it sounded nothing like an airplane.”

([http://www.space.com/news/rains\\_september11-1.html](http://www.space.com/news/rains_september11-1.html))

It also moved nothing like a passenger airplane, at least on radar. Air traffic controller Danielle O’Brien, who had earlier that morning cleared Flight 77 for take-off from Dulles, certainly didn’t think it was a Boeing 757 that she was tracking on radar as it approached Washington. What she initially saw was “an unidentified plane to the southwest of Dulles, moving at a very high rate of speed ... I had literally a blip and nothing more.” O’Brien described her impression of the projectile that she tracked: “The speed, the maneuverability, the way that he turned, we all thought in the radar room, all of us experienced air traffic controllers, that that was a military plane. You don’t fly a 757 in that manner. It’s unsafe.” The consensus opinion among the controllers, after tracking some of the movements of the projectile, was that it “must be a fighter. This must be one of our guys sent in, scrambled to patrol our capital, and to protect our president.” Of the final portion of the aircraft’s destructive journey, O’Brien has said: “We lost radar contact with that craft. And we waited. And we waited.”

([http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/2020/2020/2020\\_011024\\_atc\\_feature.html](http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/2020/2020/2020_011024_atc_feature.html))

The majority of those claiming to have witnessed the event have offered accounts that are said to corroborate the official story. The stories told by these witnesses, however, are wildly contradictory and at times ridiculously implausible, occasionally involving scenarios where the plane drug a wing along the ground, or even turned cartwheels, before slamming into the Pentagon. As is apparent in collections of witness accounts, like the one posted on an ‘Urban Legends’ website (<http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/blflight77w.htm>), there is little agreement among the witnesses on the size and type of aircraft, the altitude and stability of the aircraft, the angle of approach, and various other details.

As any student of the law knows, even the most sincere, well intentioned witnesses can be, and frequently are, mistaken about what it was that they witnessed (especially during times of extreme stress). Add to that the fact that there is a virtually unlimited supply of potential ‘witnesses’ in the D.C. area who aren’t so well intentioned, and it begins to look like witness reports may not be the best way to get at the truth of what happened at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

Simply put, the photographic evidence, which trumps the contradictory witness statements, does not support the theory that an enormous commercial aircraft smashed into the Pentagon. I first reviewed some of that evidence in Newsletter #7 (June 30, 2002). Here I will present a thoroughly revamped version of that posting, incorporating a number of additional photographs, a discussion of why my initial theory is not supported by the evidence, and a review of some of the humorous ‘evidence’ that defenders of the official story have presented.

It is interesting to note, by the way, that the Pentagon was not evacuated on the morning of September 11, 2001, even though it was widely believed to be a potential target, and even though a projectile was reportedly being tracked on radar heading in its direction. More than 20,000 people are employed at the Pentagon, all of them potentially at risk that day. If the building had been evacuated, two things would have happened: lives would have been saved; and thousands of people would have been milling about outside the Pentagon, well positioned to witness whether Flight 77 did indeed crash into the Pentagon.

I should also note here that early media reports mentioned nothing about a passenger airplane. Some reports held that either a truck or a helicopter was involved in the attack. *Fox News*, that pillar of responsible journalism, initially reported that the Pentagon had been hit by a USAF fighter jet. Unlike in New York, the airplane story took time to fully take shape.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although I refer frequently in this article to the “official story,” there really isn’t, technically speaking, an official story of what happened at the Pentagon that day. What there is instead is an officially encouraged, and notably vague, group consensus — a consensus shaped and reinforced by Washington’s political and media institutions, which have carefully avoided fleshing out too many details. This strategy is apparently intended to disarm critics, since it is much harder to point out the lies and absurdities in the official story if that official story has never been formally presented.

What the (un)official story says is that Flight 77, flying at a high rate of speed while mere feet off the ground, plowed into the side of the Pentagon at about 9:38 AM on the morning of September 11, 2001. Initial statements indicated that the only components of the aircraft to survive the impact and subsequent fire were the black boxes and a single landing light. The black boxes have never been turned over to civilian authorities and their contents have never been publicly revealed.

The failure to recover the rest of the aircraft was unofficially attributed to the fact that the entire plane was vaporized by the fire. Let me repeat that: *the aircraft was vaporized by the fire*. Not just melted into a pool of molten metal, mind you, but literally boiled away! Over 100 tons of metal, including two five-ton aircraft engines!

Although it should be obvious to any thinking person, it must be stated here anyway: a hydrocarbon fire cannot possibly burn at the temperatures required to even melt a 100 ton aircraft, let alone actually *vaporize* it. That such an absurd notion was even floated out there for public consumption indicates that Washington officials were desperately seeking any explanation, no matter how preposterous, for the complete lack of aircraft wreckage recovered from the Pentagon.

While the aircraft did not survive the ordeal, the remains of the passengers allegedly did. All but a handful were purportedly positively identified through forensic analysis. Apparently the fire in the Pentagon burned hot enough to vaporize steel aircraft engines, but not hot enough to cremate human remains. Sounds reasonable to me.

(<http://www.dcmilitary.com/army/stripe/6%5F48/national%5Fnews/12279%2D1.html>)

The attack on the Pentagon reportedly damaged an enormous chunk of office space, and yet, curiously, only 125 people were killed on the ground, with another 80 seriously injured. As in New York, initial casualty estimates were substantially higher. Demolition and reconstruction began almost immediately, and within a year, some of the newly rebuilt offices were already ready for occupation.

Some later reports indicated that Flight 77 had not actually been vaporized, but was in fact largely recovered and reconstructed. Such claims have never been formally confirmed or denied by Washington officials. To date, there is no compelling evidence indicating that any aircraft debris was recovered from any part of the Pentagon.

Many questions have been left unanswered by the official story of the attack. For example, how could hijackers possibly have known that they would be able to fly unmolested for some 300 miles while headed directly into the heart of the nation's capital, through the most tightly controlled airspace in the world — and do it not in a surprise attack, while the nation's defenses were sleeping, but rather while the country was on the highest state of alert, and actually *anticipating* the attack? ... while the whole world was watching, and all the broadcast and cable television networks were providing play-by-play coverage?

Wouldn't it have made far more sense for the Pentagon to be the first target struck, utilizing the element of surprise, considering that the home of U.S. military forces is obviously a little better defended than the World Trade Center? Wouldn't the logical way to implement the assault have been to hit the military command center first, then strike the civilian targets while the military was attempting to regroup and secure Washington? You would think that even a third-rate terrorist would know that, let alone a terrorist superstar like Osama bin Laden.

Another question that has been raised is why there has never been any film or videotape released depicting an airplane approaching, or crashing into, the Pentagon. As the home of Uncle Sam's military machine, the Pentagon is quite obviously one of the most secure buildings in the world. It is under constant surveillance by multiple closed-circuit cameras. In addition to the Pentagon's own footage, surveillance cameras at a Sheraton hotel and a Citgo gas station were also positioned to record the 'crash.' Tape from both cameras was reportedly quickly seized by the FBI. None of the footage has ever seen the light of day. And despite the fact that an unusually high number of media personnel claimed that they witnessed the attack, no photographs or videotape of the attack have ever been released by any media outlet. With the exception of one notorious image that is purported to be a frame from a tape from one of the Pentagon's CCTV cameras, there is no photographic evidence of any airplane, of any size, flying in the vicinity of, approaching, or crashing into, the Pentagon.









These five images, purportedly 'leaked' by a Pentagon source, have been analyzed endlessly by researchers. According to various accounts, the first frame depicts one of the following about to slam into the Pentagon: a Boeing 757; a smaller passenger plane; a military jet, such as an F-15; a pilotless drone; a missile; or a missile and a jet. Which of those you, as an objective reviewer of the evidence, see in frame #1 will probably largely depend upon (a) your level of sleep deprivation; and (b) the quantity, and variety, of illicit drugs you have consumed.

There are any number of curious anomalies in these images, perhaps the most obvious of which is the fact that the date/time stamps, added after the fact, are off by about thirty-two hours. The second frame differs from the other four in a number of ways: it is brighter, shifted slightly to the left, and obscured in both upper corners. The second frame also has the same time stamp, 17:37:19, as the first frame, though it obviously wasn't taken at the same time.

Some researchers, by the way, have claimed that the time stamps indicate a tape speed of 100 frames per second, which these same researchers have noted is extremely unlikely. These people apparently never learned how to tell time, so let me clue them in: the difference between 17:37:22 and 17:37:23 is one second, not 1/100 of a second. Time, you see, is generally recorded as hours:minutes:seconds. But no one should let that stop them from making stupid claims that further discredit the field of 9-11 research.

Another curious feature of the images can be observed by focusing your attention on the upper left corner of each frame — the area where it looks like Bob Guccione snuck by and spread a little Vaseline on the camera lens. As can be clearly seen, the pattern of condensation drops (or whatever they are) is quite consistent in frames #1, #4, and #5, but much different in frames #2 and #3, as though the drops began to disperse and then inexplicably returned to their original configuration. Another curiosity is that the helicopter support structure that can be seen in silhouette in front of the fireball in frames #3 and #4 is incongruously painted a bright orange in frame #2.

What then are we to make of these images? Only one of the five purportedly shows an airplane about to crash, and it is of such poor quality that it is not possible to perform any sort of meaningful analysis. There is little question that the images have been manipulated in various ways, rendering them all but useless for shedding any light on what happened at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The most



likely scenario is that these doctored photos were 'leaked' quite deliberately for the express purpose of further muddying the waters. We will therefore treat these images with the respect that they deserve — which is to say, we will pretty much ignore them.



Unlike the actual 'crash,' there is plenty of photographic evidence of the aftermath of the attack. Virtually none of it supports the official story. Nothing that can be confirmed as aircraft debris is visible in any of the photographs that have found their way into the public domain. Photos do reveal, and Pentagon officials have acknowledged, that the initial penetration into the side of the building was not nearly large enough to account for the wingspan of a Boeing 757-200 aircraft (actually, the penetration wasn't even large enough to account for the fuselage of a 757). In fact, all the available photos reveal that the initial damage to the front facade of the Pentagon, after the alleged crash but before the collapse that occurred about a half-hour later, was relatively minor. And the impact apparently did not generate enough explosive force to even displace the wire spools just below the alleged point of impact.



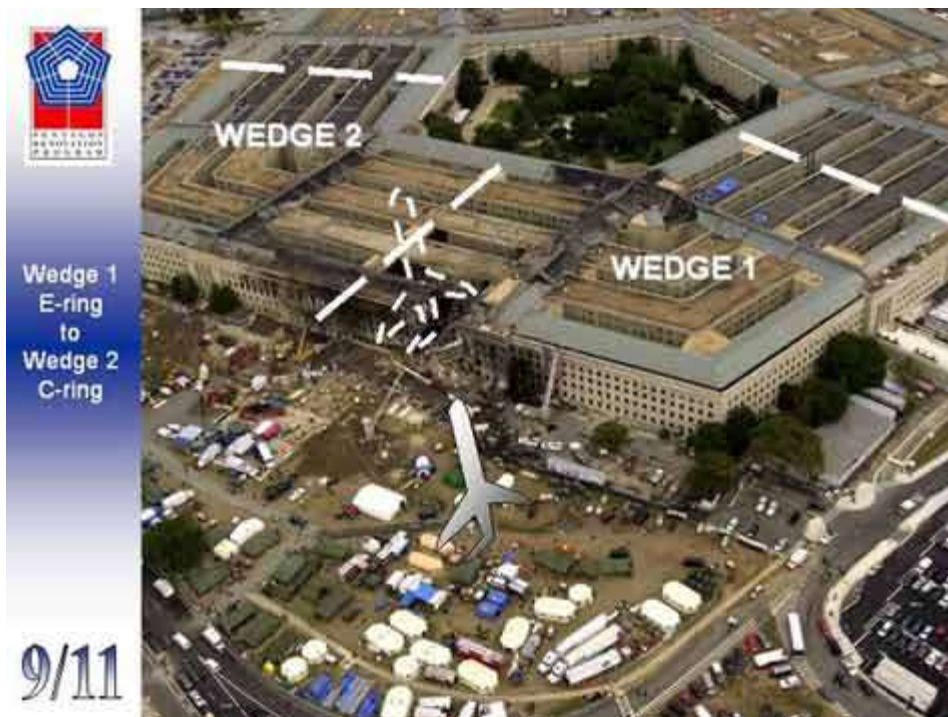
The pre-collapse photos reveal that the front wall of the Pentagon remained remarkably intact after the initial impact. Pentagon officials, and defenders of the official story, have claimed that the small entry wound made by the alleged plane was the result of the fact that the aircraft's wings were either sheared off or folded back on impact, and that only the fuselage entered the building — becoming, in effect, a very large missile. That would be a much more plausible claim if a 757 did not have very large wings that would be clearly visible in these photographs if they had in fact been sheared off as the fuselage entered the building. Attached to those wings are two engines, each about 9 feet in diameter, 21 feet long, and weighing nearly five tons. The official story doesn't really bother to account for them.

One enterprising soul put together a composite image that illustrates, more clearly than any other image that I have come across, the fundamental absurdity of the official story of the crash of Flight 77. Seen below is an actual photo of the Pentagon, over which is overlaid both a properly scaled image of the pre-collapse damage to the facade on September 11, and a properly scaled image of a Boeing 757-200 aircraft.





Perfectly obvious in this composite photo is that the actual *impact* damage to the Pentagon was entirely inconsistent with the crash of a large passenger plane. Also obvious is that even if we accept the dubious notion that the plane's fuselage disappeared within the building, some very large aircraft parts seem to be unaccounted for — like the two wings, the two engines, and the three tail fins.





Nevertheless, the official story claims that the plane did in fact impact the Pentagon exactly as depicted in the above photo, as can be seen in the graphic to the right, which was used by Pentagon spokesmen during a post-911 press briefing. As can be seen in the graphic, Flight 77 allegedly plowed through three of the five concentric rings that make up the Pentagon, coming to rest completely within the complex of buildings. According to various 911 gatekeepers, that is why there is no aircraft debris visible on the lawn outside the alleged point of impact (such as in the photo to the left). Also missing, needless to say, is any indication that a 100 ton aircraft performed a gymnastics floor routine on that lawn before slamming into the side of the Pentagon.

After the collapse, there was still no aircraft wreckage visible, as can be seen in these post-collapse photos — the center one taken just after the collapse, while the fire still burned, and the other two taken after clean-up efforts were underway. According to the 911 gatekeepers, the remains of the aircraft were at that time still buried beneath the collapsed building. Fair enough. That seems to be a reasonable enough claim — except for the fact that only the outer ring of the Pentagon collapsed, while the plane, according to the official story, penetrated through two additional rings, neither of which collapsed, and neither of which yielded any verifiable aircraft debris. And if any aircraft debris was later found buried beneath the collapsed portion of the Pentagon, no one bothered to document it with photographs.







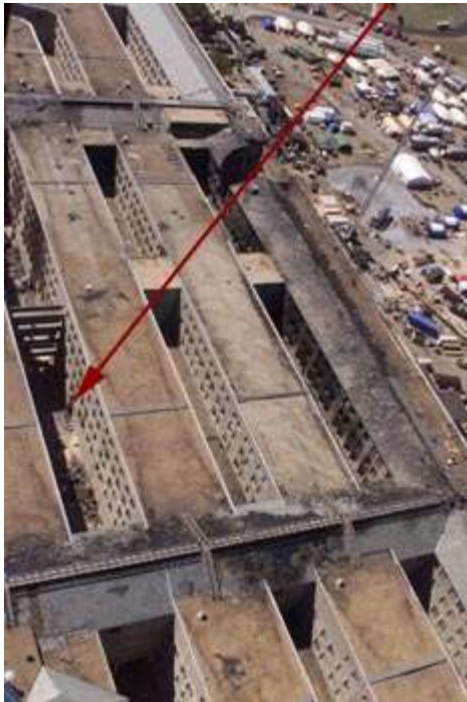
Sometimes offered in support of the official story is photographic evidence of an exit wound exactly where we would expect it to be located if an airplane, or some other fast moving projectile, did in fact slice through the concentric rings of the Pentagon in the manner indicated in the official Pentagon graphic. Punched through the inside of "C" ring, at ground level, was a remarkably clean hole that appeared to measure roughly 8'-9' high and 10'-12' wide. This hole, punched through a thick, steel-reinforced masonry wall, was purportedly made by the nosecone of Flight 77. There is no indication, however, in any of the photos, of aircraft debris either inside or outside of the hole.

## September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act II, Part II



by [Dave McGowan](#) | Oct 2, 2004

## **ACT II, PART II**



Some websites, however, claim otherwise. Bizarrely enough, some of these same photos are cited elsewhere as evidence that a 757 *did* crash into the Pentagon. The photo below, for example, supposedly depicts aircraft debris — and remarkably uncharred aircraft debris at that. If you're having trouble finding it, here's a hint: it's the green stuff. If you're wondering how we can be sure that it is in fact aircraft debris, it's really quite simple: it has to be aircraft debris, you see, because it's green. Such is the level of investigative analysis employed by at least one 'debunker.' Before I learned the proper way to identify aircraft wreckage, I had assumed that the green stuff was probably just broken up office

furnishings of some sort. And I also had no idea that a few flimsy pieces of debris could cleanly punch out a large hole in a beefy masonry wall.





As I explained in my first Pentagon rant, it would have been physically impossible for the nosecone, or any other component, of a Boeing 757 to punch out an exit hole in the “C” ring of the Pentagon after plowing through three entire building rings. As the *Los Angeles Times* noted, five days after the attacks, the Pentagon was “built to be as strong and impenetrable as this country always hoped its military

would be ... When ground was broken on the building—eerily, on September 11, 1941, exactly 60 years before Tuesday’s attack—it was a state of the art bunker.”

(<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-091601pentagon,0,1620389,print.story>)

The Pentagon is an immense, and immensely strong, structure. It is composed primarily of thick, steel-reinforced concrete. The exterior walls are a full two feet thick – two feet of solid concrete, brick and limestone (see wall detail, below left). As a pictorial study of the building noted, “the main interior walls above the basement level are of masonry” as well. Throughout the entire complex, spaced roughly fifteen feet apart, in both directions, are thick, steel-reinforced concrete columns (see example, below right). Also throughout the complex are “Transformer vaults and machine rooms ... protected by masonry walls and firedoors.” ([http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/The\\_Pentagon.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/The_Pentagon.html))

The buildings’ floor slabs are composed of 5.5 inches of steel-reinforced concrete. To add further to the total mass of concrete that makes up the Pentagon, “concrete ramps instead of elevators were used to connect the floors,” according to the Department of Defense’s History of the Pentagon. The same source adds that, “By 30 April 1942, about eight months after ground breaking, the contractor completed the first two sections of the building and War Department personnel began to move in.” ([http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/The\\_Pentagon.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/The_Pentagon.html))

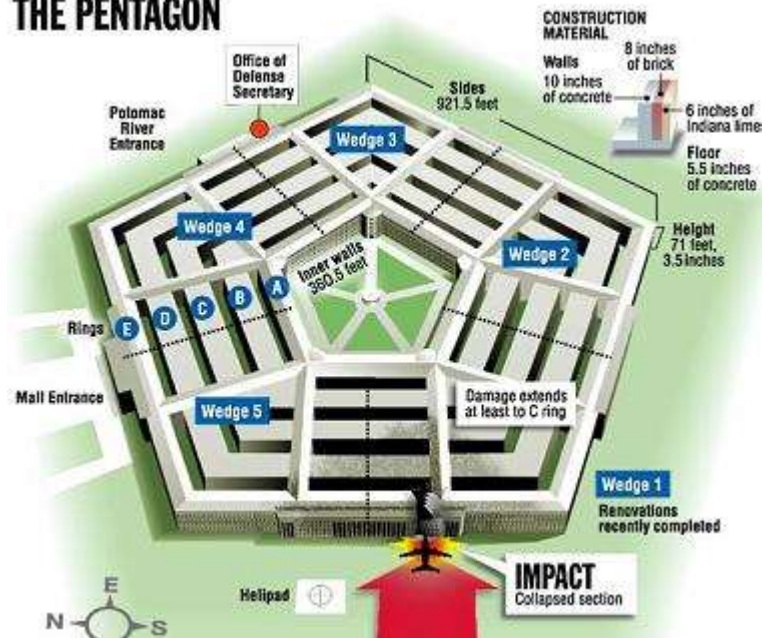
I will leave it to the serious conspiracy theorists in the crowd to ponder the significance of the date of ground-breaking and the date of initial occupation. The point here is to emphasize the number of thick, dense, reinforced concrete obstacles that would hinder the forward progress of any projectile attempting to pass through the Pentagon. To cleanly penetrate just one ring would require blasting through two 24” thick masonry walls, several masonry interior walls (notice the cross-section of “E” ring provided by the post-collapse photos), numerous concrete support columns, and maybe a concrete ramp or a concrete transformer room. Also, since a 757 fuselage (see below — and notice, in the front view, the ‘pods’ visible on the underside) would not easily fit between floors, and since the official story claims that the plane entered between the first and second floors, it would have to rip its way horizontally through a considerable amount of steel-reinforced concrete floor slab.

The *L.A. Times* (and many other sources) added that, in addition to all the reinforced concrete, the portion of the Pentagon that was hit in the attack had recently been “reconstructed with a web of steel columns and bars to withstand bomb blasts.” In other words, the Pentagon in general, and especially the portion affected by the attack, is an extremely well fortified building. An airplane blasting through three rings of the complex would be roughly equivalent to an airplane blasting through a whole series of concrete bunkers.

Another interesting fact about the Pentagon attack that is frequently ignored is that, in order for the official story to be true, the ‘airplane’ that hit the Pentagon had to be flying in an almost perfectly horizontal trajectory at an extremely low altitude — mere feet off the ground. And it had to be flying at a rate of speed that would have allowed it to maintain that trajectory, losing almost no altitude, even as it was plowing its way through dozens of reinforced concrete obstacles.



# THE PENTAGON



The nosecone of a Boeing passenger plane, pictured below, is composed of carbon. Its function is to serve as an aerodynamic cover for the aircraft's navigation system. It is not designed to be utilized as, and it will not perform well as, a missile warhead. Impact with the very first masonry wall would have completely obliterated the plane's nosecone and enclosed electronics. The plane's fuselage, composed primarily of strong yet lightweight metals, would have fared only slightly better.



If we were to play along with the official story, we might propose that there are two components of a Boeing 757 that might have had sufficient mass and density to punch out such an exit wound: one of the engines, or a portion of the fuselage that had been thoroughly compacted by previous impacts with dense masonry walls and concrete columns. But again, it must be said that while such components might well have punched through multiple walls in one ring of the Pentagon, they certainly could not have punched cleanly through three entire rings.

The official story maintains that, rather than a dense mass of metal, it was the lightweight carbon nose of the aircraft that punched out the exit hole. According to the National Fire Protection Association's *Online Journal*, "Captain Defina and airport Battalion Chief Walter Hood, as well as other jurisdictions' battalion chiefs, led crews inside with attack lines to fight fires on every floor of the 'D' and 'E' rings. The aircraft had penetrated all the way to the 'C' ring. 'The only way you could tell that an aircraft was inside was that we saw pieces of the nose gear. The devastation was horrific.'"

([http://www.nfpa.org/NFPAJournal/OnlineExclusive/Exclusive\\_11\\_01\\_01/exclusive\\_11.01.01.asp](http://www.nfpa.org/NFPAJournal/OnlineExclusive/Exclusive_11_01_01/exclusive_11.01.01.asp))

Arlington County Fire Chief Ed Plaughner, when asked at a Department of Defense news briefing about the presence of jet fuel, responded: "We have what we believe is a puddle right there that the — what



we believe is to be the nose of the aircraft. So — ”

([http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2001/t09122001\\_t0912asd.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2001/t09122001_t0912asd.html))



To account for these reports of surviving nose gear, and to account for an alleged exit hole that couldn't possibly have been punched out by a passenger airplane, I suggested in my previous Pentagon rant that the damage was likely caused by a particular type of cruise missile — specifically, a Boeing AGM-86C Conventional Air Launched Cruise Missile (CALCM) outfitted with a depleted uranium (DU) warhead. Here are excerpts of what I wrote back in June 2002:

How it operates is explained by the Federation of American Scientists: “After launch, the missile’s folded wings, tail surfaces and engine inlet deploy. It is then able to fly complicated routes to a target through the use of an onboard Global Positioning System (GPS) coupled with its Inertial Navigation System (INS). This allows the missile to guide itself to the target with pinpoint accuracy.” The FAS website also comments on the missile’s “small size and low-altitude flight capability, which makes them difficult to detect on radar.”

The AGM-86 also can be equipped with a “penetrating” warhead, designed to cut into hardened bunkers. As the FAS describes it: “The AGM-86D Block II program is the Precision Strike variant of

CALCM. It incorporates a penetrating warhead, updated state of the art, near-precision, GPS guidance, and a modified terminal area flight profile to maximize the effectiveness of the warhead.”

The American Scientists also discuss a “feasibility study [which] was concluded in April 1997, in which it was determined the BROACH Warhead on CALCM would offer very significant hard target capabilities ... The BROACH multi-warhead system ... achieves its results by combining an initial penetrator charge (warhead) with a secondary follow-through bomb, supported by multi-event hard target fuzing.”

Everything seemed to fit — the clean initial penetration, the low altitude flight capability, the ability to evade radar, the ability to penetrate multiple reinforced targets. Other researchers apparently liked the fit as well. As I mentioned in Act I, I recently read portions of an online version of David Ray Griffin’s book, *The New Pearl Harbor*. While doing so, I noticed that Mr. Griffin seems to favor the notion that what hit the Pentagon was “one of the latest generation of AGM-type missiles, armed with a hollow charge and a depleted uranium BLU tip.” Griffin credits that theory to Thierry Meyssan.

Last time I checked, Meyssan was selling a truck bomb theory, so I’m not really sure where he and Griffin picked up that crazy AGM missile theory, but after carefully reviewing the photographic evidence, I can now say with considerable confidence that it wasn’t a missile warhead that punched out that exit hole. I can say that because it is perfectly obvious that the ‘exit’ hole wasn’t actually an exit hole at all.

First of all, though no one seems to have given it much serious thought, it is not in the right location to be an exit wound. True, the hole is where it should be if a projectile following the alleged trajectory of the alleged plane sliced through the building in a perfectly straight line from the point of entry. But that would never actually happen in this place that we call the ‘real world.’ In the real world, when a fast-moving projectile strikes a flat, dense, stationary object at an angle (in this case, an angle of approximately 45 degrees, by most accounts), something called deflection comes into play.

It’s been a little while since I had a math or physics class, so I am not going to try to impress anyone here with any complicated calculations — which would be meaningless to most people anyway (including me). Instead, I am going to make the common sense observation that, due to a projectile’s tendency to deflect off of an immovable (relatively speaking) flat surface when striking at an angle, it takes considerably more energy to penetrate at an angle than it does to penetrate head on. And when a projectile does penetrate through an angled surface, the trajectory of that projectile will change due to deflection.

The degree of deflection will largely depend upon the speed and mass of the projectile, and the density of the immovable surface being impacted/penetrated. If the projectile is traveling at sufficient speed and has sufficient mass, and the angled surface offers minimal resistance, then the deflection will be minimal. However, as the projectile’s speed decreases with each successive penetration, each subsequent obstacle will offer greater resistance, and, due to the cumulative effects of deflection, will be struck at a progressively sharper angle, so that, after a given number of impacts/penetrations, the projectile will have lost sufficient velocity, and/or it will be traveling at such a severe angle, that it will, rather than penetrating, ricochet off the next masonry wall or concrete column in its path. In the case of the Pentagon, this would happen long before a projectile plowed through three entire rings of the complex.

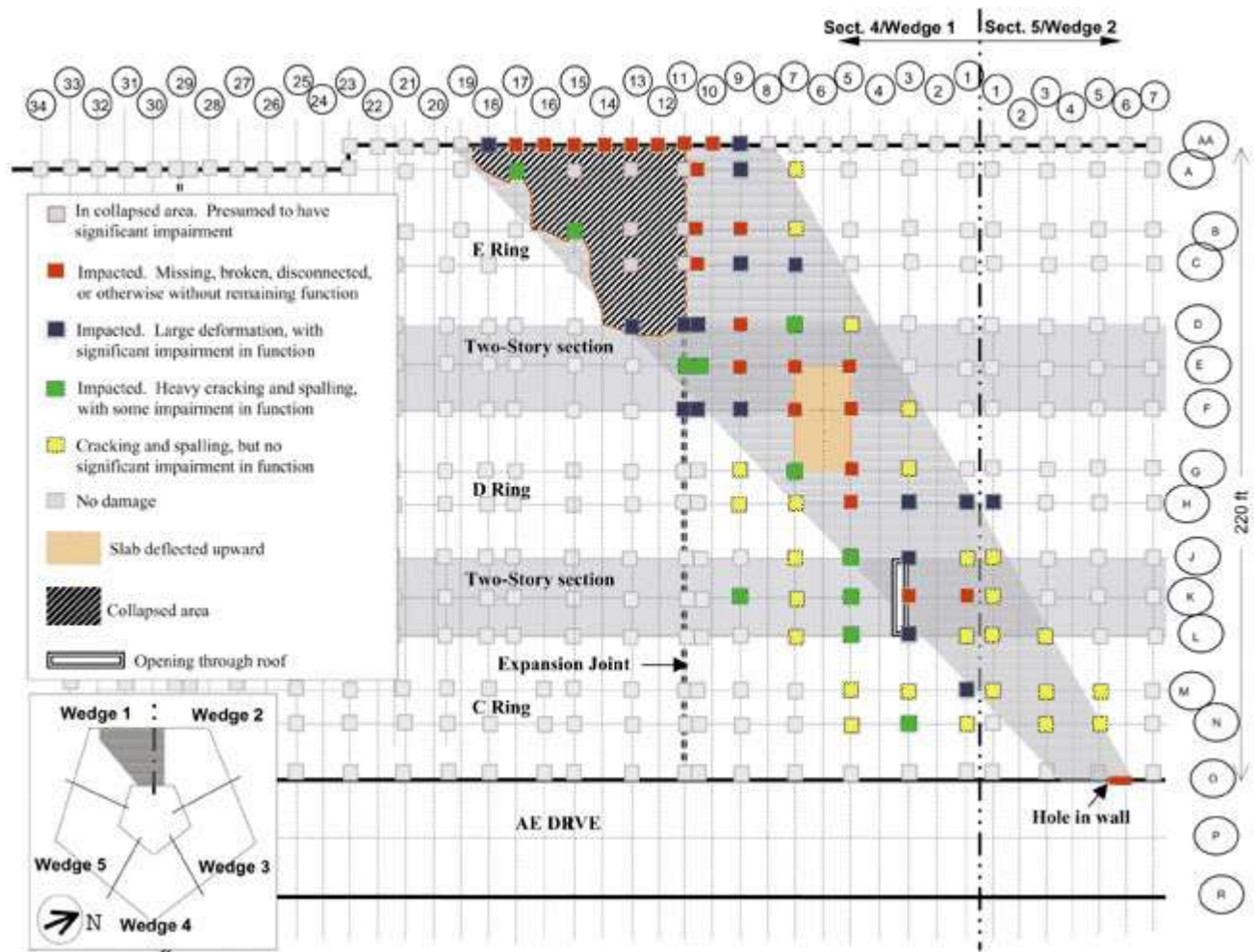


Even if we were to accept that the projectile did manage, miraculously and in violation of various laws of physics, to plow a perfectly straight course through three entire rings of the Pentagon, we would still be left with one rather perplexing question: if whatever punched that hole still had sufficient mass and velocity to blast cleanly through two feet of solid concrete, brick and limestone, then what stopped it from continuing on into the Pentagon's "B" ring? Once it exited "C" ring, after all, there was nothing between it and the next exterior wall but about forty feet of air, which doesn't normally offer much resistance. And yet, according to all reports (and the photo to the left), the damage did not extend beyond "C" ring. So what exactly was it that stopped the forward progress of the alleged projectile after it cleanly exited "C" ring?

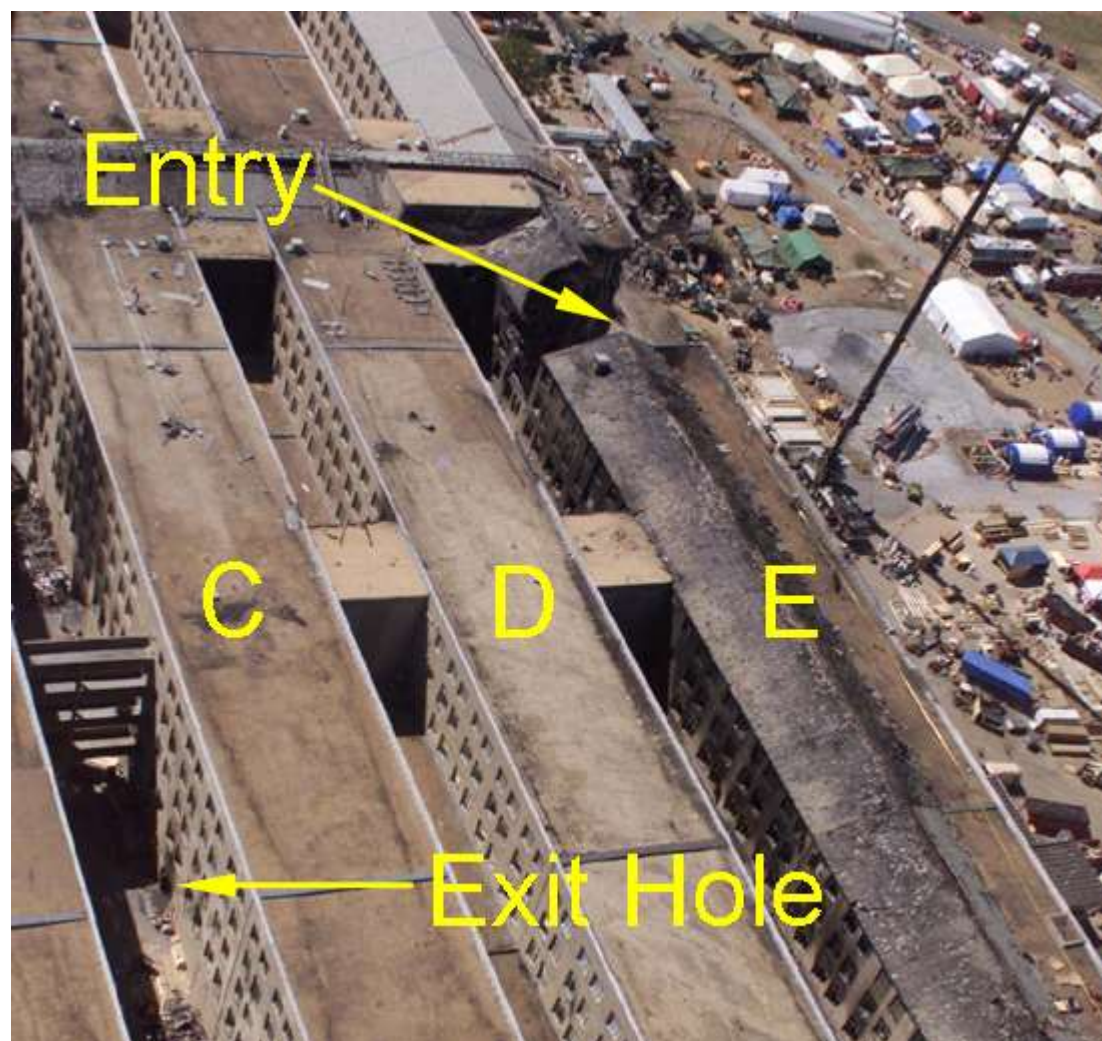
Below is what is purported to be the official damage report on the Pentagon. Notice that in "C" ring, none of the structural columns in the alleged path of travel suffered significant damage. Just for fun, take a straightedge and try to map out a path of travel from the entry hole to the exit hole that does not pass through one or more of those largely undamaged columns. Let me know if you succeed.

What are we to conclude happened here? Did the strangely indestructible nosecone of Flight 77 somehow weave its way around those columns on the way out of the building? Or did it careen around as if it were in a giant pinball machine until, magically, it somehow ended up right back on course and with sufficient energy to punch its way out? Perhaps I am just a bit of a skeptic, but somehow I find either of those scenarios rather unlikely.

So there are, it seems, at least three questions raised by the existence of the 'exit' hole; how did the projectile plow through dozens of concrete obstructions and yet still retain enough energy to cut cleanly through a two-foot-thick masonry wall? Once it exited "C" ring, what stopped the projectile's forward progress? And how did the projectile manage to avoid hitting a whole series of columns on its way out the newly created back door?









As the photo to the left reveals, the space between rings “C” and “D,” and between rings “D” and “E,” is not empty space (as I had erroneously believed when I penned my previous diatribe); rather, those rings are connected, but only for the first two floors. Notice that that there is no visible damage to the second-story roof between “C” and “D” rings, nor is there any visible damage to “C” and “D” rings themselves, with the exception of the blackened ‘exit hole’ (and two additional blackened openings in “C” ring apparently created by firefighters to gain access to the building). It would seem then that there was no significant damage to the building complex above the second floor, at least beyond “E” ring.

In fact, even in “E” ring, the alleged point of entry, there doesn’t appear to have been much significant damage above the second floor. As can be seen in the post-collapse photo above, all the structural columns above the second floor appear to be intact, and, remarkably enough, there doesn’t even appear to be a significant amount of fire damage above the second floor. Furniture sitting right next to the point of collapse appears to be unscathed. The same was largely true of the area on the other side of the collapse, as can be seen in the photo to the lower left, which presents a view across the chasm after the clean-up had begun.





There is nothing suspicious or unusual, by the way, about the clean break between the collapsed and standing portions of the building. Some theorists have mistakenly attached significance to the fact that it looks as though the Pentagon was cleanly sliced. The truth is that the building gave way at what is known as an expansion joint (a built-in break to allow for expansion and contraction), which is exactly where a collapse would be expected to occur, if it was to occur at all (it is marked as an expansion joint on the damage report presented previously, and an expansion joint can be clearly seen running along the roofs of the surviving rings in the aerial photos, directly in line with the 'slice' in "E" ring).



The point that I started to make here though is that, with the exception of the collapsed portion of “E” ring, all the structural damage, and nearly all the fire damage, was confined to the first and second floors. It appears as though the fire, from its origins at the point of impact, primarily burned along the roof (until, presumably, firefighters got it under control). As can be seen in the views to the left and upper right, it burned only along the segments of the roof composed of the blue colored material, which doesn’t appear to have been very fire retardant. The apparent lack of fire damage to the upper floors of the adjoining buildings tends to indicate that it was primarily the roof, and not the buildings themselves, that suffered significant fire damage.

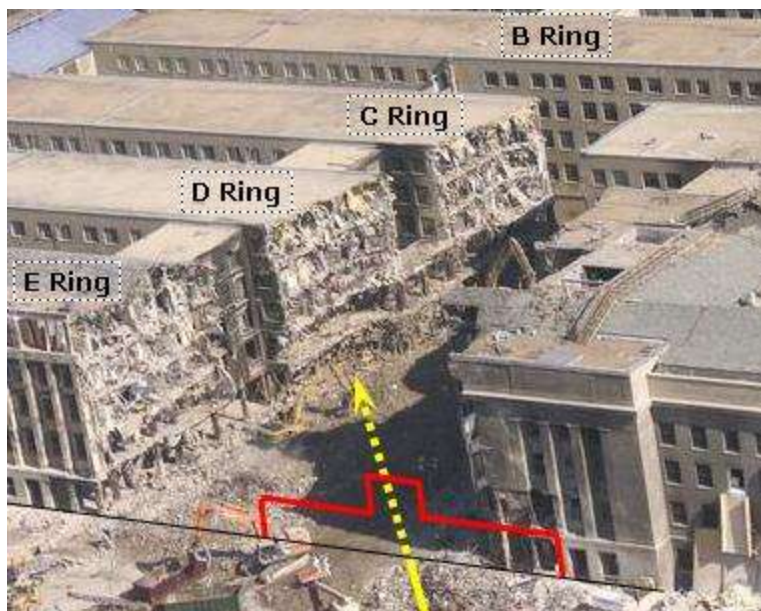
But if the vast majority of the significant damage was to the first and second floors only, to such an extent that a second-story roof over a portion of the alleged path of travel shows no visible signs of damage, then we are not really being asked to believe that an enormous 757 jumbo jet disappeared without a trace into a five-story building; incredibly enough, we are actually being asked to believe that it essentially disappeared without a trace into a two-story building!

## September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act II, Part III

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Oct 2, 2004

### ACT II, PART III





The remarkable photo to the left, taken after a considerable amount of demolition work had been done, reveals an actual cross-section of the three connected rings of the Pentagon. Notice the number of columns and walls that would have to be cleanly penetrated to blast completely through this massive concrete, brick and limestone structure. And consider that to pass through at a 45 degree angle, a projectile would have to plow through nearly 100 additional feet of concrete obstacles, the equivalent of approximately 1½ more rings.

The distance from the alleged point of penetration to the alleged exit wound was just over 300 feet. For you sports-minded readers, that's an entire football field. Imagine that across each goal line of that football field is a 24" thick, steel-reinforced masonry wall. And down each sideline as well. Imagine also that every five yards or so, across the entire field, in both directions, are 24" square, reinforced concrete columns. Now imagine that there are several concrete slabs spanning between that network of columns, each five-and-a-half inches thick, spaced about fourteen feet apart. Now add some concrete ramps here and there to connect the floors. What we have then, so far, is something the size of a football field that closely resembles a walled, multi-story parking structure. Now add to that, every four or five yards, interior walls, some masonry and some of lightweight construction. Don't forget to add them in both directions, across the entire width and length of the field. If you'd like, you can also add file cabinets, desks, and various other bulky office furnishings, but that's really optional. The important thing here is to consider how likely it would be that a 757 flown into the fortress wall at one end of the field would blast its way through a hole in the fortress wall at the other end of the field. I'm guessing not very likely at all.

\* \* \* \* \*

So what really did happen at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001? When I began writing this piece – just a couple short weeks ago, though it seems much longer – I was leaning towards a scenario that involved a missile fired into the point of entry (to create the initial penetration, the facade damage, and the fireball), combined with explosives placed within the building, possibly quite hastily, to create all of

the following: the collapse of “E” ring (necessary to hide the fact that no plane actually entered the building); much of the destruction along the ‘path of travel’; and the alleged ‘exit’ hole.

In other words, my theory was that both a missile (possibly fired by a passing jet, assuming that some of the witness reports, and the air traffic controller reports, were accurate) and supplemental explosives were used to simulate, albeit rather poorly, the crash of a passenger plane. That would explain, among other things, why “secondary explosions and plumes of smoke” were reported by witnesses to *Washington Post* reporters.

(<http://a188.g.akamaitech.net/f/188/920/5m/www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/metro/daily/sep01/attack.html>)

But is that what really happened? The reality is that we will likely never know what really happened at the Pentagon that morning. As at the site of the World Trade Center towers, all evidence was quickly bulldozed away. And even if it hadn’t been, we would not likely have learned what secrets lay buried in the rubble. We are talking here, after all, about the Pentagon, which isn’t the kind of place that a truly independent investigator could have wandered into to take a look around.

We will never know which aspects, if any, of the alleged CCTV images are legitimate. Nevertheless, a number of investigators on both sides of the debate have spent countless hours attempting to prop up the images as ‘proof’ either that a 757 did hit the Pentagon, or that a 757 did not hit the Pentagon, when neither conclusion can ever be drawn from grainy, low-resolution images that have clearly been doctored.

We will never have any way of verifying the accuracy of the purported damage report. Was there really extensive structural damage extending well beyond “E” ring? The report says there was, but numerous aerial photos of the buildings reveal little indication of such damage lying within. Even the two-story buildings, amazingly enough, were able to completely conceal the extensive damage.

We really don’t know, with any certainty, how many of the ‘witness’ reports are fraudulent accounts planted in the media. Many of the witnesses were themselves members of the Washington press corps, whose primary function is parroting government lies. We also don’t know how many of the reports are more a reflection of what the witnesses wanted to see than what they actually did see. Any major event, after all, will draw out ‘witnesses’ driven by a desire to be a part of history in the making.

There have been, to date, around 150 published witness reports, with roughly a third of those witnesses claiming to have seen something impacting the Pentagon. The majority of the accounts do not strictly conform to the official story. Indeed, perhaps what is most surprising about the witness accounts of the attack on the Pentagon – considering the magnitude of the event, and the fact that, by 9:38 AM on the morning of September 11, 2001, more than a few people in Washington were nervously scanning the skies for signs of errant aircraft – is that there aren’t a lot more of them.

Some investigators seem to have spent countless hours constructing elaborate theories around multiple witness reports that not only contradict each other, but contradict the photographic evidence as well. The effort seems rather pointless, given that anyone can cherry-pick from the available ‘witness’ reports to validate any number of theories — just as I did at the top of this post.

It has occurred to me, as I've been mulling over the evidence, that maybe that is the ultimate goal — to deliberately render the evidence so ambiguous and indecipherable that it becomes impossible to construct a logical and coherent theory that accounts for all the known 'evidence.' If no alternative scenario can be constructed that won't be immediately attacked for ignoring some aspect of the 'evidence,' then the official story, by default, becomes the truth.

It was almost certainly realized, very early on, that the Flight 77 fable wasn't going to stand up to the slightest bit of scrutiny. The official story, such as it is, cannot really be defended directly, so a very deliberate effort has been made to thoroughly muddy the waters and render the available evidence hopelessly ambiguous and inconclusive.

Nevertheless, even through the fog it is perfectly obvious that the one conclusion that can be drawn is that it was not a Boeing 757 passenger jet that caused the damage to the Pentagon on the morning of September 11, 2001. What evidence, after all, supports the official story? A smattering of witness reports, to be sure, but those are contradicted by other witness reports and by virtually all of the photographic evidence. In addition to the witness reports, there is the extremely dubious, and unverifiable, forensic identification of the passengers. Then there is the official damage report, which is supposed to support the official story, but in reality reports damage that couldn't possibly have been inflicted by a passenger plane. The only other aspects of the evidence that support the official story are the notorious clipped-off light poles, and the widely circulated photos that purportedly depict aircraft debris in and outside the Pentagon.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Flight 77 story has been vocally defended by more than a few 911 'skeptics,' some of whom have shown a curious willingness to toss credibility and consistency out the door when necessary. Michael Rivero, of [WhatReallyHappened.Com](http://WhatReallyHappened.Com), provides a good case study.



To explain the lack of aircraft wreckage outside the Pentagon, Rivero presents a single post-collapse photo (left) and claims that the aircraft “slid INTO the building, into the first floor space, starting a fire in the first floor, whereupon the upper floors later collapsed down onto the remains of the aircraft. Most of the aircraft wreckage is therefore under the collapsed roof section in the photo.”

A few paragraphs later, Rivero reveals that “aircraft are relatively fragile objects due to weight considerations.” I was shocked by that revelation, having been fooled into believing that aircraft had to be pretty sturdy to withstand years of exposure to the stresses of things like sudden and extreme weather changes, heavy turbulence, and icing. But I guess not. According to Rivero, “jet aircraft ... are, if you think about it, mostly filled with air, like an aluminum balloon.”

I’m not entirely sure that Rivero understands the difference between a blimp and an airplane, but I hate to stop him when he’s on a roll, so let’s listen and learn as he compares a commercial aircraft to a glass Christmas tree ornament: “Take a glass Christmas ornament and hurl it against a brick wall. Do you get a round opening in the brick wall the size of the ornament? No, of course not. Neither will an aluminum plane leave a clean outline of itself crashing into concrete. In the case of the plane, there are subassemblies which are heavy and solid, such as the engines, the frames supporting the landing gear, cockpit avionics, the potable water tanks, APU, etc. On impact, these would break loose from the aircraft and continuing forward, produce smaller holes.”

Uhhh ... but what happened to the plane sliding into the building? Rivero has inadvertently provided a wonderful example here of the impossibility of defending the official story while maintaining even a hint of credibility. To explain the lack of aircraft wreckage outside the Pentagon, he claims that the plane slid into the building and was then buried under rubble. But then, just a few paragraphs later, while



struggling to explain the lack of an entry wound, he makes the completely contradictory claim that the plane essentially blew apart on impact.



In the same post, Rivero makes a bold claim about the pile of indeterminate debris identified by the red rectangle in the photo above. “The Pentagon is a building mostly made of concrete and wood,” Rivero writes, “Yet here is a pile of crumpled aluminum debris, and clearly seen mixed in with it are pieces of luggage. Since the Pentagon itself does not travel, we can conclude that the luggage (and the aluminum shards mixed with them) are part of the remains of the passenger jet which hit the Pentagon.”

I have to concede that I apparently do not have the visual acuity of a Michael Rivero, so it is not entirely clear to me how he could have possibly determined that what we are looking at is “aluminum debris,” let alone the remains of a passenger airplane. I’m also a little unclear on which pieces of debris are luggage and which are aircraft parts. It’s hard to tell when everything is carelessly jumbled together like that, and shoved around by that Bobcat visible in the foreground. But that is, of course, exactly the kind of respect that we would expect would be shown for the personal effects of the Pentagon victims. Hell, for all we know, they might have even tossed some bodies in the pile. In fact, it would be fair to say that the human remains in the pile can be identified with the same level of certainty as the pieces of luggage and aircraft debris in the pile.

One conclusion that can be safely drawn from this photo is that the materials in the pile, whatever they may be, were removed from the building through the open entry door that the debris is piled just outside of. And that door quite obviously does not lead into the portion of the Pentagon that was allegedly hit by the plane. In addition to that, the plane, according to Rivero, is still lying buried beneath the collapsed portion of the building. How, one wonders, was all this alleged wreckage recovered before excavation had even begun on the collapsed portion of the Pentagon?

Joe Vialls displays the very same photo and makes more outlandish claims about the pile of debris: “Which bits of the pile are which bits of American Airlines Flight 77 you had best decide for yourself,

because there are lots of bits to choose from ... Though most of the Boeing 757 was still in the Pentagon basement [or even below it] on that date, only three days after the crash, there is already enough scrap metal on the pile to construct a pair of fighter aircraft from scratch. And because this aircraft wreckage utterly destroys the French conspiracy, they failed to show it to you. Worse than that. The French deliberately edited it out completely, so you would be unable to reach your own conclusions.”

Those goddamn French! Unlike those “wine-swilling Parisians,” as Vials refers to them, I have no problem displaying the photo. In fact, unlike Vials and Rivero (and numerous others), I have tried to present here a representative sampling of *all* the photographic evidence, even some that I consider to be fraudulent and/or too grainy and ambiguous to be of any value. That, you see, is what enables people to reach their own conclusions.

You may find yourself wondering, by the way, how in the world Flight 77 could have ended up in the Pentagon’s basement. The answer, according to Vials, is that the plane actually dive-bombed into the Pentagon, barreling straight down into the bowels of the building. And it did so, amazingly enough, without leaving any penetrations in the roof of the complex. Vials has boldly opted to blaze his own trail on this one, disregarding pretty much all of the available evidence. He has also failed to explain how aircraft debris was excavated from the basement without disturbing the mountain of concrete lying on top of it.

Moving on, I am required by the Fairness Doctrine to show you some additional photos that allegedly depict aircraft debris. However, it is my understanding that the doctrine places no restrictions on my right to thoroughly mock and ridicule this alleged evidence. We will begin with the alleged debris that was photographed either in “C” ring or in the walkway between “C” ring and “B” ring, and then we will move on to the notorious piece of debris allegedly left on the Pentagon lawn. Like the alleged aircraft debris presented by Rivero and Vials, none of this alleged debris has ever been officially acknowledged — which seems rather odd, since you would assume that the Washington gang would be eager to embrace any evidence that supposedly lends credence to the official story.



First up we have this wheel, reportedly photographed outside the infamous 'exit' hole in "C" ring. It is claimed to be part of the landing gear of a Boeing 757. Also photographed in the walkway between "B" and "C" rings is a grainy black object alleged to be the tire that was once mounted to that wheel. Of course, it is impossible to ascertain whether the object to the right is a tire at all, let alone a tire from the landing gear of a 757, just as it isn't really possible to verify where the photo to the left was actually taken. If we accept that the items are what they are claimed to be, and that they were photographed



outside of “C” ring, and that they weren’t planted there, then we must also accept that not only can lightweight aircraft parts smash their way through literally dozens of concrete and steel barriers, but they can emerge from such an ordeal nearly intact and in readily recognizable form. Who knew that alloy rims and rubber tires were actually tougher than multiple layers of concrete, steel, brick, and limestone?





Next up is the photo to the right, which depicts ... uhhh, I have to be honest here — I have no clue what it is supposed to be. Some kind of manifold or something. And it was discovered ... uhmm, somewhere in the Pentagon, I suppose, but that can't actually be determined from the photo. Obviously then it must be debris from Flight 77. To the left, jutting out prominently from a pile of indeterminate debris, and obviously better lit and in much sharper focus than other alleged interior shots of alleged aircraft debris, is what is claimed to be yet another component of a Boeing 757's apparently indestructible landing gear. Whatever.

Similar grainy photos of indeterminate origin can be found on various websites devoted to bolstering the official story through the use of unofficial 'evidence.' None of the photos depict any large pieces of actual, identifiable aircraft wreckage. Even if all the of the photos did actually depict debris from a 757, and if all that debris was actually found inside the Pentagon, then a few hundred pounds of Flight 77 has been accounted for. That leaves well over 100 tons unaccounted for — plus all the passengers and crew, since none of the photos, strangely enough, depict any human remains mixed in with the aircraft debris.







We now turn our attention to these infamous images, which I like to call the “is it an airplane or is it a soda can?” photos. This immaculately preserved piece of debris, lovingly photographed by a writer for *Navy Times*, but ignored by everyone else on the scene, is purportedly a portion of American Airlines Flight 77. Despite having endured both a 450 mile per hour (the speed varies in various accounts) impact into dense concrete, and the massive fireball that resulted from that impact, this purported aircraft wreckage, sitting all by itself, far from the alleged point of impact, doesn’t appear to be charred in the least. After these photos were taken, the mysterious debris was never seen again, nor ever mentioned in any official accounts of the alleged crash.

That is kind of a shame, when you think about it, because it might have been nice to have a piece of history like that displayed in a museum or something. Perhaps the Smithsonian might have been able to find it a suitable home. Better yet, it could have been mounted on a granite base and planted on the

Pentagon lawn, exactly where it sits, as a permanent memorial to the victims of the September 11 attacks.

Some researchers have claimed that it is actually just one of many pieces of aircraft debris visible in these two photos. Behind it, some say, lies a large 'debris field' of shredded aircraft parts. It seems far more likely, however, that the debris closer to the building, which the emergency personnel are freely trampling over, is nothing more than shattered pieces of the building's limestone veneer, a considerable amount of which was blasted away.

All of this photographic evidence of alleged debris appears to have been 'unofficially,' but actually quite deliberately, leaked. The goal appears to be to silence critics of the official 9-11 narrative while carefully avoiding officially acknowledging the existence of the alleged debris. The reason for such a strategy is obvious: Washington cannot acknowledge the existence of what are purported to be random bits and pieces of the aircraft without admitting that it cannot account for the other 99.9% of the wreckage.



Last on the evidence list is the ever-popular 'toppled light pole' evidence. To bring those of you unfamiliar with all the minutiae of the Pentagon attack up to date, the 757 that allegedly hit the Pentagon allegedly clipped off five light poles on its way to doing so. And those light poles, of course, were directly in line with the trajectory of the plane established by the entry and exit wounds in the Pentagon and the reported pattern of internal structural damage. Toss in a pinch of debris and a handful of dubious witness statements, stir the whole thing up real good, and you have an open-and-shut case — to a casual observer unaware of the fact that neither the entry hole nor the exit hole could have possibly been created by the crash of a Boeing 757.



The light pole evidence is considered by some researchers to be a crucial piece of the puzzle, because it allegedly establishes three things: the trajectory of the plane on its approach to the Pentagon; the approximate wingspan of the plane (based on the spacing of the poles); and the plane's extremely low approach altitude. The toppled light poles, however, are problematic in a number of ways.



As can be seen in these photos, these were very sturdy poles that appear to have been ripped cleanly away from their foundations without doing substantial damage to the bases of the posts. You would think that if a 100+ ton metal object traveling at hundreds of miles per hour impacted a steel light pole, it might, at the very least, maybe dent the pole, or perhaps bend it a little bit. In other words, you would think that there would be some kind of impact scar visible on the toppled pole. You would also think that there might be signs of extreme stress at base of the pole, where it had presumably been securely bolted to a concrete footing before being violently torn loose. But you would be mistaken in those assumptions.

You might also conclude that if an airplane hit a sturdy steel light pole with enough force to cleanly uproot it, the impact might do some pretty serious damage to the airplane — maybe take off part of a wing, or disable an engine, or rip a hole in the fuselage. But again you would be mistaken, just as you would be mistaken if you were to assume that an enormous, unwieldy passenger plane already flying in an exceedingly dangerous and unlikely manner would almost certainly crash after hitting just one light pole, let alone five in a row. Consider that an airplane with a 125 foot wingspan flying just 20 feet or so off the ground has very little margin for error. Even a relatively minor tilt to one side or the other would

result in one of the wing tips hitting the ground, thus precipitating a very messy crash that would have left the area littered with large pieces of aircraft wreckage.



According to the approach path graphic, both wings of the plane clipped light poles, three on the left side and two on the right side. And yet, amazingly enough, the pilot was able to maintain perfect control of his aircraft, completing a perfectly stable, high-speed, ground-level approach that would have been all but impossible even in a 757 that had not suffered any damage to its wings and engines. According to some accounts, the right wing of the plane also impacted a large generator on the approach path.

As is apparent from the height of the light poles, an airplane flying low enough to clip them with its wings would have been all but scraping its engines across the roofs of the cars on the highway. And, sure enough, there is at least one witness report of the plane actually clipping off the antenna of a Jeep Grand Cherokee.

Incredibly enough, some researchers have actually tailored their Pentagon theories to account for this alleged evidence, but I have no idea why. Are these theorists really that naive, or do they just pretend to be? Is it not perfectly obvious that this so-called evidence is patently absurd? How much thrust do you suppose is required to get a fully-loaded, 100+ ton aircraft off the ground and then propel it through the air at 500+ miles per hour? Isn't an aircraft engine essentially just an immensely powerful fan that is capable of displacing massive quantities of air and expelling it at an extremely high velocity? Is there something I am missing here?

Some time ago, I watched an episode of the television show "Myth Busters" in which one of the myths tested was a story about a car being literally flipped over by the engine exhaust from a jet aircraft. As I recall, the test set up by the program's hosts failed to flip the car, but it did succeed in thoroughly trashing the vehicle. Steel body panels were literally ripped from the car by the force of the engine, as were the windows, the hood, the mirrors, and various other parts. While the car remained standing, it looked very much like it had survived a bomb blast.

The cars in the light pole photos, on the other hand, are in pristine condition, as are their drivers. Some pedestrian witnesses, amazingly enough, have actually claimed that the plane came in so low over their

positions that they ducked for fear of being hit. One such witness, Frank Probst, a retired Army officer, has claimed that as he dove for the ground, one of the plane's engines passed beside him, "about six feet away." Probst also claims that he saw the plane clip the SUV antenna and literally shear the light poles in half.

Frank Probst has been propped up as a key witness by some defenders of the official story, despite the fact that his tall tale is contradicted by the photos of the obviously still intact light poles, and, more importantly, by the fact that Mr. Probst is still alive. Simply put, if Probst (and various other witnesses) had been as close to the passing aircraft engines as they claim to have been, they would not have been witnesses to the tragedy; they would have been additional casualties.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have done my best here to present a reasonably comprehensive review of everything that has been offered up as 'evidence' of what happened at the Pentagon on the morning of September 11, 2001. It is up to each of you, my fearless readers, to decide which aspects of that evidence is credible, and which is not.

So what did cause the damage to the Pentagon that morning? Did American Airlines Flight 77 – missing from radar screens for half an hour, and undetected by America's state-of-the-art air defense systems – suddenly and inexplicably appear in the skies over Washington? Did it then, after performing a high speed maneuver normally beyond the capabilities of a Boeing 757 (according to some witness accounts), begin a high speed approach to the Pentagon at such a ridiculously low altitude that it actually clipped a car antenna? Did it cleanly uproot five sturdy steel light poles, and smash one of its wings into a large generator, and yet still maintain an arrow-straight, perfectly stable approach to the Pentagon? And did it then strike the Pentagon with such tremendous force that it was able to cleanly blast through over 300 feet of angled, reinforced concrete obstructions? And did it do all of that without anyone documenting it with a single frame of film or videotape?

Or was it something else that hit the Pentagon? Can we even say with any certainty that something did hit the Pentagon? Was it all done with explosives planted inside, and possibly outside, the building? If so, then what toppled those light poles? Can we ever hope to find answers to all the unanswered questions concerning the Pentagon attack? Or is that a hurdle that has been constructed so as to make it impossible to clear?

## September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act II, Addendum II

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Apr 12, 2005

### **ACT II: ADDENDUM 2**

*[Editor's Note: A popular hobby of late among some 9-11 researchers seems to involve disparaging the efforts of, and questioning the motives of, those researchers who refuse to ignore*



*the fact that the available evidence is entirely inconsistent with the crash of a jetliner at the Pentagon. These individuals generally refer to certain other Pentagon investigators as “no-plane” theorists. For the purposes of this article, I have adopted a name for them as well: Tattoo theorists. This appellation is, of course, an homage to the “Fantasy Island” character best known for the tag line, “Ze plane! Ze plane!”*

*Two of the most aggressive of the Tattoo theorists, by the way, are Jim Hoffman and Brian Salter, both of whom were on the other side of the fence, so to speak, until fairly recently. If you have ever known someone who quit smoking and thereafter embarked on a mission to browbeat and berate every other smoker on the planet, then you have a pretty good idea of how the Tattoo theorists operate.]*

On February 24, Brian Salter (questionsquestions.net) posted a histrionic [denunciation](#) of Pentagon “no-plane” theorists that included the bizarre claim that any efforts to “keep the unnecessary no-plane speculation alive just helps to smear 9-11 Truth activists as hateful maniacs. Maybe that’s the idea.”

Well, I guess the jig is up. Mr. Salter, it seems, has figured out our diabolical plot. All along, the real goal has been to cast 9-11 researchers as – dare I say it? – hateful maniacs. In fact, the ‘talking points’ that I receive from my secret CIA backers routinely contain such notations as: “*Operation Hateful Maniacs* is, as you know, proceeding on schedule; prepare to shift into the next phase of the program, *Operation Deranged Psychopaths*.”

Of course, it could also be that those of us who continue to focus on the glaring inconsistencies in the official story of what happened at the Pentagon are actually pursuing the *truth*, which is what a “Truth activist” is supposed to do, rather than peddling *entirely speculative* drivel about a mythical ‘plane bomb,’ which is what the Tattoo theorists choose to do.

The primary strong-arm tactic of the Tattoo theorists is to cast “no-plane” theorists as part of a Cointelpro-type operation aimed at undermining the 9-11 skeptics’ case. The “no-plane” theories, it is claimed, are “straw man” arguments, propped up specifically so that they can be easily brushed aside by “debunkers,” thus discrediting the 9-11 movement in its entirety by attacking at points of greatest vulnerability.

In his blog, Salter claims “media debunkers have shown maximum enthusiasm for portraying [Pentagon no-plane theories] as the heart and soul of 9/11 skepticism and making it the centerpiece of practically every hit piece.” (<http://questionsquestions.net/blog/>) Hoffman has written that “the prominence of the no-757-crash theory will damage the cause, particularly as it reaches a wider audience less inclined to research the issue ... The mainstream press is casting the no-757-crash theory as a loony construct of conspiracy theorists, and representative of all 9/11 skepticism.” (<http://911research.wtc7.net/essays/pentagontrap.html>) Mark Robinowitz has joined the chorus by claiming “‘No Planes’ has been the most effective means to discredit issues of complicity inside the Beltway.” (<http://www.oilempire.us/pentagon.html>)

Obviously then, everyone is in agreement (as if *they* were all reading the same ‘talking points’) that we must immediately drop all support for the “no-plane” theories, because if we don’t, we will continue to furnish the enemy with useful ammunition with which to attack and discredit us. Sounds like a good plan — except for the fact that it is based on a false premise.

The reality is that there have been almost no mainstream media ‘debunkings’ of the 9-11 skeptics’ case, and there is a very good reason for that: the cumulative case that has been painstakingly compiled is (despite the spirited efforts of people like the Tattoo theorists) a formidable one that major media outlets, along with most so-called ‘alternative’ media outlets, have wisely chosen not to confront.



By far the most ambitious, high-profile media ‘debunking’ of the claims made by 9-11 skeptics has been the hit piece that graced the cover of the March 2005 edition of *Popular Mechanics* magazine (<http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/defense/1227842.html>). Since it is known that this article was co-written by Benjamin Chertoff, reportedly a cousin of our very own Director of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, then it is probably safe to assume that a primary objective was to knock down all the ‘straw men’ arguments that had been carefully planted and nurtured by government operatives. That is, after all, how this game is played, as the Tattoo theorists readily acknowledge.

We should, therefore, expect to find that the *Popular Mechanics* article focuses considerable attention on the Pentagon “no-plane” theories, and on the Pentagon attack in general. But what we find instead is quite the opposite; instead of emphasizing questions about the Pentagon, the issue is *downplayed and given very little attention* — which isn’t really surprising given that the attack on the Pentagon *has always been*, from day one, relegated to the status of a relatively insignificant footnote.

The *PM* article presents what it says are the top sixteen claims made by 9-11 skeptics, coupled with what are supposed to be ‘debunkings’ of each of those claims. The claims are grouped into four categories, which are presented in the following order: “The Planes” (the ones that hit the towers); “The World Trade Center” (the collapse of the towers); “The Pentagon”; and “Flight 93.” Five of the sixteen claims examined concern the collapse of the WTC towers, four concern Flights 11 and 175, four concern Flight 93, and just three concern the Pentagon attack. In terms of word count, the article runs (minus the introduction) about 5,200 words, and it breaks down roughly as follows: collapse of towers – 2,050 words; WTC planes – 1250 words; Flight 93 – 1150 words; and the Pentagon – a paltry 750 words.

So if we are to use the focus of mainstream media attacks to gauge the points of greatest vulnerability in the 9-11 skeptics’ case, then, in terms of both word count and number of claims examined, the collapse of the Twin Towers would be, by far, the weakest link in the chain (which is kind of ironic, when you think about it, considering that most, if not all of the Tattoo theorists actively promote the theory that the towers were brought down with explosives). As for Pentagon “no-plane” theories, they are, according to the given criteria, the point of *least vulnerability*.

If we use the criteria of prominence of placement on the list, then the point of greatest vulnerability would be theories concerning the planes that hit the towers. Indeed, the very first claim that is examined concerns the notorious “pod plane” theories, and the third delves into the equally inane issue of ‘windowless jets.’ These are, of course, some of the *real* areas of vulnerability in the 9-11 skeptics’ case. And though they are frequently linked to Pentagon theories, they are entirely separate issues.

Claims concerning the Pentagon attack don’t make an appearance on the *Popular Mechanics* list until well into the second half of the article. And once they do appear, they are given very little print space. The three claims ‘debunked’ in the *PM* piece barely scratch the surface of the cumulative case that has been built to challenge the official version of the Pentagon attack. And the ‘debunking’ of even these cherry-picked ‘claims’ is pathetically inept. The undeniable lack of aircraft debris from the alleged crash, for example, is brushed aside with nothing more than this ludicrous emotional appeal from an alleged blast expert and witness to the aftermath of the attack: “I saw the marks of the plane wing on the face of the building. I picked up parts of the plane with the airline markings on them. I held in my hand the tail section of the plane, and I

found the black box ... I held parts of uniforms from crew members in my hands, including body parts. Okay?”

You would think that if the Pentagon attack theories were the ‘straw men’ that the Tattoo theorists claim, then the ‘debunkers’ would be better prepared to knock those straw men down, and they would devote more print space to doing so. Instead, we find the Pentagon attack being *downplayed* in a major media attack on the 9-11 skeptics movement — at the very same time, curiously enough, that a number of 9-11 skeptics have begun aggressively demanding that all “unnecessary speculation” about the Pentagon attack be dropped, *and* at the very same time that a new purported Pentagon skeptics’ [site](#) suddenly appeared, professionally designed and complete with new interviews and photos (from insider sources), numerous omissions, copious amounts of spin and disinformation, a new DVD for sale, and, of course, enthusiastic backing from the Tattoo theorists and other 9-11 skeptics.

I have to say, quite frankly, that all of this just seems too well choreographed for my tastes. And, I have to also say that the Tattoo theorists’ recent efforts to bury the Pentagon “no-plane speculation” seem rather desperate and overreaching. Consider, for example, the opening lines of the Salter post that I referenced at the beginning of this rant:

The latest escapade in the frantic effort to “keep the faith” amongst the Pentagon no-plane cult is the announcement of a great new “smoking gun”. It turns out that a key figure in the Gannon scandal, [GOPUSA.com](#) president Bobby Eberle, who was a key White House go-between, testified that he witnessed the Pentagon strike on 9/11. Well, there’s only one logical conclusion that anyone could draw from this — that all of the witness testimony supporting the crash of a 757 airliner into the Pentagon is all part of a vast fraudulent conspiracy masterminded by Bobby Eberle! As the Xymphora blog tells it, with breathless drama:

“Forget about Gannon. The only reason he has been interesting is the prurient part of his story. I’m reading more and more about how everyone in the White House, up to and including Rove and Bush, is as gay as Paul Lynde, which just reflects the deep homophobia in the coverage of Gannongate. The gay aspect is a red herring. The deep politics aspect of the story is the connection between the White House, conservative e-mail harvester and fundraiser Bruce W. Eberle, and GOPUSA President Bobby Eberle. Bobby Eberle’s eyewitness testimony of Flight 77 crashing into the Pentagon is the big break we’ve been waiting for, the first tiny window into the American conspiracy behind 9-11.”

<http://xymphora.blogspot.com/2005/02/gannongate-and-9-11.html>

While I certainly do not agree with everything that Xymphora has written here concerning the [Gannon scandal](#), it is immediately apparent that Salter is grossly misrepresenting the situation. Specifically, no one that I know of, and certainly no one cited by Salter, has claimed that Bobby Eberle “masterminded” a vast conspiracy. Indeed, Xymphora’s actual position is clearly stated in another excerpt that Salter has thoughtfully posted:

“I have speculated that at least some of the witnesses to the crash of Flight 77 into the Pentagon were ringers planted by the conspirators. What are the chances that Eberle, whose name has come up prominently in Gannongate, was an eyewitness to the crash? Those who are so certain that the testimony of eyewitnesses means that Flight 77 must have crashed into the Pentagon, despite the enormous amount of physical evidence to the contrary, just might want to give their heads a shake and rethink things. If the evidence of the crash of Flight 77 is so goddamn clear, why did the operators in the Republican Party feel the need to gild the lily?”

That is, I must say, a perfectly legitimate question — although Salter dismisses it by proclaiming that “there is no basis to claim that Eberle’s testimony represented an effort to ‘gild the lily.’”

Salter's position might be a valid one if – and this is a very big “if” – Eberle was the only political operative that stepped out of the shadows with an unlikely account of the attack on the Pentagon. But he wasn't the only one. Not by a long shot.

Of course, that fact might not be immediately apparent to anyone relying upon the [witness list](#) assembled by French researcher Eric Bart, which is the witness list that virtually all of the Tattoo theorists routinely cite as the ‘most complete’ list (Salter calls it “the most extensive available,” Robinowitz touts it as “perhaps the best list of eyewitness accounts,” [pentagonresearch.com](#) describes it as a “comprehensive witness list,” and Hoffman has paid tribute by re-posting the list). In truth, however, Bart's list is not by any means a complete list, though it is certainly the most imposingly *long* list. Most of that length, however, is due to extensive padding. As it turns out, a substantial portion of the entries on the list are not witness accounts at all; instead, they fall into one of the following categories:

- News reports that retell the official story without citing any specific witnesses.
- Statements by official government spokesmen who were not themselves witnesses to the attack.
- Hearsay accounts.
- Reports that have nothing to do with what did or did not hit the Pentagon (such as an air traffic control report, two seismic reports, a Navy report on treating blast injuries, a Federation of American Scientists report on blast effects, an engineer's report on the reinforcement work done on the Pentagon, and, most bizarrely, a *Washington Post* report on the creation of the Information Awareness Office).
- Accounts of rescue workers who tended to the wounded.

As for the potential witnesses that are included on the Bart list, roughly half of them offer no information that is useful for determining what really happened at the Pentagon. About three dozen of the cited witnesses were inside the building complex at the time of the attack; their accounts describe only the explosion and/or the smoke and fire, offering no clue as to what caused that explosion and fire (although there are numerous reports of multiple explosions, and a few reports of the smell of cordite, none of which lend much weight to the official legend). Similarly, many of the outside witnesses could be described as ‘earwitnesses’; these individuals *heard* something fly by, and/or they *heard* (or felt) an explosion at the Pentagon, but they did not actually *see* anything. Other witnesses saw the fireball or smoke cloud, but not what caused it.

After editing the Bart list to eliminate all the non-witnesses and all the irrelevant witnesses, what is left is, at most, 70 witnesses who claim to have seen something flying in the vicinity of, approaching, or actually crashing into, the Pentagon. So much for the endlessly cited “hundreds of witnesses” that the Tattoo theorists can't seem to stop talking about (even the brazen liars at *Popular Mechanics*, by the way, acknowledge that there were “dozens of witnesses,” not hundreds) ...

Something else, by the way, that the Tattoo theorists love to talk about is how the dastardly “no-planers” like to pluck portions of witness statements out of context, particularly in the case of oft-cited *USA Today* reporter/witness Mike Walter. Given the manner in which Mr. Bart presents the testimony of ‘witnesses’ like Scott Cook, I'm sure that those in the opposing camp will understand why I say: “pot, meet kettle.” According to Bart (and, by extension, all the Tattoo

theorists who have endorsed and/or re-posted his list), this is Cook's account of the Pentagon attack:

It was a 757 out of Dulles, which had come up the river in back of our building, turned sharply over the Capitol, ran past the White House and the Washington Monument, up the river to Rosslyn, then dropped to treetop level and ran down Washington Boulevard to the Pentagon (...)

As we watched the black plume gather strength, less than a minute after the explosion ...

As presented, Cook's recollection appears to be a very specific account of the approach and crash of a 757 aircraft into the Pentagon. In fact, it appears to be an *impossibly specific* account, since no witness at the scene could have know, at the time of the alleged crash, that the plane had flown out of Dulles. But Mr. Cook never actually made such a claim. For the record, here is how Scott Cook's 'witness' account read before it was deceptively (and apparently quite deliberately) edited by Eric Bart:

**We didn't know what kind of plane had hit the Pentagon, or where it had hit. Later, we were told that** it was a 757 out of Dulles, which had come up the river in back of our building, turned sharply over the Capitol, ran past the White House and the Washington Monument, up the river to Rosslyn, then dropped to treetop level and ran down Washington Boulevard to the Pentagon. **I cannot fathom why neither myself nor Ray, a former Air Force officer, missed a big 757, going 400 miles an hour, as it crossed in front of our window in its last 10 seconds of flight. (The more I've thought about it since, the odder the choice of the Pentagon as a target appeared. The Pentagon is a huge pile of concrete, the walls over a foot thick, and no plane is big enough to do more than superficial damage to it. Had the hijackers chosen to dive into the Capitol or the White House, much smaller sandstone buildings with little internal framework, the damage and the death toll would have been infinitely higher. Both houses of Congress were in session, and in addition Laura Bush was in the building, preparing to testify to some committee about school reading programs. I guess the symbolism of the Pentagon was more important to the terrorists, who blamed the US military for everything, much like Chomskyites blame everything on the CIA. As horrible as it sounds, the hit on the Pentagon may have been a blessing.)** As we watched the black plume gather strength, less than a minute after the explosion ...

It is quite obvious that what Cook actually said was that even though both he and his partner were positioned to witness the alleged plane and the alleged crash, and therefore *should have witnessed the alleged plane and the alleged crash*, neither one of them actually saw anything of the sort. Far from confirming the official account of the alleged crash, Mr. Cook appears to have been somewhat bewildered by it. Of course, you would never know that from reading through Eric Bart's 'witness' list — which raises the question of why, if the 'witness' evidence is so compelling, *Eric Bart* felt the need to gild the lily.

Scott Cook, by the way, wasn't the only one who missed seeing the plane that day. One of the non-witnesses on Bart's list, Tom Hovis, had these thoughts to share: "Strangely, no one at the Reagan Tower noticed the aircraft. Andrews AFB radar should have also picked up the aircraft I would think." Well ... yeah ... I would tend to think so as well — but I guess those terr'ists were just real sneaky or something, stealthily flying that large aircraft into Washington without it registering either visually or on radar.

But then again, maybe not, since I see that, according to the very same Tom Hovis, "The plane had been seen making a lazy pattern in the no-fly zone over the White House and US Cap."

According to witness Clyde Vaughn, "There wasn't anything in the air, except for one airplane, and it looked like it was loitering over Georgetown ..." And journalist Bob Hunt claimed that he

“talked to a number of average people in route who said they saw the plane hovering over the Washington Mall Area ...”

I have to confess my ignorance here, since, to be perfectly honest, I didn’t even know that it was possible for a passenger plane to *hover*. Despite the fact that I have the good fortune of living under the approach path of the local airport, and have therefore seen more than my share of airplanes, I have personally never seen one hover, even briefly. But since this information is not only included on Pentagon witness lists, but is attributed to *average people*, then I know it must be true (just as it must be true that the plane actually dive-bombed into the Pentagon, as at least five witnesses saw it do, and it must simultaneously be true that the plane actually hit or scraped the ground before impacting the building, as at least five other witnesses have claimed, and it must also be true that there was a second plane, since at least nine witnesses saw it).

So, this is apparently the situation that existed at around 9:30 AM the morning of September 11, 2001: both World Trade Center towers had been attacked and hundreds of people were already dead or dying; not just the nation, but *the entire world* was watching and knew that America was being attacked by hijacked aircraft, some of which were reportedly still in the air and still very much a threat; the nation’s defenses were, presumably, on the highest state of alert; and, in the midst of it all, a hijacked aircraft was – as would be expected, I suppose – leisurely cruising through the most secure airspace in the known world, over the most sensitive political and military installations in the country, with nary a military jet in sight.

Now, some may find this pre-suicide sightseeing by the terr’ists to be somewhat odd, but my guess is that they were probably stalling to allow time for all the news crews to get set up so that they could capture all the nonexistent photographs and video footage that we are still waiting to see. Either that, or those ballsy terr’ists were actually taunting the U.S. military, daring the fighter jets to come out and play, knowing full well that a squadron of F-16s are no match for an unarmed 757. But here I digress ...

In the interest of compiling a more complete (and accurate) list of witnesses than that presented by Bart, I went searching elsewhere and found that there are actually many more purported witnesses of the Pentagon attack. Some of the names that Bart has conveniently chosen to leave off are painfully obvious lily-gilders. Others have told stories that are, I have to say, laughably absurd. Consider, for example, the tale told by purported witness Dennis Smith, who was supposedly “smoking a cigarette in the center courtyard [of the Pentagon] when he heard the roar of engines and looked up in time to see the tail of a plane seconds before it exploded into the building.”

Now, I obviously can’t say for sure what was in that ‘cigarette’ that Dennis was smoking, but according to my trusty high school geometry book, it would have been very difficult for him to peer over a structure 77 feet high and 200 feet wide and see something that was, according to legend, some 50 feet off the ground — unless, of course, Mr. Smith happens to be about 100 feet tall, or to have x-ray vision. I’m going to go on record here as saying that neither seems very likely.

In any event, the point here is that Eric Bart has prepared a very selective presentation of the available Pentagon witness testimony. Some of the testimony that Bart has opted to omit from his list can be found here (<http://www.geocities.com/someguyyoudontknow33/witnesses.htm>), and yet more can be found here ([http://mouv4x8.club.fr/11Sept01/A0082\\_b\\_They%20saw%20the%20aircraft.htm](http://mouv4x8.club.fr/11Sept01/A0082_b_They%20saw%20the%20aircraft.htm)).

Although these two lists mercifully omit many of the non-witness accounts that Bart has used to pad his list, and include many purported accounts that Bart has left off, both of the additional

lists are plagued by problems of their own. Probably the biggest problem is that a good number of entries are credited to what amount to anonymous sources (people identified by only first name, or by initials, or by pseudonym). Some listings are, incredibly enough, unverified pseudonymous postings to internet discussion groups that appeared months, and even years, after the fact. I would hope that we can all agree here that anonymous, belated boasts of having witnessed one of the most significant events in modern American history do not exactly qualify as actual witness accounts.

By combining the three lists, minus all the filler, I came up with a list of roughly 110 named individuals who have claimed, at one time or another, to have witnessed something flying near, headed towards, and/or crashing into the Pentagon on the morning of September 11, 2001. However, nearly three dozen of these individuals held off telling their tales until long after the official version of events had thoroughly penetrated the American psyche, leaving roughly 75 people who claimed, in the hours and days immediately following the attack, that they had witnessed the event. With this more complete witness list in hand, it is time to return to the original question being examined here (as posed by Xymphora): “If the evidence of the crash of Flight 77 is so goddamn clear, why did the operators in the Republican Party feel the need to gild the lily?”

As it turns out, it was actually more of a ‘bipartisan’ affair, with operatives of both alleged political persuasions joining the lily-gilding party. Consider the following list of self-described witnesses: Gary Bauer, Paul Begala, Bobby Eberle, Mike Gerson, Alfred Regnery, and Greta Van Susteren. Many of them need no introduction, but let’s run through the list anyway:

- Gary Bauer: Talking head and former Republican presidential candidate who has been linked to the notorious Project for a New American Century.
- Paul Begala: Democratic Party operative and nominally liberal punching bag on *CNN*’s “Crossfire.”
- Bobby Eberle: President and CEO of *GOPUSA*, a portal of right-wing propaganda. \
- Mike Gerson: Director of George W. Bush’s speech writing staff.
- Alfred Regnery: President of *Regnery Publishing*, another portal of right-wing propaganda — one that has seen fit to bestow upon the world the literary stylings of Ann Coulter, the Swift Boat Veterans, and numerous other accomplished liars.
- Greta Van Susteren: Nominally liberal legal analyst for *Fox News*.

I don’t know if the Tattoo theorists are aware of this, but all of the people on that list share at least one thing in common: they are all *professional* liars. *It is their job*, individually and collectively, to lie to the American people. On a daily basis. They are, by any objective appraisal, propagandists for the state. So if all of them are selling the same story, in the face of compelling evidence to the contrary, it is probably best to assume that they might not be telling the truth. Let’s take a look now at some of the other people that are hawking the same story: Dennis Clem, Penny Elgas, Albert Hemphill, Lincoln Leibner, Stephen McGraw, Mitch Mitchell, Patty Murray, Rick Renzi, James Robbins, Meseidy Rodriguez, Darb Ryan, Elizabeth Smiley, and Clyde Vaughn. And who are they? Allow me to handle the introductions:

- Dennis Clem is a Deputy Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency.



- Penny Elgas sits on the FDIC Advisory Committee on Banking Policy, alongside of Jean Baker, who just happens to be the Chief of Staff at the Office of President George H.W. Bush.
- Albert Hemphill is a Lt. General with the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization.
- Captain (now Major) Lincoln Leibner is a communications officer for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.
- Stephen McGraw is a former U.S. Department of Justice attorney reborn as an Opus Dei priest.
- Colonel Mitch Mitchell serves as a *CBS News* ~~war spinner~~ military consultant.
- Patty Murray is a United States Senator (D-Washington).
- Rick Renzi is a United States Congressman (R-Arizona).
- James Robbins is a contributor to National Review, a national security analyst, and a Senior Fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council (I, by the way, have decided that I should refer to myself as a Senior Fellow at the Center for an Informed America).
- I'm not sure exactly who Meseidy Rodriguez is, but his name appears in [legal filings](#) concerning Dick Cheney's top-secret energy policy meetings, which probably isn't a good sign.
- Vice Admiral Darb Ryan is the Chief of U.S. Naval Personnel.
- Elizabeth Smiley is an intelligence operations specialist with Civil Aviation Security at FAA headquarters — which means that she is one of the people who inexplicably failed to perform their jobs on September 11, 2001, possibly because she was busy watching phantom jetliners crashing into the Pentagon.
- Brig. General Clyde A. Vaughn is the deputy director of military support to civil authorities — which means that he is another one of the people who inexplicably failed to perform their jobs on September 11, 2001, possibly because he was also busy watching phantom jetliners crashing into the Pentagon.

Anybody see anyone on that list that they would want to buy a used car from? No? How about Colonel Bruce Elliot or Major Joseph Candelario? Or Lt. Cols. Stuart Artman or Frank “Had I not hit the deck, the plane would have taken off my head” Probst? Still no? Then how about Elaine McCusker, a Co-Chairman of the Coalition for National Security Research? Or retired Naval Commanders Donald Bouchoux or Lesley Kelly? How about Shari Taylor, a finance manager at the Defense Intelligence Agency, or Philip Sheuerman, the Associate General Counsel for the U.S. Air Force?

How about any of the names on this list: Bob Dubill, Mary Ann Owens, Richard Benedetto, Christopher Munsey, Vin Narayanan, Joel Sucherman, Mike Walter, Steve Anderson, Fred Gaskins and Mark Faram? Aside from claiming to have witnessed the attack on the Pentagon, what do these ten people have in common? We'll get to that in just a moment, but first let's hear from Mr. Faram, who is, it will be recalled, the gentleman who captured the two famous shots of the alleged aircraft debris that many investigators have inexplicably spent countless hours trying to match up with images of various American Airlines aircraft fuselages:

I hate to disappoint anyone, but here is the story behind the photograph. At the time, I was a senior writer with *Navy Times* newspaper. It is an independent weekly that is owned by the Gannett Corporation (same owners as *USA Today*). I was at the Navy Annex, up the hill from the Pentagon when I heard the explosion. I always keep a digital camera in my backpack briefcase just as a matter of habit. When the explosion happened I ran down the hill to the site and arrived

there approximately 10 minutes after the explosion. I saw the piece, that was near the heliport pad and had to work around to get a shot of it with the building in the background. Because the situation was still fluid, I was able to get in close and make that image within fifteen minutes of the explosion because security had yet to shut off the area. I photographed it twice, with the newly arrived fire trucks pouring water into the building in the background ... Right after photographing that piece of wreckage, I also photographed a triage area where medical personnel were tending to a seriously burned man. A priest knelt in the middle of the area and started to pray. I took that image and left immediately ... I was out of the immediate area photographing other things within 20 minutes of the crash.

To say that Mr. Faram's account of his actions that morning strains credibility would be a gross understatement. Imagine this scenario: you are a reporter for a major news service, and you happen to find yourself, purely by chance, among the first on the scene of the most significant news story in decades — one that would occupy all of the media's time for weeks to come. Would you be at all surprised to find a triage area already set up and staffed by medical personnel and a priest? And, more importantly, would you just take a quick look around, snap off a few quick photos, and then hurriedly leave the scene, because there was apparently something else to photograph on the other side of town — like maybe a really important dog show?

Despite the dubious nature of Mr. Faram's account, he did at least provide us with some useful important information — specifically, that *USA Today* and *Navy Times* are both part of the *Gannett* family of news outlets. Actually, if Faram weren't so modest, he would have noted that *Gannett* also publishes *Air Force Times*, *Army Times*, *Marine Corp Times*, *Armed Forces Journal*, *Military Market*, *Military City*, and *Defense News*. In other words, it's just your typical independent, civilian media organization.

Having established that, let's now take a look at who our group of mystery witnesses are (or who they were at the time of the Pentagon attack):

- Bob Dubill was the executive editor for *USA Today*.
- Mary Ann Owens was a journalist for *Gannett*.
- Richard Benedetto was a reporter for *USA Today*.
- Christopher Munsey was a reporter for *Navy Times*.
- Vin Narayanan was a reporter for *USA Today*.
- Joel Sucherman was a multimedia editor for *USA Today*.
- Mike Walter was a reporter for *USA Today*.
- Steve Anderson was the director of communications for *USA Today*.
- Fred Gaskins was the national editor for *USA Today*.
- Mark Faram was a reporter for *Navy Times*.

Is it just me, or does anyone else detect a pattern here?

Now, it is my understanding that the Tattoo theorists claim, for the most part, not to be ‘coincidence theorists.’ So, I guess that the question that I have is this: exactly how many *Gannett* reporters and editors does it take to make a conspiracy? I could accept that maybe two or three of them might have been, purely by chance, in position to witness the attack on the Pentagon. Hell, being an open-minded kind of guy, I might even be willing to go as high as four or five. But ten?! *Ten*?! What are the odds that ten of the alleged Pentagon witnesses would be from the same news organization?

Perhaps some readers are thinking that maybe there is a simple explanation for this statistical aberration — like maybe the *Gannett* building is ideally located to provide a view of the attack, or maybe everyone was riding together on a *Gannett* ride-sharing bus. But neither of those appear to be the case, since only one of the ten *Gannett* journalists claims to have witnessed the attack from his office, while all the rest maintain that they just happened to be positioned in various strategic locations near the Pentagon. So unless *USA Today* staff was holding its annual company picnic on the Pentagon lawn that morning, it seems to me that there is something seriously wrong with this story.

Amazingly enough, no fewer than five of those ten *Gannett* reporters and editors (Benedetto, Munsey, Narayanan, Sucherman and Walter) were able to specifically identify the plane that they saw as an American Airlines jet, and a sixth (Faram) managed to capture the only known photographic images of something vaguely resembling a twisted piece of wreckage from an American Airlines jet! I have to note here that it's a damn good thing that we had proactive and incredibly observant reporters like the *USA Today* staff swarming all over the scene of a pending national tragedy. I guess that when you're a seasoned professional, you just have a sixth sense about where to be and when to be there. That's probably why Eugenio Hernandez and Dave Winslow, two *Associated Press* reporters, were also on the scene to witness the attack.

Hernandez, by the way, is a video journalist — but not the kind of video journalist who shot any actual video footage.

According to Dave Winslow, an *AP* radio reporter, his being on the scene to witness the attack and then quickly call in a report ensured that “*AP* members were first to know.” I guess he didn't notice that nearly the entire staff of *USA Today* was loitering around the scene and calling in reports as well.

According to the ‘witness’ compilations, it wasn't just major media outlets that knew immediately what had happened at the Pentagon. Witness Mark Bright, a Defense Protective Service officer who was manning a guard booth, claims that, “As soon as it struck the building, I just called in an attack, because I knew it couldn't be accidental.” If true, then I guess his call must have come in right after that of fellow witness and Defense Protective Service officer William Lagasse, who said on *ABC*'s “Nightline” program: “It was close enough that I could see the windows and the blinds had been pulled down. I read American Airlines on it ... I got on the radio and broadcast. I said a plane is, is heading toward the Heliport side of the building.”

The *Christian Science Monitor* reported that Fred Hey, a congressional staff attorney and yet another purported witness, had the following reaction to the attack: “‘I can't believe it! This plane is going down into the Pentagon!’ he shouted into his cell phone. On the other end of the line was his boss, Rep. Bob Ney (R) of Ohio. Representative Ney immediately phoned the news to House Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Livingood, who ordered an immediate evacuation of the Capitol itself.” And according to the *Seattle Times*, Senator Patty Murray was meeting with other Senate Leaders when, “From a window in the meeting room, she saw a plane hit the Pentagon.”

The *Birmingham Post Herald* held that Pentagon firefighter/witness Alan Wallace “switched on the truck's radio. ‘Foam 61 to Fort Myer,’ he said. ‘We have had a commercial carrier crash into the west side of the Pentagon at the heliport, Washington Boulevard side. The crew is OK. The airplane was a 757 Boeing or a 320 Airbus.’” According to another report, local Engine Company 101 also witnessed the attack and immediately radioed in this report: “Engine 101—emergency traffic, a plane has gone down into the Pentagon.”

According to yet another report, “Barry Frost and Officer Richard Cox, on patrol in south Arlington County, saw a large American Airlines aircraft in steep descent on a collision course

with the Pentagon. They immediately radioed the Arlington County Emergency Communications Center. ACPD Headquarters issued a simultaneous page to all members of the ACFD with instructions to report for duty.” In addition, a purported transcription of an Arlington County Police Department log tape reads as follows: “Motor 14, it was an American Airlines plane. Uh. Headed eastbound over the Pike (Columbia Pike highway), possibly toward the Pentagon.”

So what we can safely conclude, after reviewing these various accounts, is that – *within mere moments of the attack/explosion* – all of the following entities knew exactly what had happened at the Pentagon on the morning of September 11: the Pentagon’s own police force; the Pentagon’s own fire department; the Arlington County Police Department; the Arlington County Fire Department; the Arlington County Emergency Communications Center; the leadership of the United States House of Representatives; the leadership of the United States Senate; the country’s national newspaper; and the nation’s largest newswire service. In addition, there were, according to the Tattoo theorists, literally hundreds of witnesses on the scene who knew exactly what had happened. And according to John Judge (perhaps the least credible of the Tattoo theorists, with the possible exception of Jean-Pierre Desmoulins), “local news immediately interviewed and broadcast eyewitness accounts of the plane going in.”

(<http://www.ratical.org/ratville/JFK/JohnJudge/notAllCequal.html>)

In other words, there was never any doubt about what hit the Pentagon on the morning of September 11, 2001. From the very moment of impact, it was perfectly clear to everyone exactly what had happened. We know this because the accounts contained on the ‘witness’ lists of various Tattoo theorists tell us that it is so. And we should, I suppose, believe these accounts even though the objective reality is that – despite the alleged presence of hundreds of eyewitnesses, including numerous local and national media figures, prominent politicians, police and fire personnel, and military and intelligence personnel, and despite the fact that it was widely known that hijacked commercial aircraft were being used as weapons that day, and that a hijacked plane had allegedly been heading toward Washington – *no one initially seemed to know what had happened at the Pentagon*.

According to Assistant Secretary of Defense Torie Clarke, it was none other than Donald Rumsfeld who first determined that the Pentagon had been struck by an airplane — half an hour after the attack had occurred: “[Rumsfeld] was in his office, really not that far away from the side of the building that got hit by the plane. He and another person immediately ran down the hallway and went outside and helped some of the people, some of the casualties getting off the stretchers, etc. When he came back in the building about half an hour later, he was the first one that told us he was quite sure it was a plane. Based on the wreckage and based on the thousands and thousands of pieces of metal. He was the one that told us, the staff that was in the room. So he was really the first one who told us that it was most likely a plane.”

([http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2001/t09162001\\_t0915wbz.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2001/t09162001_t0915wbz.html))

It wasn’t until later that it was declared that the alleged aircraft was an American Airlines passenger plane. As David Ray Griffin recounted in *The New Pearl Harbor*, “At 10:32, *ABC News* reported that Flight 77 had been hijacked, but there was no suggestion that it had returned to Washington and hit the Pentagon. Indeed, *Fox TV* shortly thereafter said that the Pentagon had been hit by a US Air Force flight.”

(You can read the relevant chapter from Griffin’s book here, along with some amusing criticism from Jean-Pierre Desmoulins: <http://www.earth-citizens.net/pages-en/npp-griffin.html>)

So it appears that, nearly a full hour after the attack had occurred, no one had yet begun to flesh out the official story of what happened at the Pentagon. “Only sometime in the afternoon did it

become generally accepted that the aircraft that hit the Pentagon was Flight 77,” writes Griffin. “The first move toward the identification was made by a statement on the website of the Pentagon announcing that it had been hit by a ‘commercial airliner, possibly hijacked.’” That statement, we can safely assume, was likely based on the assessment of Donald Rumsfeld. Griffin continues: “Then that afternoon the story that this airliner was Flight 77 spread quickly through the media. The source of this story, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, was some military officials speaking on condition of anonymity. The media also started reporting that Flight 77, just before it disappeared from view, had made a U-turn and headed back toward Washington. But, argues Meyssan, since the civilian air controllers were, according to the official account, no longer receiving information from either radar or the transponder, this ‘information must also have come from military sources.’”

(<http://www.earth-citizens.net/pages-en/npp-griffin.html>)

There was, of course, one other person who played a key role in fleshing out the official story: Theodore Olson, U.S. Solicitor General and right-wing conspirator extraordinaire. It was Olson, it will be recalled, who single-handedly verified the ‘hijacked by Arabs and flown back to Washington’ story through his inconsistent accounts of unverified cellphone calls that he supposedly received from his wife, yet another right-wing propagandist and talking-head. The truth of the matter is that the “American Airlines 757 Crashes Into The Pentagon!” story did not spontaneously arise from the eyewitness accounts of rank-and-file citizens. To the contrary, it was a product of the work of Donald Rumsfeld, Ted Olson and unnamed Pentagon officials, and it was reinforced by the media largely through the words of the political operatives and media whores we have already gotten acquainted with — and people like reputed Navy pilot Tim Timmerman, who spoke on the air with *CNN* correspondent Bob Franken on the afternoon of September 11 (some four-and-a-half hours after the incident at the Pentagon). Timmerman was seemingly on a mission to unequivocally establish what it was that had allegedly struck the Pentagon:

Bob Franken: What can you tell us about the plane itself?

Tim Timmerman: It was a Boeing 757, American Airlines, no question.

Franken: You say it was a Boeing, and you say it was a 757 or 767?

Timmerman: 7-5-7.

Franken: 757, which, of course ...

Timmerman: American Airlines.

Franken: American Airlines ...

And who exactly was this witness who was so cocksure of his identification of the plane? No one seems to know. One researcher (Jerry Russell) failed in his efforts to verify that he is an actual person. Maybe he is the Tim Timmerman mentioned in this story out of Michigan

(<http://clubs.calvin.edu/chimes/2002.02.15/cmm2.html> and <http://www.detnews.com/2001/metro/0103/05/c08-195512.htm>), which seems to carry the distinct stench of black operations. Or maybe he doesn’t even exist at all.

In any event, the American Airlines 757 story was further embellished through the notorious photographs of Mark Faram of the infamous *Gannett Ten*, and through the fragment of indeterminate metal lovingly and patriotically preserved and [donated](#) to the National Museum of American History by a woman who just happens – coincidentally, of course – to sit on a board with George Bush, Sr.’s Chief of Staff, and through various other images of supposed aircraft debris, virtually all of which are credited to “anonymous” or “unknown” photographers.

(<http://pentagonresearch.com/photographers.html>)

\* \* \* \* \*

In the beginning, nobody talked much about the Pentagon attack. Most of the internet chatter was about advance warnings and put options. A few brave souls questioned the collapse of the Twin Towers, the appearance of an air defense stand-down, and the fate of Flight 93, but no one really talked about what happened at the Pentagon.

We never saw any footage that verified the official story, nor did we initially see or hear anything that contradicted that story. And so it was until Thierry Meyssan, working from thousands of miles away, alerted the world to the fact that the official story of what happened at the Pentagon was at serious odds with the available photographic evidence.

In retrospect, it seems odd that we had to look to France for answers to what happened in this nation's capitol. After all, don't we have any real investigative journalists of our own? Don't we have our own 'conspiracy researchers'? And aren't many of them based right there in Washington, DC? Weren't some of them in an ideal position to blow the whistle on the various Pentagon anomalies?

John Judge is one name that immediately comes to mind here. Judge is, as most readers are probably aware, a veteran researcher who is revered in many 'conspiracy' circles. He is not only a current resident of the nation's capitol, but a native son as well. In fact, he literally grew up in the Pentagon, as he is fond of telling people. If any alternative journalist knows his way around the Pentagon, it is John Judge.

Perhaps more so than anyone else, John Judge was in a position to serve as a whistleblower. But John Judge was also ideally positioned to fill another role: upholder of the official story within the so-called 'truth movement,' and denouncer of anyone who dared to question the veracity of that official story. Ever since questions first began to arise about what really happened at the Pentagon, John Judge has filled the latter role.

Judge is smart enough to realize that he can't possibly come out on the winning end of any arguments over the merits of the available evidence, so he has, for some three years now, studiously avoided debating the actual evidence. Instead, he quickly created an apparently fictional entity, in the form of an unidentified, but supposedly dear friend of his who just happens to be a flight attendant for American Airlines, and just happens to regularly fly the route flown by Flight 77 that fateful day, but just happened to have taken that particular day off so that she survived and now has insider information, unavailable to anyone else, that Flight 77 really did crash into the Pentagon that day.

This mythical person has served Judge well for the past three years, enabling him to sidestep any and all substantive questions concerning the evidence anomalies with a pat answer that goes something like this: "Well, you know, there were hundreds of witnesses, *and my friend says* that it really did happen the way the government says, so it must be true."

Judge's phantom friend, it should be noted, is not your average flight attendant. In a [post](#) dated February 21, 2004, Judge told the latest fanciful, and unintentionally hilarious, version of his friend's story, which has grown more and more elaborate, and more and more ridiculous, over the past three years:

A dear friend and fellow researcher had been working as a flight attendant for American for many years, and that was her regular route, several times a week ... As it turned out, my friend had not been on Flight 77, having taken the day off work to care for her sick father ... When questions arose about Flight 77, I contacted her to raise the issues that concerned me and the speculation of others who denied the plane hit the Pentagon. She was adamant in saying it had, and told me she had been to the crash site and had seen parts of the plane. I asked her about the



speculation that the plane would have made a larger hole due to the wingspan. She informed me that the fuel was stored in the wings and that they would have exploded and broken off, as the fuselage slammed through the building walls.

Already we see that not only is this person a flight attendant, but also a fellow researcher and, apparently, an expert on airplane crashes. As we return to the story, Judge's mystery friend has been "approached by another flight attendant to assist in support work for the rescue crews at the site." Let's see what happens next:

The Pentagon was seeking people with security clearances that they could trust to be near the site and all the airline attendants qualified for that level of clearance ... [My friend] and her mother signed up for an overnight shift on Friday, September 21st. She and her mother spent the entire night continuously providing drinks to rescuers ... At the end of her shift on Saturday morning, September 22nd, she was approached along with other attendants to visit the crash site. One declined, but she and two others took a van driven by the Salvation Army to the area.

I have to interrupt here briefly to ask a couple of silly questions that come to mind. First, how is it that someone who is supposedly a conspiracy researcher, and a dear friend of a very well known conspiracy researcher, obtains a security clearance that allows them to roam about the Pentagon? And second, if the mystery friend had just spent the entire night tending to the rescue teams working at the Pentagon crash site, why did she then have to be driven to the crash site?

Where did that Salvation Army van take her — across the Pentagon lawn?

Memo to John Judge: lying isn't as easy as it may appear to be. If you're going to completely fabricate a story, you have to be careful that that story is consistent. And with that out of the way, let's get back to the story, which is about to veer off into bizarro world:

The area was covered with rescue equipment, fire trucks, small carts, and ambulances. They were still hoping to find survivors. Small jeeps with wagons attached were being used to transport workers and others at the site. One flight attendant was driving one of these around the site. Once inside the fence, she was unable to clearly discern where the original wall had been. There was just a gaping hole. She got off the van and walked inside the crash site. The other attendants broke down crying once they were inside. But my friend went in further than the others and kept her emotions in check as she has been trained to do and usually does in emergency situations.

How do I even begin to dissect out all the absurdities present in this one brief passage? I suppose I could begin by pointing out that the mystery friend couldn't possibly have seen a "gaping hole" since any entry hole was buried in rubble shortly after the alleged crash, when the Pentagon was afflicted with that curious September 11 malady known as Collapsing Building Syndrome. I also have to point out how extremely unlikely it is that a group of flight attendants would be invited to freely tour a site that was: (1) one of the world's most secure military installations; (2) ground zero of an investigation into what was supposedly the deadliest act of 'terrorism' ever on American soil; and (3) a badly damaged, unsafe, partially-collapsed structure that obviously would have been off-limits to anyone who didn't need to be in there.

I was also going to comment on the scenario of the unnamed flight attendant cruising around the site in a jeep-and-wagon set-up, but, to be perfectly honest, every time the visual flashes through my mind I find myself too convulsed with laughter to think of anything to say.

At this point, you are probably wondering what the phantom stewardess/researcher/crash expert/rescue worker saw when she entered the building. Quite a bit, as it turns out. Certainly far more evidence of a plane crash than anyone else has ever claimed to have seen. And much of

what she saw, believe it or not, was wreckage that could be positively identified as wreckage of an American Airlines Boeing 757, which she was, of course, an expert at identifying. She saw parts of the fuselage of an American Airlines plane, a Boeing 757 plane. She identified the charred wreckage in several ways. She recognized the polished aluminum outer shell ... and the red and blue trim that is used to decorate the fuselage. She saw parts of the inside of the plane ... The soft carpeting and padding of the inner walls had a cloud design and color she recognized ... The blue coloring of the drapes and carpet were also specific to the 757 or 767 larger planes ... Seating upholstery also matched the AA 757 planes ... She saw other parts of the plane and engine parts at a distance but they were familiar to her ... One area of fuselage had remaining window sections and the shape of the windows ... was also distinct to the 757's she had flown. She also saw parts with the A/A logo, including parts of the tail of the plane. Smaller A/A logos and "American" logos are also on the planes and she saw parts of those.

Who knew there was so much identifiable aircraft wreckage? Wreckage that was apparently never photographed and never shown to anyone other than John Judge's friend? Am I the only one here who is wondering whether Mr. Judge has maybe been watching too many reruns of old *Saturday Night Live* skits featuring Jon Lovitz. "Yeah, John, that's it ... that's the ticket." The anonymous friend "also saw," we are to believe, "charred human bones but not any flesh or full body parts." So the bodies were apparently reduced to charred bones, but the upholstery, carpet and drapes were, of course, still looking factory fresh.

In an [earlier version](#) of the flight attendant story, posted on October 30, 2002, Judge claimed that his friend was also "shown autopsy photos of her fellow crew members, including the severed arm of her best friend at work, which she recognized from the bracelet she wore." I have to confess here that I never realized how much access flight attendants have. I now find myself wondering what kind of access commercial pilots must have. I'm guessing they could probably sit in on the President's morning briefings if they really wanted to.

Anyhow, getting back to the story, we aren't quite through yet being subjected to outlandish claims. The next one goes something like this:

The crew of Flight 77 who died in the crash included her personal friend Renee May. She had spoken to Renee's mother after the crash, and Renee had used a cell phone to call her mother during the hijacking.

It sounds like the phantom stewardess has this case all wrapped up. She has, single-handedly, gathered more evidence that AA Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon than the entire federal government and all of its media mouthpieces combined. I, for one, am impressed. She has seen and positively identified wreckage of Flight 77. She has seen and positively identified the remains of actual humans who were supposed to be on the flight. She has seen the gaping entry wound. She has spoken to someone who can personally vouch for the hijacking story.

And that's not all! Judge has other phantom witnesses as well, and they can verify other portions of the official fairy tale:

Other American ground crew workers saw some of the suspects board American Airlines Flight 77 and recognized them from published photos ... My attendant friend knows and has put me in touch with other American Airlines employees and pilots who were at the site and took photographs. We are busy locating these, as well as another attendant who was at the site with her that day.

Well, you keep working on that, John. Let us know just as soon as you can produce a single one of these alleged witnesses, or any of their alleged photographs. But, really, there's no rush. We

understand that these things take time, and you've only had three-and-a-half years to locate these witnesses that you claim to have already been in touch with.

By the way, what were they all doing stomping around the Pentagon crash site? Was it open to all American Airlines employees? How about United Airlines employees? Were Boeing employees allowed to tour the site as well? How about employees of Dulles International Airport? How about employees of the company that catered the meals for Flight 77? Did the baggage handlers get to take a peek? I don't mean to sound snide here; I'm really just trying to determine what the criteria were for deciding who was allowed to tour this very sensitive site, because, truth be told, I would have liked to take a look for myself, but my invite must have gotten lost in the mail or something.

Moving on, it's time for Mr. Judge to abruptly segue into the conclusion of his formidable case: My friend is therefore a credible and very knowledgeable eyewitness to the fact that American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. She has been vilified by those who refuse to believe the obvious ... My friend is herself a researcher for many years into government misdeeds and cover-ups. If she did not see the parts, she would say so. She has no reason to lie about it. Nor is she confused about what she saw. She is a professional and is used to looking at evidence.

Let it never be said that I participated in the vilification of a nonexistent person. That just wouldn't be right. For the record, the argument here is not that Judge's friend is a liar. No, the argument here is that John Judge is a liar. And not a particularly good one — but certainly a very ambitious one. Lest there be any lingering doubt about that, Judge saves his best for last. In the final paragraph of his missive, he actually makes the following claim:

One employee saw the nose of the plane crash through her office wall.

No shit? I hope she didn't receive any serious injuries.

In that same paragraph, Judge claims that Flight 77 “flew dangerously close to the ground, *skidding* into the ground floor of the Pentagon.” In yet another [Pentagon rant](#), this one from October 23, 2002, Judge made a similar claim: “the plane bottomed out just short of contact with the building and bounced into it.” That scenario, of course, was long ago discredited, owing to the fact that it is quite apparent that there was no damage to the Pentagon lawn consistent with an airplane crash. And yet, more than three years after the events of September 11, Judge is still hawking the same story.

The bottom line here is that Judge has quite obviously fabricated an elaborate tale — allegedly, but not actually, based on the testimony of unnamed witnesses — and he has used that story to shield himself from having to deal with the very real evidence anomalies uncovered by legitimate researchers. For three years, he has asked that we take him at his word, because he is, after all, the great John Judge. And that, my friends, is what legend building is all about.

After reviewing Judge's various Pentagon rants, I have a few final questions for the Tattoo theorists: why did the ‘powers that be’ feel the need to call on the services of an established ‘conspiracy theorist’ to further gild this lily? Why is John Judge so obviously lying? Or, if he is isn't lying, then why do all you Tattoo theorists shy away from referencing his ‘work’? After all, he has obviously presented more evidence in support of your Tattoo theories than anyone else. Isn't the fact that you choose to ignore his contributions a tacit admission that you know full well that he is lying his ass off?

So, again I must ask: if the evidence of the crash of Flight 77 is so persuasive, then why is John Judge gilding the lily?

# September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act II, Addendum III

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Nov 13, 2005

## ACT II: ADDENDUM 3

Among 9-11 skeptics, there has been considerable debate over the size of the alleged entry hole that was created by whatever it was that hit the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 (assuming that something did, in fact, hit the Pentagon). More than a few researchers have claimed that the supposed entry hole was large enough to accommodate the fuselage of a Boeing 757-200 aircraft. I find it hard to discern such a hole in any of the available pre-collapse photographs (to clarify here, I define the word “hole” to mean a *clean* penetration into the building, unobstructed by partially intact columns and the like), but let’s assume, for the sake of argument, that such an opening did exist.

The size of the opening that has been claimed – generally around 16 to 18 feet wide – leaves little margin for error in accounting for an angled entry by an object measuring roughly 12½ feet across ([http://www.boeing.com/commercial/757family/pf/pf\\_200tech.html](http://www.boeing.com/commercial/757family/pf/pf_200tech.html)). Accepting the claim that a Boeing 757 entered the Pentagon in such a manner requires accepting that there was no deformation of the fuselage due to compacting, and, more importantly, that the wings and tail sections of the plane were sheared *cleanly and completely off*, leaving only a decidedly phallic object that then slid cleanly into the building like ... well, use your imagination on that one. This is a family newsletter. Sort of.



When reading through Pentagon crash theories, it is nearly impossible to avoid frequent encounters with the word “confetti,” as in statements such as: “the plane’s wings were reduced to confetti.” On many websites, it seems to be generally accepted as a truism that passenger airplane wings will not only snap off as easily as the wings on a child’s balsawood glider, but will thereafter disintegrate into such fine particles that they all but disappear.

Now, I will freely admit that I am not an aircraft engineer and I have never worked on the design or manufacture of commercial aircraft. But that’s okay, because neither have any of the people who talk incessantly about airplane wings being reduced to confetti. And as is so often the case, all we really need do here is apply a little logic and common sense and we should be able to determine, with a reasonable degree of certainty, how likely it is that the wings of a Boeing 757-200 aircraft could be sheared off and/or reduced to confetti.

As can be clearly seen in the accompanying photos of just such an aircraft, the most prominent feature of the wings are the enormous engines hanging from each of them. Those engines weigh in at roughly 9,000 pounds each – nearly 12,000 pounds each if we factor in the steel struts that support them (according to [pentagonresearch.com](http://pentagonresearch.com) and the ASCE). Some researchers have already pointed out that the aircraft’s wings have to be quite strong to support those massive engines. That much seems rather obvious. Of far more significance, I would think, is that *those engines are what propels the plane*. In other words, in order for the plane to actually lift off the ground and fly, the engines, and hence the wings, have to literally drag that fully-loaded, 127-ton aircraft into the air and then pull it along to its destination.

It seems to me then that if a 757’s wings were as flimsily attached to the fuselage as many researchers claim, we would regularly be treated to rather comical scenes of wingless jets sitting on runways while the wings themselves took flight in wild, unpredictable ways. And that’s not the kind of thing you see on the evening news that often.

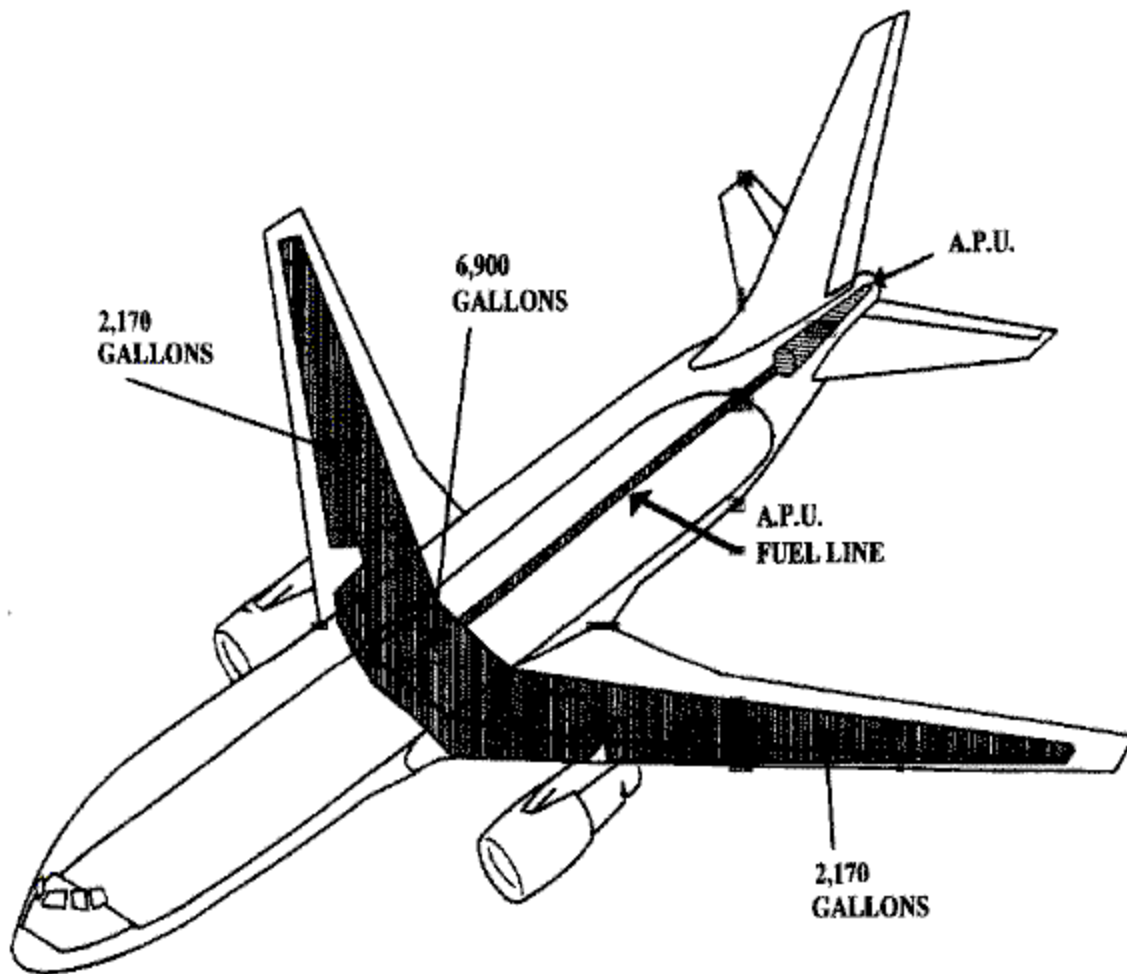




Also clearly visible in these photos is the aircraft's main landing gear, which also happens to be attached not to the fuselage, but to the wings. That landing gear adds nearly two tons of weight to each wing. More importantly, the fact that the gear is attached to the wings means that when the plane is on the ground, *it is the wings* – described by more than a few 9-11 skeptics as consisting of little more than a thin aluminum skin – that have to support almost the entire weight of the aircraft (up to 255,000 pounds at take-off). And when the plane lands, needless to say, that landing gear provides the first point of contact with the ground. It also provides the primary means of braking the aircraft to a stop. It seems safe then to conclude that the wings can not only support the entire weight of the plane but can also simultaneously arrest its considerable forward momentum. Imagine the stress that is placed on that landing gear as a 200,000+ pound airplane skips down the runway at a relatively high rate of speed and it becomes quite clear that the landing gear, and the wings themselves, have to be very securely attached to the fuselage.

Indeed, the area of the plane with the greatest structural strength, by any logical analysis, would have to be the span between those two enormously heavy, and enormously powerful, engines. In other words, the wings are not some insignificant appendages that are tacked on with a few aviation rivets and a wad of bubblegum; *they are an integral part of the aircraft.*





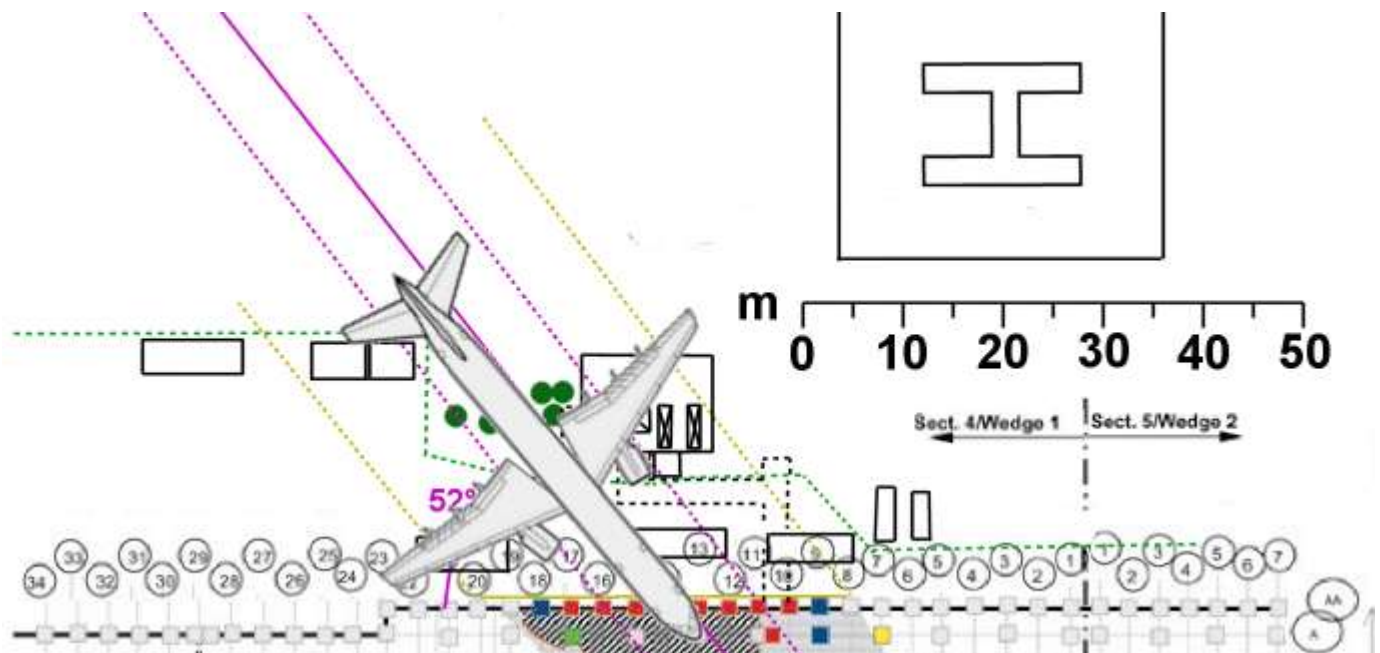
In addition to the engines and the main landing gear, the wings are also home to the aircraft's fuel tanks, which carry a combined 11,240 gallons of fuel (at least according to the graphic reproduced here; fuel capacity is listed elsewhere as [11,489](#) gallons or [11,275](#) gallons), weighing some 75,000 pounds. Each wing holds nearly 15,000 pounds of fuel and another 45,000 pounds, more or less, is stored in tanks between the wings.

According to the [American Society of Civil Engineers](#), each wing of a Boeing 757-200 weighs in at a whopping 44,000 pounds, including the engine and struts, the landing gear, a full load of fuel, and the weight of the wing structure itself (steel and other metals account for about 2/3 of that weight, or roughly fifteen tons, with the fuel accounting for the other seven tons). If we add together the weight of the two wings (88,000 pounds), the weight of the fuel stored between the wings (45,000 pounds), and the weight of the heavily reinforced cross-section of the fuselage between the two wings, we come up with a figure, I would guess, somewhere in the neighborhood of 150,000 pounds. Since a fully fueled Boeing 757-200 weighs in at roughly 200,000 pounds (127,000 pounds for the aircraft and 75,000 pounds for the fuel), a little rudimentary arithmetic reveals that fully 3/4 of the aircraft's weight is

distributed in the cross-section between the wing tips. The bulk of the fuselage, which *appears* to be the most massive portion of the plane, in reality accounts for only about 25% of the aircraft's total weight.

What the “plane-bomb”/“confetti” theorists would have us believe then is that the area of the plane with by far the greatest structural strength, greatest mass, and greatest density, is the section that was magically reduced to confetti, while the relatively lightweight, low-density and low-strength fuselage punched cleanly through the reinforced masonry walls of the Pentagon.

Jean-Pierre Desmoulins, for example, has created a series of [images](#), including the one below, to illustrate how the wings of a 757 will allegedly snap cleanly off on impact, while the turgid fuselage will, of course, plow cleanly through pretty much any obstruction — even though the fuselage is, in reality, little more than a reinforced aluminum tube filled, in large part, with a mixture of air and relatively soft materials like luggage and human bodies. (And yes, by the way, I do realize that that sounds very similar to the claim made by Michael Rivero that I earlier ridiculed. What's your point?)



I can't imagine that an actual 757 aircraft would ever perform in the real world as this one does in Desmoulins' world. To the contrary, what would most likely happen is that the nose of the plane, from the very moment of initial impact, would begin to compact. The effect would be very similar to the workings of a vice, with the two-foot-thick Pentagon wall serving as the stationary jaw of the vice and the extreme forward momentum of the 150,000 pound wing section serving as the other. In other words, the effect would be akin to stomping on an upright aluminum can, with the ground representing the Pentagon, the empty can serving as the forward section of the fuselage, and your foot filling in for the wings of the plane.

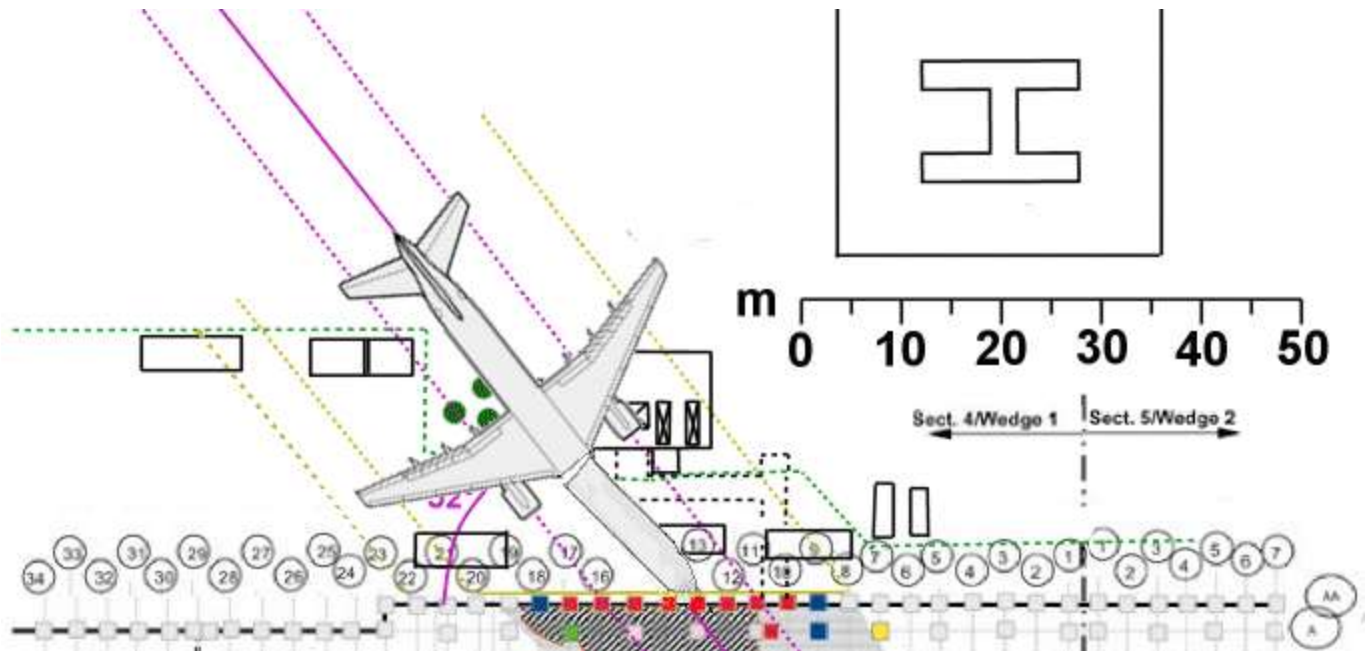
The initial compacting, needless to say, would occur nearly instantaneously and would be quickly followed by the impact of the plane's wings and engines, bringing the full weight of the aircraft to bear on the front wall of the Pentagon. It is certainly possible that, *at that time*, the tips of the wings – which is to say, the area beyond the engines – could be sheared off or bent back. But it is extremely unlikely

that the wings would be sheared off completely, and it is inconceivable that they would break off before even impacting the building.

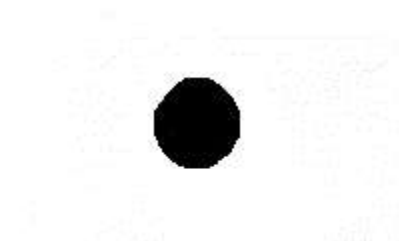


It should be noted here, before moving on, that Desmoulins did get one thing right with his series of fanciful impact images: the deflection of the plane upon impact with an angled surface is clearly illustrated. In the image above, the aircraft has already begun to veer from its initial course. In subsequent [images](#), Desmoulins depicts the plane deflecting further still from its trajectory. Curiously though, Jean-Pierre forgets to mention that this deflection completely invalidates the claim that the aircraft somehow managed to punch out an exit hole that was directly in line with the initial trajectory of the plane rather than with the deflected trajectory. But here, I suppose, I have digressed.

As can be clearly seen in the photograph to the right, taken at a Boeing assembly plant, an aircraft of the Boeing 7X7 family is not assembled by slapping a couple of flimsy wings onto the fuselage. To the contrary, the wing section is quite obviously manufactured as a single unit — and necessarily so, for there are undoubtedly continuous steel structural elements that run through the wings from engine to engine. The tail sections appear to be separate pieces, to be sure, but the wings are clearly an integral component of the main body of the aircraft. They are not separate structures that can snap off at the seams because, as it turns out, there are no seams. The only seams, as is clearly evident, are in the fuselage.

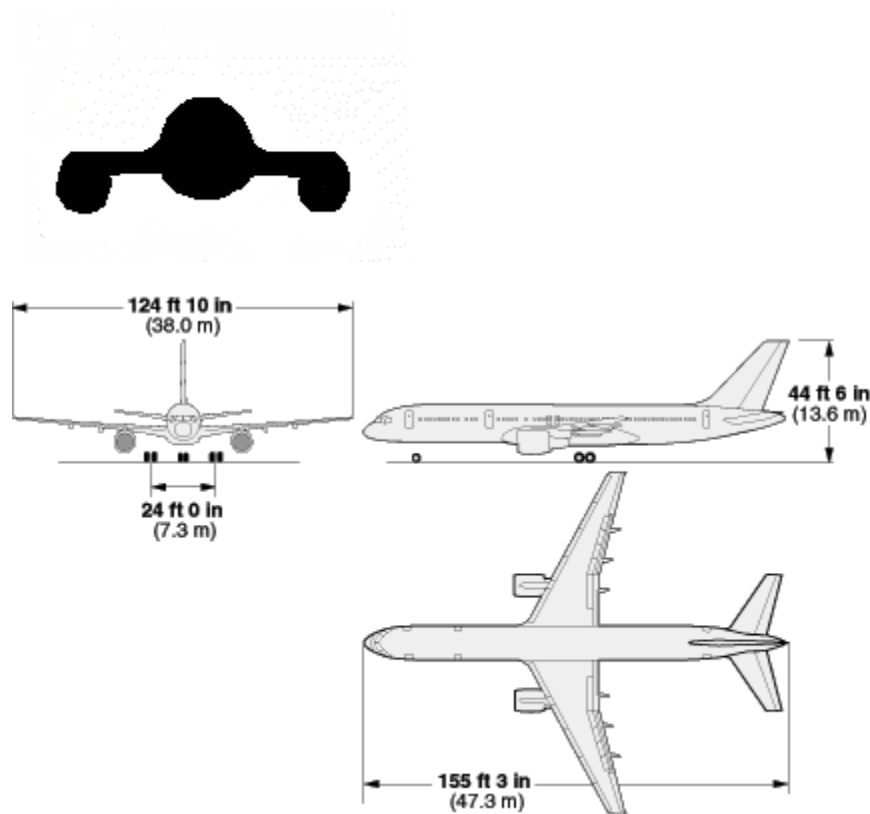


Given that any seams are inherently the points of greatest structural weakness, and given also the angle of impact, it seems reasonable to conclude that if the aircraft was going to begin to break apart upon initial impact with the exterior wall of the Pentagon, it would do so as depicted in the graphic to the left (which I, utilizing my obviously formidable skills at computer animation, have taken the liberty of adapting from one of Desmoulin's impact images). Such a crash scenario, needless to say, would not have resulted in a ridiculously small entry hole coupled with a complete lack of aircraft debris deposited outside the building, but it would be consistent with the actual design characteristics of the aircraft that purportedly created that entry hole.



The bottom line here, it seems to me, is that the existence of a 16-18 foot wide hole in the face of the Pentagon does not even begin to explain the complete disappearance of a Boeing 757-200 aircraft. Such an airplane, viewed head-on, looks much like the photo to the left. The "confetti" theorists would have

us believe that that entire aircraft can disappear, without a trace, into an entry hole not much larger than the diameter of the fuselage, as is crudely depicted in the image to the right. In reality, the design and weight distribution of a 757 strongly suggest that the *smallest possible* entry hole would actually look like the equally crude image to the lower left.



The difference is certainly not an insignificant one. An entry hole such as the one to the left would have to be about 50 feet wide. And as even the “plane bomb”/“confetti” theorists acknowledge, there was no such hole in the Pentagon’s façade. What that means, needless to say, is that no Boeing 757 or similar aircraft crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, regardless of whether or not there was an identifiable entry hole measuring some 16-18 feet across. Such an entry hole might be consistent with a missile strike, but it certainly is not consistent with the crash of a Boeing aircraft with wing-mounted engines.

Speaking of missiles, our old friend Donald Rumsfeld, last seen providing the very first identification of the aircraft that supposedly hit the Pentagon, apparently decided later that it was actually a missile that had done the damage. In an interview with *Parade* magazine dated October 12, 2001, Rumsfeld had this to say:

Here we’re talking about plastic knives and using an American Airlines flight filed [sic] with our citizens, and *the missile to damage this building* and similar (inaudible) that damaged the World Trade Center. The only way to deal with this problem is by taking the battle to the terrorists, wherever they are, and dealing with them. ([http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2001/t11182001\\_t1012pm.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2001/t11182001_t1012pm.html))



Rumsfeld's interviewer, Lyric Wallwork Winik, did not bother to ask for clarification of the missile reference. Some researchers have claimed that Rumsfeld's choice of words was deliberate – that his goal was to plant a 'meme' that would misdirect the efforts of 9-11 researchers. Many of the researchers making that claim, however, are the same people who have spent the last several years muddying the waters, planting red herrings, and working diligently in various other ways to sabotage the efforts of other theorists.

This was not, by the way, the only 'meme' that has been planted by Herr Rumsfeld. In an address to U.S. troops in Baghdad, the Secretary of Preemptive War let slip a curious remark about United Airlines Flight 93: "the people who attacked the United States in New York, *shot down the plane over Pennsylvania ...*"



So I guess Rumsfeld is either very skilled at planting 'memes,' or he is not very good at keeping secrets. Let's assume, since we know that Flight 93 was indeed almost certainly shot down, that Rumsfeld has a bad case of Freudian diarrhea-of-the-mouth and was actually telling the truth about a missile strike at the Pentagon. Such a scenario, of course, would not offer a complete explanation for what happened at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. It would not explain, for example, the alleged 'exit hole,' nor the downed light poles (which, unfortunately, I must return to in the next outing; who knew that breakaway poles really do exist?). But it would explain the pre-collapse damage to the exterior of the Pentagon and the alleged flight characteristics of whatever it was that may or may not have hit the building.

If it had been a late model, American-made cruise missile that slammed into the Pentagon on the morning of September 11, it likely would have left impact damage very similar to the damage done by the American-made cruise missiles that slammed into the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the 'liberation' of Kosovo. And curiously enough, the low-altitude impact of those missiles created entry wounds that should look at least vaguely familiar to anyone who has taken a serious look at what really happened at the Pentagon that fateful morning.

\* \* \* \* \*

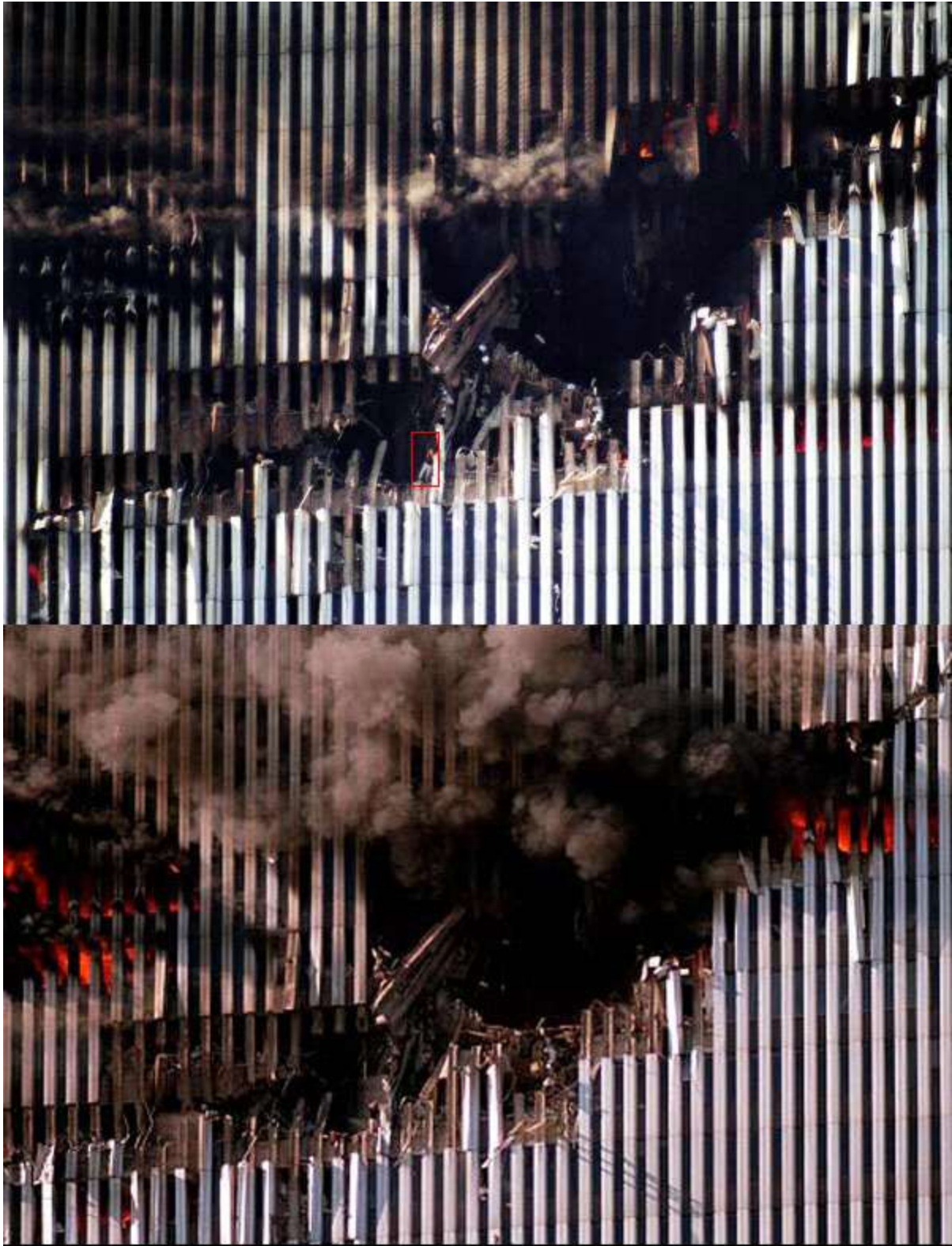


Some researchers have applied the same faulty “flimsy wings” arguments to analyses of the crashes at the Twin Towers. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from a piece penned by Australian researcher [Gerard Holmgren](#):

When you sit in a passenger jet and look out the window to the wings, what do you see? A light aluminum structure which is segmented into panels and movable flaps. Hardly a cutting blade or battering ram, except against light materials. The WTC was constructed of heavy construction steel, built to withstand hurricanes. We are asked to believe that such flimsy aluminum wings sliced through this structure decisively enough to make a cartoon type shape of themselves.

Holmgren might just as easily have made another argument that would have been equally as valid:

When you look up at the World Trade Center Towers (prior to September 11, of course), what do you see? A lightweight structure composed of individual glass panels separated by light gauge aluminum mullions. Hardly an effective barrier, except against very lightweight and slow-moving projectiles. The attacking aircraft weighed 100+ tons and was traveling hundreds of miles per hour. We are asked to believe that such a projectile would not have passed cleanly through the building.



The fatal flaw in both these arguments, of course, is that they ignore an adage that any school kid is familiar with: *never judge a book by its cover*. What you see when you look at the wings of a passenger aircraft has no relevance for determining the composition of those wings, just as what you would have

seen when looking at the Twin Towers would have been of little help in determining the structural characteristics of those buildings. Holmgren seems to recognize that fact in regards to the towers, but certainly not in regards to the aircraft — an oversight that has lead him to amusingly characterize as “flimsy” two 22-ton, steel-and-aluminum structures that were capable of handling a dynamic load well in excess of 100 tons.

What Holmgren and some others in his clique have argued, essentially, is that the existence of a hole the size and shape of a 767 aircraft in the side of one of the Twin Towers is proof that a 767 aircraft *did not* create that hole. “This kind of thing,” says Holmgren, “might happen in cartoons,” but not in the real world.

This same group, it should be noted, has steadfastly maintained that there was no plane crash at the Pentagon on September 11, a conclusion based in part on the fact that there was no entry hole consistent with the crash of a passenger plane. Fair enough. But in the case of the WTC attacks, they have reached the same “no planes” conclusion, this time based in part on the fact that there *was* an entry hole conforming to the dimensions of a Boeing aircraft. It would seem that some researchers have chosen to set the bar rather high.

Other researchers, curiously enough, have concluded that the impact hole in the side of the World Trade Center *did not conform closely enough* to the outline of a Boeing 767. These theorists have noted that while there is a gaping hole at the center of the impact zone, there are no actual ‘holes’ where the outer portion of the wings would have impacted. There is obviously substantial damage to the exterior of the building in those areas, but there is not a clean penetration. Based on this observation, these researchers, like those in the other clique, have concluded that the impact hole was faked with either conventional explosives or some sort of ‘black’ technology.

Both subsets of researchers, it seems to me, are mistaken. The reality is that the weight distribution and design characteristics of a Boeing 7X7 aircraft would seem to indicate that an impact hole should look remarkably like the hole photographed in the side of the World Trade Center tower on the morning of September 11 – with a clean penetration at the center of mass and substantial damage, though not necessarily penetration, at the wing extremities.

There was no such penetration at the Pentagon. And no amount of delusional theorizing about flimsy, conveniently self-destructing airplane wings will ever change that fact.

# September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act III, Part I

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Oct 27, 2004

## **ACT III: PART I**

Demolishing a highrise office building that has outlived its usefulness is a daunting task. As a general rule, tall buildings tend to grow in clusters, much like mushrooms, and the owners and occupants of the surrounding buildings usually frown upon having their own buildings damaged or destroyed in the process of bringing down a neighboring building. The trick then is to get the unwanted building to drop straight down, forming a neat pile that doesn't extend much beyond the structure's original footprint.

That is not something that tall buildings are naturally inclined to do. A large structure can be brought down in that manner, but it is an extremely difficult trick to pull off. A considerable amount of study, planning and preparation is required. Specific quantities of explosives have to be precisely placed at key structural locations throughout the building, and those explosive charges have to be programmed to detonate in a specific pattern. There is almost no margin for error. Only a handful of companies have the technical expertise to take on such a project.



When one of these highly specialized demolition companies does their job properly, the result is a spectacular show during which the targeted building seems to self-destruct and simply drop away from the skyline, as though it had never been there at all. The show is generally over in just a few seconds, making the entire process appear to be very quick and easy. But it is decidedly not easy.

When a building implodes (like the one to the left, which you can click on to view a short video of another controlled implosion), all that we as spectators see is the end result of months of research and preparation by a team of specialists with decades of training and experience. Buildings never implode by accident — at least they never did before September 11, 2001. But the south WTC tower did, at 9:59:04 AM that fateful day. And the north WTC tower did as well, at 10:28:31 AM. And then WTC7 did the very same thing, at about 5:20 PM. In less than eight hours time, three separate highrise office buildings allegedly did what no buildings in history have done before: spontaneously collapsed into their own footprints.

The inexplicable collapse of the twin towers has always been the single most compelling aspect of the events of that day — compelling because the controlled collapses point directly to inside involvement,

and compelling because this evidence of direct U.S. sponsorship of the attacks has always been brazenly displayed for all to see.

The evidence suggesting that Flight 77 did not hit the Pentagon was not immediately available, but rather was developed over a considerable period of time. It *was* immediately apparent that routine procedures for responding to potential emergencies were not followed that day, but grasping that concept required exercising a little independent thought, rather than just robotically processing the propaganda blizzard of words and images that followed the attacks.

Most people, reeling from the media assault, were unable to connect the dots and recognize that a stand-down had occurred. And most people have never seen the body of photographic evidence that overwhelmingly suggests that a passenger plane did not hit the Pentagon. Even many skeptics have not seen that evidence, thanks to the zealous efforts of the 911 gatekeepers. But virtually everyone saw the twin towers brought down in controlled demolitions. In fact, most people have likely seen footage of the twin collapses replayed dozens of times.

Perhaps what is most compelling then about the collapse of the towers is that the very images that were seared into our brains as reminders of the horrific nature of the attacks are the same images that should have been presented as “Exhibit A” in the people’s case against the real perpetrators of the crimes committed that day. The collapsed towers, in other words, are iconic symbols of the power of media and information control.

The tower collapses, airing as the dramatic final acts in the 9-11 production, were meant to be seen. And with the knowledge that we were witnessing, in real time, the tragic deaths of untold numbers of victims, the images were meant to horrify and traumatize. A traumatized subject, you see, is a receptive subject, and when you are trying to sell the need for a fundamental shift in our collective reality, it helps to have as many traumatized, compliant subjects as possible. And it helps to provide images that aren’t easily forgotten.

Imagine if the twin towers had not collapsed that day. Imagine no endlessly replayed footage of the spectacular collapses. Imagine no footage of massive devastation. No “Ground Zero.” No footage of dazed, dust-covered New Yorkers. No instantaneous revision of the New York skyline. No tributes to the scores of dead firefighters. No heart-wrenching appeals from family members desperately seeking information on relatives likely buried deep in the rubble.

Without the collapses, would the events of September 11 have had the same impact? Would Americans, with their notoriously short memories, still vividly recall the images and the human drama from that day, or would we have largely moved on, giving little more thought to September 11 than we do to the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building? Is it the loss of life that causes the events of that day to linger in our collective memory, or is it the harrowing and ubiquitous images of massive property destruction?

In order for the attacks of September 11 to serve as the catalyst for a realignment of the ‘group mind,’ the events of that day had to play out on a grand scale. The spectacular collapses of the towers were, therefore, undoubtedly the most important component of the production. But they were also the riskiest aspect of the production, since there was no way to disguise the fact that the collapses were, by necessity, the result of controlled demolitions.

The collapses then represented a fundamental weakness in the master plan. Were it not for the virtually complete control exercised by Washington over the media, both mainstream and 'alternative,' the twin collapses would almost certainly have been recognized as an obvious smoking gun. Of course, the perpetrators never had any reason to doubt their ability to thoroughly control the flow of information, both in the media and in the so-called 'skeptics community.'

Many in that community have harshly denounced those intrepid souls who have questioned the cause of the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, just as they have cast aspersions on those who question whether it was really a commercial airliner that struck the Pentagon. *From the Wilderness* set the tone very early on with a post that was up barely 48 hours after the towers hit the ground:

### **Credible Evidence, Expert Witness Testimony Convincing: No Explosives Hidden in WTC**

Sept 13, 2001 — 1500 PDT

([http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/09\\_13\\_01\\_No\\_Explosives.html](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/09_13_01_No_Explosives.html))

**FTW** – Based upon a detailed review of an interview with a NY architect who is expert on high rise construction and upon today's *BBC* story which I have linked at the bottom of this page, I am now virtually certain that there were no explosives placed within the WTC buildings. The motive for such a move would have been unclear in light of the drama and the security risks for "pre-event" compromise posed by dual efforts that would have accomplished the same ends.

Discovery of the explosives before the hijacking would have emptied the buildings and placed the nation on alert before the hijackings could have been carried out. The WTC towers would have been evacuated and that would have reduced the impact of the crashes.

Gravity would have taken all of the unburned fuel down central shafts of the building and the physics in this story are consistent with both witness statements and other expert interviews I have read.

In addition, my ex-wife Mary lives a block away and witnessed both the second crash and the collapse of both towers from a close distance. Neither she, nor any other person she knows, heard any explosions or believe that secondary charges were a factor in of the collapses.

I will be posting a more detailed bulletin for my subscribers on this shortly.

Mike Ruppert

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/americas/newsid\\_1540000/1540044.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/americas/newsid_1540000/1540044.stm)

The phantom New York architect was never identified. The alleged "expert interviews" never actually existed. The *BBC* report was shown to be littered with errors. And the "more detailed bulletin" never surfaced. Instead, Ruppert allowed his hastily assembled initial post to stand for over two years as his only commentary on the collapse of the towers. The dust from the World Trade Center hadn't even settled yet and already the 9-11 gatekeeper position had been established, courtesy of Mike Ruppert and the *BBC*.

Before the spin had fully set in, there was one early media report, published in the relatively obscure *Albuquerque Journal*, that accurately identified the cause of the collapse of the towers:



Televised images of the attacks on the World Trade Center suggest that explosives devices caused the collapse of both towers, a New Mexico Tech explosion expert said Tuesday. The collapse of the buildings appears “too methodical” to be a chance result of airplanes colliding with the structures, said Van Romero, vice president for research at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology. “My opinion is, based on the videotapes, that after the airplanes hit the World Trade Center there were some explosive devices inside the buildings that caused the towers to collapse,” Romero said. Romero is a former director of the Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center at Tech, which studies explosive materials and the effects of explosions on buildings, aircraft and other structures ... Romero said the collapse of the structures resembled those of controlled implosions used to demolish old structures. “It would be difficult for something from the plane to trigger an event like that,” Romero said in a phone interview from Washington, D.C. ... “It could have been a relatively small amount of explosives placed in strategic points,” Romero said.

*(Albuquerque Journal, September 11, 2001)*

That report would have been quickly lost in the blizzard of media coverage of the attacks were it not for the work of Internet researchers, particularly Jared Israel of [emperors-clothes.com](http://emperors-clothes.com), who first called attention to the story on September 14 (<http://emperors-clothes.com/news/albu.htm> 9-14-01). A week later, the *Journal* ran a follow-up report that found Mr. Romero radically reversing his position:

A New Mexico explosives expert says he now believes there were no explosives in the World Trade Center towers, contrary to comments he made the day of the Sept. 11 terrorist attack. “Certainly the fire is what caused the building to fail,” said Van Romero, a vice president at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology ... Romero supports other experts, who have said the intense heat of the jet fuel fires weakened the skyscrapers’ steel structural beams to the point that they gave way under the weight of the floors above ... Conspiracy theorists have seized on Romero’s comments as evidence for their argument that someone else, possibly the U.S. government, was behind the attack on the Trade Center. Romero said he has been bombarded with electronic mail from the conspiracy theorists. “I’m very upset about that,” he said. “I’m not trying to say anything did or didn’t happen.”

*(Albuquerque Journal, September 21, 2001)*

Those damn conspiracy theorists! What is it with them? They seem to be forever insisting that the stories told to the American people by our media guardians actually make sense and reflect some kind of objective reality. On September 14, the same day that the *Albuquerque Journal* article hit the Internet, *The Financial Times* added further fuel to the conspiracy fire:

The owners of the demolished World Trade Center in lower Manhattan acquired the buildings just two months ago under a 99-year lease allowing them to walk away from their investment in the event of “an act of terrorism.” The owners, Silverstein Properties and Westfield America – a shopping mall specialist – purchased the buildings from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for \$3.2bn in July and completed the financing just two weeks ago ... It is understood that the buildings are insured for more than \$3bn, enough to cover rebuilding costs.

*(The Financial Times Limited, September 14, 2001)*

Though it seems to be forgotten now, it was only through their destruction that the twin towers were transformed into beloved symbols of America. Prior to September 11, 2001, most New Yorkers would

have been quite happy to see the towers disappear from the city's skyline, albeit in a less deadly and destructive manner. Controversial when first proposed and considered an eyesore upon completion, the towers never really captured the hearts of the city's inhabitants. And they were never really necessary, judging by the chronically high office vacancy rates in lower Manhattan.

On the morning of September 11, the World Trade Center towers hit the ground at an estimated 124-miles-per-hour, less than ten seconds after they first began to collapse. They were, in other words, virtually in free-fall. Once the collapses had begun, the 200,000 tons of steel and nearly 500,000 cubic yards of concrete that supported the massive structures seemed to offer no resistance at all. In just seconds, 10,000,000 square feet of commercial office space simply ceased to exist.

We all watched it happen, just three short years ago, but it is still difficult to believe that two 110-story monoliths, stretching a quarter-mile into the sky, were reduced to a 1.8-million-ton pile of rubble that stood, at its tallest points, just 60 feet high. *In under ten seconds.*

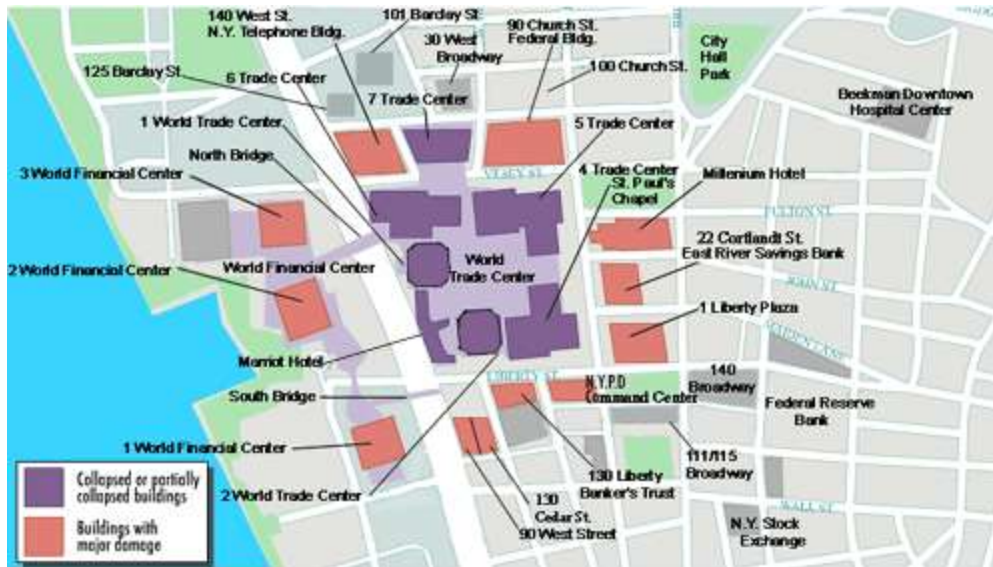
What has never been in dispute is that the fall of the south tower, just 56 minutes after it had been hit, marked the first time in history that a steel-framed highrise structure had suffered a total collapse due to fire. Never before had such a building suffered even a partial collapse due to fire. At 10:28 AM, the north tower became the second steel-framed highrise structure to suffer a total collapse due to fire.

The twin towers were certainly not the first highrise structures to ever sustain significant damage from a fire. Nor were they the first steel-framed buildings to be struck by errant aircraft. Various buildings around the world, including the Empire State Building, have been hit by airplanes of various size. And countless steel-framed buildings around the world have been hit by U.S.-launched cruise missiles and guided bombs. None of them have ever suffered a complete collapse, even after sustaining multiple impacts.

To explain the unprecedented series of events that unfolded on September 11, 2001, 'experts' trotted out by the media have posited that the photogenic collapses resulted from an historically unique combination of three factors: the initial damage inflicted on the towers by the airplane crashes; the damage caused by what were said to be intense fires; and the unconventional "tubular" design of the twin towers.



These experts, however, have offered no explanation for why the building known as #7 World Trade Center – a conventional steel-framed highrise structure that was not hit by a plane – became, at approximately 5:20 PM on September 11, 2001, the third highrise structure in recorded history to suffer a complete collapse due to fire. FEMA struggled to find an explanation to include in a report on the collapses, but came up short: “The specifics of the fires in WTC 7 and how they caused the building to collapse remain unknown at this time.” (<http://www.fema.gov/library/wtcstudy.shtm>)



Though dwarfed by the massive twin towers, WTC7 was an imposing structure that would have dominated the skyline of many large cities. Built in 1985, it was a modern, 47-story structure that housed 1,868,000 square feet of commercial office space, much of it occupied by governmental agencies bearing three-letter acronyms, including the CIA.

Some have suggested that WTC7 collapsed due to damage caused by debris from the falling towers, particularly the north tower. That does not appear to be the case, however, since photos and video of the building taken in the hours after the collapse of the towers show that WTC7 was quite intact prior to its collapse. There is also the curious fact that WTC6, which sat between WTC7 and the towers, somehow managed to avoid suffering a complete collapse that day.

Some reports, including the *BBC* report cited earlier by Ruppert, seemed to imply that the building's foundation had perhaps been "weakened by the earlier collapses." But if that had been the case, WTC7 would not have dropped straight down, as though sinking into the ground; it would have toppled over, taking out neighboring buildings in the process. The *BBC* report also warned that "more nearby buildings may still fall," as though it had suddenly become commonplace for tall buildings to spontaneously convert themselves into neat piles of debris.

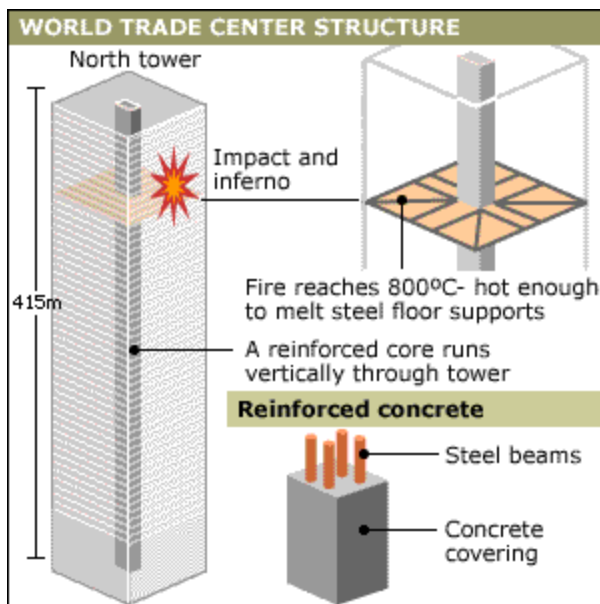


Fires purportedly raged within WTC7 for hours before the building collapsed, but the source of the fires remains largely a mystery, as does the complete failure of the building's modern sprinkler system, which should have been more than adequate to contain any fires. Considering the intense media attention that was focused on lower Manhattan that day, still photos or video footage of WTC7 engulfed in flames

are curiously hard to find. Photos of the building taken not long before the collapse (such as the one to the upper right) reveal only small pockets of fire that were confined to two floors.



World Trade Center #7 hit the ground, reduced to a neat pile of rubble, in approximately seven seconds. Like the twin towers, it was in virtual free-fall. Also like the towers, WTC7 collapsed into its own footprint with absolutely uncanny precision. It is no accident that the American people, although bombarded with images of the collapsing towers, have never seen footage of the collapse of WTC7. It is nearly impossible to watch video footage of the collapse and fail to recognize it for what it is: a deliberate, and perfectly executed, controlled implosion. [Click on the two small animated gifs to view video clips of the collapse from two different vantage points.]



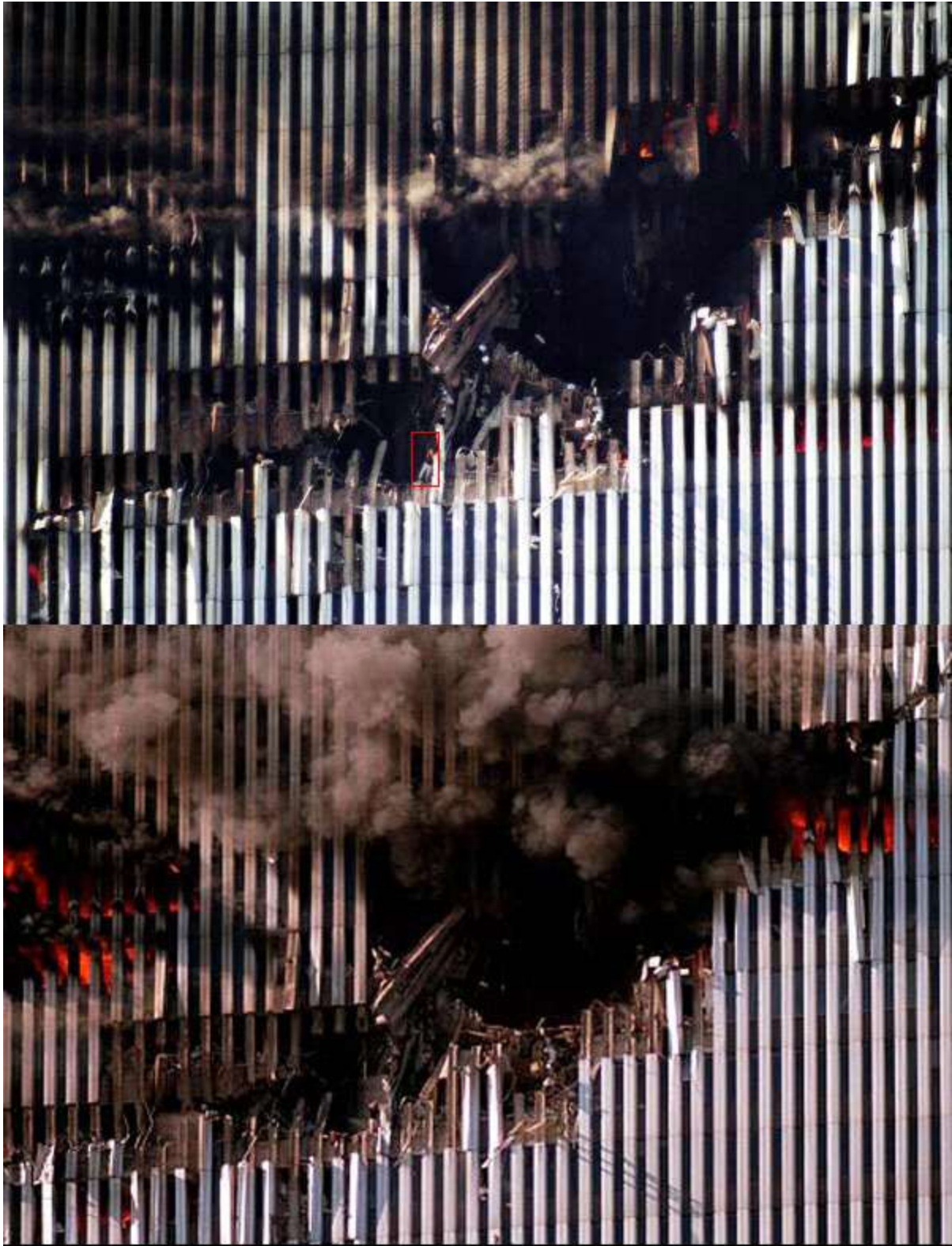
The official explanation for the collapse of the twin towers (WTC7 is rarely mentioned) is that the steel and concrete floor slabs, in the areas of the towers damaged by the initial plane crashes, broke free and collapsed down upon the floors below, which then in turn broke free and collapsed, thus creating an alleged 'pancake' effect that quickly gained mass and speed. Once the floors broke free, so the story goes, the outer steel shells of the towers lost structural integrity and collapsed in upon the pancaking floor sections.



There are a few very obvious problems with this 'pancake' theory. First, there is the question of whether fires raged in the towers at sufficient intensity, and for a sufficient amount of time, to cause the failure of the floor trusses. All of the images captured that day show that at the time of the collapses, the towers were billowing copious amounts of thick, black smoke — indicative not of raging infernos, but of low intensity, smoldering office fires. Transcripts of fire department audiotapes indicate that firefighters on the scene reported only pockets of low intensity fire that posed no danger to the structural integrity of the building.

(<http://www.thememoryhole.org/911/firefighter-tape-excerpts.htm>)

The graphic to the left, published with the previously cited *BBC* report, was supposed to help the public understand what caused the collapse of the towers. The illustration, however, contained obvious errors, including the claim that the fires reached "800° C – hot enough to melt steel floor supports." There is no indication that the fires burning in the towers reached such temperatures — and even if they did, steel doesn't actually melt at 800° C (about 1,500° F); it melts at about 1,500° C (about 2,750° F).



The text of the *BBC* report contained this curious claim: “the towers’ ultimate collapse was inevitable, as the steel cores inside them reached temperatures of 800C – raising questions as to why hundreds of rescue workers were sent into the doomed buildings to their deaths.” Actually, if the claim about the

core temperatures were true, it would have raised questions as to *how* hundreds of rescue workers were sent into the doomed buildings to their deaths, since the only way up was through the building cores, where all the stairwells and elevators were located.

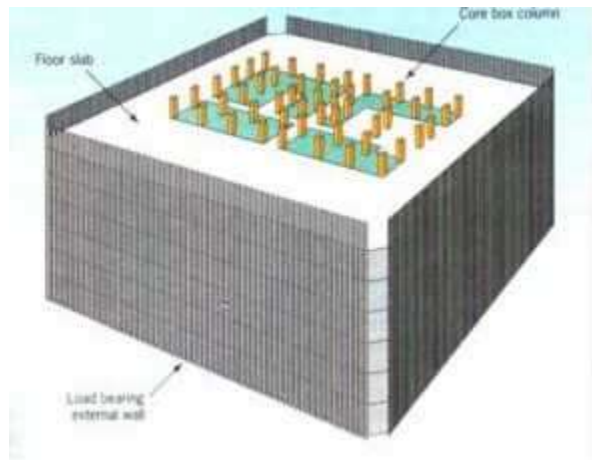


Perhaps the best evidence refuting the notion that the fires in the WTC towers were burning at extremely high temperatures can be found through close examination of the pre-collapse photos to the left. Near the center of the gaping entry wound (which looks much different, by the way, than the phantom entry wound in the Pentagon) stands the tragic figure of an apparently young woman still very much alive — and seemingly unaware that she is clinging to a piece of nearly molten metal.

Technically speaking, the ‘pancake’ theory does not require that the fires reached temperatures capable of *melting* steel; it requires only that temperatures were high enough to substantially *weaken* the steel floor supports. A 1500° F fire could conceivably accomplish that task, if that temperature was maintained for a considerable amount of time. But there is no indication from firefighter reports, survivor reports, or the photographic evidence that there were any fires of that magnitude that burned for any appreciable length of time.

Another problem with the ‘pancake’ theory is that it fails to address the fate of the cores of the two towers. Contrary to the deceptive *BBC* graphic, the cores of the WTC towers occupied a considerable portion of the buildings’ footprints, as can be seen in the accurately scaled graphic on the lower left, and

in the photo on the lower right, taken while the towers were under construction. These configurations of 47 massive steel support columns, heavily cross-braced, were designed to not only be self-supporting, but to support the floors and exterior walls as well.







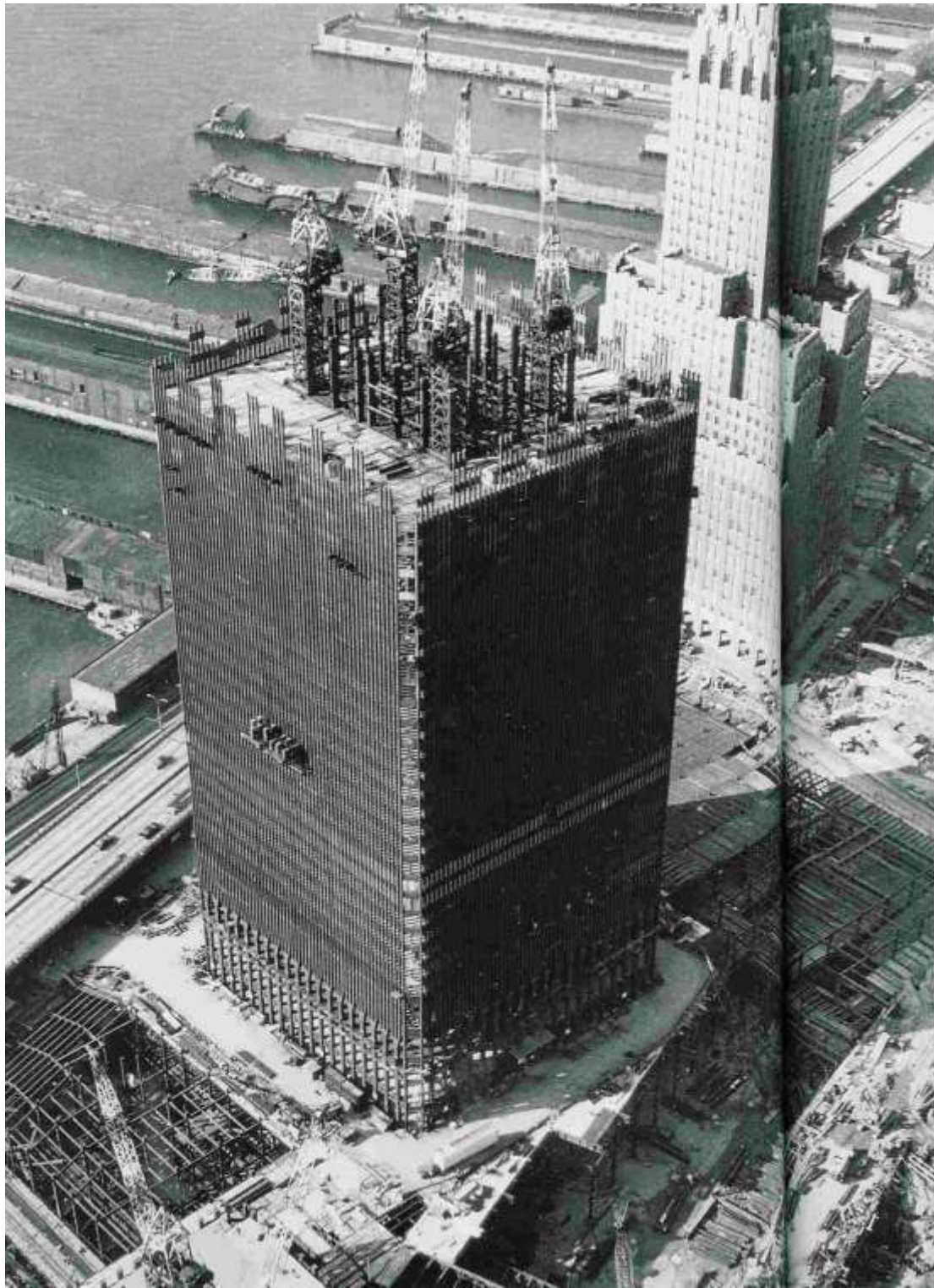
Even if we accept that the floor slabs somehow ‘pancaked,’ and that the outer steel and aluminum shells then buckled and collapsed, we are left with no explanation of what happened to those massive concrete and steel cores. Clearly, the floor slabs were hardly the wide-open ‘pancakes’ depicted in deceptive media graphics. In truth, the ‘pancake’ theory, at best, offers only an explanation of how the floor and exterior wall sections may have collapsed. Even if such an extremely unlikely event had occurred, the end result would not have been a 60-foot-high mound of rubble; it would have been two 137’ x 87’ x 1,360’ towers standing in place of two 208’ x 208’ x 1,360’ towers.

Yet another problem with the 'pancake' theory is that it is wholly dependent on a perfectly symmetrical failure of the floor slabs, even though the initial damage to the buildings was clearly asymmetrical, and the fires certainly did not burn uniformly throughout the damaged floors. And yet we know that for the destruction to be complete, the collapse of the initial floor slabs would have had to be perfectly uniform; every point of connection around the perimeter of the core, and every point of connection around the exterior shell, would have had to fail at precisely the same moment in time. And each successive floor would have had to fail in exactly the same perfectly uniform manner, unerringly, all the way down the line. When the 'pancake' effect has to course through 110 floors, there isn't really any margin for error. And yet both towers, as we all know, 'pancaked' into oblivion in matching, perfectly choreographed collapses.

Remarkably enough, the two towers somehow collapsed in exactly the same manner even though the initial damage to each tower was quite different. The plane that hit the north tower plowed straight into the center of the north face of the tower, and then straight into the center of the tower's core. The south tower, however, was hit with more of a glancing blow, through the southeast corner of the building, in such a way that the plane likely did minimal damage to the tower's core. Nevertheless, the damage to the south tower may have been more significant than the damage to the north tower. In the north tower, the weight of the upper floors was transferred to the remaining structural elements of the north wall of the tower. But in the south tower, since it was a corner of the building that was blown out, there was nowhere for the load to be transferred. Also, the south tower was hit at a lower elevation, so there was more weight bearing on the damaged area.

It is interesting to note here, by the way, that in both tower crashes, the initial impacts caused structural damage on at least six floors. The south tower was impacted on floors 78-84, and the north tower on floors 93-98. The Pentagon, on the other hand, miraculously sustained impact damage on just two floors.

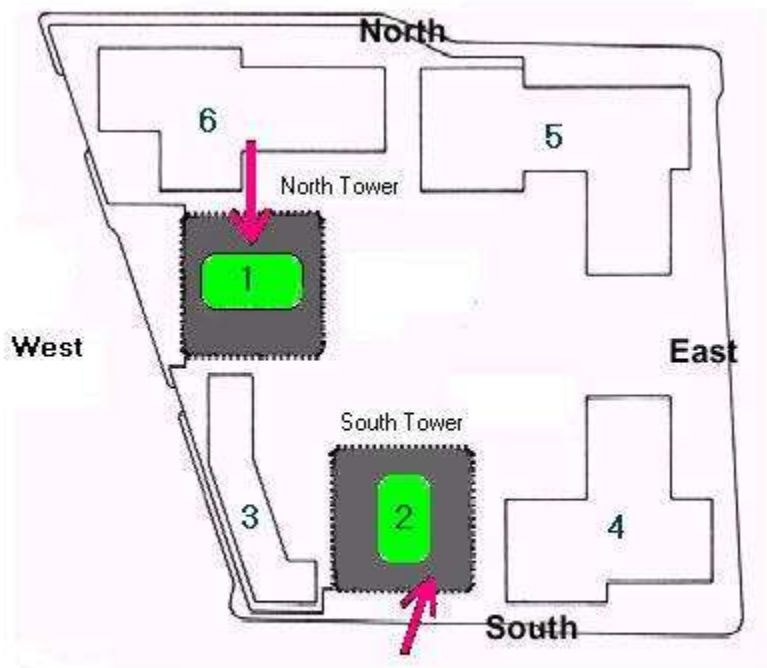




# September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act III, Part II

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Oct 27, 2004

## ACT III, PART II





Photographs reveal that when the south tower first began to collapse, it was definitely not in a symmetrical manner. To the contrary, WTC2 first began to collapse in exactly the way that one would expect a tower to collapse after an airplane had ripped away one corner: the intact upper portion of the building, above the point of impact, began to tilt precariously toward the point of structural weakness. It is perfectly obvious that this was not the onset of a symmetrical, 'pancake' collapse.

How then did it become, literally in the blink of an eye, a perfectly symmetrical collapse? With no other forces acting upon it, gravity and momentum should have sent the enormous block of concrete and steel crashing down alongside the topless tower, likely on top of WTC4. But that isn't what happened. Instead, something very peculiar happened — something that can be seen in the series of photos to the lower right.







Instead of continuing to topple over, the massive block seems to have mysteriously self-destructed. But how could that have happened? The upper portion of the tower certainly couldn't have 'pancaked,' unless it did so from the bottom up. And smoke and fire don't normally cause large chunks of steel-framed buildings to suddenly blow apart. That usually only happens when explosives of some kind are involved. And if the top of the tower blew apart, then what was it that provided the impetus for the 'pancaking' of the remainder of the tower?

The photo to the right reveals that the collapse of the north tower began asymmetrically as well. As was the case with the south tower, the upper portion of the north tower, above the point of impact, began to tilt as a solid block toward the point of the initial structural damage. But in a virtual instant replay, the asymmetrical collapse of WTC1 was instantaneously transformed into a perfectly symmetrical collapse.



What could have caused the tops of the towers to suddenly begin toppling over? That would seem to require that the massive steel cores of the towers simply snapped at the point of impact, allowing the upper portions of the towers to completely break free from the lower portions — even though, in the case of the south tower at least, there was likely minimal structural damage to the building's core from the initial impact and explosion.

The only way to get the World Trade Center towers to drop straight down was to eliminate the central support structure. The best way to do that would have been to blast away a portion of each of those 47 core columns, down near where they were anchored to the bedrock, causing the entire central core of the tower to abruptly drop a given distance, which would begin to pull each of the floors down toward the center of the building's footprint. As this happened, the entire load of the tower would have been transferred, instantaneously, onto the exterior shell, which was not engineered to support such a load.

What we are looking at in the photos showing the tilting tower tops are images captured in that very brief moment in time after the core had dropped and the load had been transferred to the building's exterior skeleton. In other words, although the towers still appear to be intact, they have already begun to collapse from within. With the core support gone, the unsupported upper shell immediately began to

tilt toward the point of impact. But even as that occurred, the entire tower was beginning a top-to-bottom collapse precipitated by the drop of the core.

Early news reports, broadcast before the official spin had set in, acknowledged that the collapses had been assisted by explosives. *NBC* correspondent Pat Dawson, for example, stated the following on the air: “The Chief of Safety of the Fire Department of New York told me that, uhh, he thinks that there were actually devices that were planted in the building. One of the secondary devices he thinks that took place after the initial impact was, he thinks, may have been on the plane that crashed into one of the towers. The second device, he thinks, he speculates, was probably planted in the building, uhh, so that’s what we have been told by, uhh, Albert Turi, who is the Chief of Safety for the New York City Fire Department, he told me that just moments ago.”

A radio broadcaster on station *WLS* in Chicago, whose former colleague was on the scene at the towers, reported that this colleague had witnessed an enormous fireball emanating from *beneath* one of the towers immediately before it came crashing down. Such a fireball would, of course, be entirely consistent with the collapse scenario just outlined. Also consistent with that scenario are the multiple reports of pools of molten steel found in the basements of the towers days after the collapses.



Steve Evans, a correspondent for the *BBC*, reported the following on the air: “I was at the base of the 2nd tower, the second tower that was hit. There was an explosion — I didn’t think it was an explosion, but the base of the building shook. I felt it shake, then when we were outside, the second explosion happened and then there was a series of explosions. We can only wonder at the kind of damage — the kind of human damage — which was caused by those explosions, those series of explosions.”

On September 24, 2001, *People Weekly* published an interesting witness account provided by Louie Cacchioli, one of the first firefighters to enter the south tower: “I was taking firefighters up in the elevator to the 24th floor to get in position to evacuate workers. On the last trip up a bomb went off. We think there were bombs set in the building.”

Teresa Veliz, who was on the 47th floor of the north tower when it was hit, told her survivor story in Dean Murphy’s *September 11: An Oral History* (Doubleday, 2002): “The flashlight led us into Borders bookstore, up an escalator and out to Church Street. There were explosions going off everywhere. I was



convinced that there were bombs planted all over the place and someone was sitting at a control panel pushing detonator buttons. I was afraid to go down Church Street toward Broadway, but I had to do it. I ended up on Vesey Street. There was another explosion. And another. I didn't know where to run."

In mid-December 2001, *USA Today* revisited the collapse of the towers in a compelling series of articles written by Dennis Cauchon. The first of the articles, published December 18, included an account of survivor Ronald DiFrancesco's encounter with a fireball at the base of the south tower: "As he left the building, he saw a fireball rolling toward him. He put his arms in front of his face. He woke up three days later at St. Vincent's hospital. His arms were burned. Some bones were broken. His lungs were singed. But he was alive—the last person out of the south tower."

(Dennis Cauchon "Four Survived by Ignoring Words of Advice," *USA Today*, December 18, 2001

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2001/12/19/usat-escape.htm>)

The second article focused on an interesting, if not necessarily directly relevant, aspect of the tower attacks: "When the World Trade Center was bombed in 1993, Otis Elevator's mechanics led the rescue of 500 people trapped in elevators. Some mechanics were dropped onto the roofs of the twin towers by helicopter. Others, carrying 50-pound oxygen tanks on their backs, climbed through smoke to machine rooms high in the towers. On Sept. 11, the elevator mechanics – many of the same men involved in the rescues in 1993 – left the buildings after the second jet struck, nearly an hour before the first building collapsed ... The departure of elevator mechanics from a disaster site is unusual."

(Dennis Cauchon "Mechanics Left Towers Before Buildings Collapsed," *USA Today*, December 19, 2001

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2001/12/19/usat-mechanics.htm>)

The third article, published December 20, was an analysis of who survived the collapses, and who did not. It was by far the most compelling article in the series. Among the revelations was that the twin towers were very sparsely occupied that day: "*USA Today* estimates 5,000 to 7,000 people were in each tower when the attack began. Earlier estimates ranged from 10,000 to 25,000 per tower. But company head counts show many desks were empty at 8:46 a.m."

(Dennis Cauchon "For Many On Sept.11, Survival Was No Accident," *USA Today*, December 20, 2001

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2001/12/19/usatcov-wtcsurvival.htm>)



September 11, 2001

Photo © 2001 Bill Biggart

Cauchon offered some specific examples of the pattern of occupancy that day: “For example, Marsh & McLennan, an insurance company, had offices on the 93rd through 100th floors in the north tower. About 1,000 worked there; 295 were at work at the time. All died. Fred Alger Management, a money manager, occupied most of the 93rd floor. Thirty-five of 55 employees were in. They all died. Only 25 of 55 employees were in the New York Metro Transportation Council’s 82nd floor office. Three died. The receptionist was the only person in the office at the 16-employee law firm of Drinker Biddle & Reath on the 89th floor. She lived.”

Perhaps this would be a good time to pause and reflect on a rather uncanny series of ‘coincidences’: as we recall from Act I, all four of the hijacked aircraft took off with far more empty seats than filled ones; as was mentioned in Act II, the Pentagon was impacted in a section that had just been renovated and was not yet fully reoccupied; and now we find, curiously enough, that the other two targets, the twin WTC towers, were sparsely occupied as well. Maybe Allah just wasn’t on the terr’ists side that day.

*USA Today* determined that, “In each tower, 99% of the occupants below the crash survived. At the impact area and above, survival was limited to just a handful of people in the south tower who made an amazing escape.” If the towers had not collapsed, the majority of the people trapped above the impact area would most likely have been rescued (especially if the elevator mechanics had stuck around to assist the other rescue personnel). In addition, virtually all of the 479 rescue workers killed that day would have survived as well. In other words, the already surprisingly low death toll from the tower

attacks would have been considerably lower. So again the question needs to be raised: would '9-11' have had nearly the impact on the American psyche if the towers had not fallen?

One of the lingering questions surrounding the collapse of the towers is why the south tower fell just 56 minutes after impact, while the north tower held for 102 minutes — nearly twice as long. Just days after the attacks, I speculated in one of my meandering rants that perhaps the south tower was brought down first because it was evacuated first, owing to the fact that the occupants of the south tower received advance warning via the crash into the north tower, and therefore had the benefit of beginning evacuation before the south tower was hit and all hell broke loose. At the time that post went up, most respondents seemed to find that idea absurd, and news reports repeatedly claimed that occupants of the south tower did not in fact begin evacuating after the strike on the north tower, but rather were advised to remain in their offices.



*USA Today* concluded otherwise after talking to numerous survivors: “Most of the dead were in the north tower, the first one hit and the second to collapse. *USA Today* documented 1,434 who died in the north tower vs. 599 in the south tower. (Locations could not be determined for 147 of the building occupants.) An analysis shows that two-thirds of south tower occupants evacuated the upper floors during the 16 1/2 minutes between the attacks. In the north tower, an average of 78 people died per floor at the crash area and above, compared with 19 people per floor in the south tower.”

The occupants of the south tower had both advance warning and the benefit of utilizing the building's ninety-nine elevators, which is obviously a much quicker way to exit than walking, single file, down as many as 110 flights of stairs. So even though the south tower was hit at a lower elevation, thus potentially trapping far more people, and even though it stood for only half as long, more than twice as



many people died in the north tower. It seems entirely reasonable then to speculate that the south tower was brought down first because it was 'cleared' first (for lack of a better word).

The *USA Today* report seemed to subtly suggest that scenario: "The evacuation was a success. *Nearly everyone who could get out did get out.* The Port Authority had revised its evacuation plan for the buildings after a terrorist bomb exploded in a Trade Center garage in 1993. On Sept. 11, those changes saved hundreds, possibly thousands, of lives. The buildings, sturdily constructed, exquisitely engineered and equipped with stairwells bigger than building codes require, *stood just long enough to give potential survivors a chance to get out.*" (emphasis added)

The reason the evacuation was a success, according to *USA Today*, was because of the lessons learned from the February 26, 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. At the time of that attack, "The evacuation took nearly four hours in dark, smoky, poorly marked stairwells. Some people were stuck in elevators for 10 hours. The Port Authority made crucial improvements after that attack. The changes saved countless lives on Sept. 11."



September 11, 2001

Photo © 2001 Bill Biggart

Those improvements included the addition of a back-up power supply, fire command posts, stairwell lighting with battery back-up, loudspeakers, reflective paint and directional arrows. In addition, evacuation drills were reportedly held every six months. Taking all that into consideration, and also taking into consideration that the 1993 WTC bombing was carried out by operatives under the supervision of the FBI, a skeptic might be tempted to conclude that the 1993 'attack' was really a test to see how quickly the buildings could be evacuated in an actual emergency.

One final intriguing nugget of information included in the *USA Today* report is that just “Ten bystanders were killed by falling debris.” If true, that is a remarkable statistic. So precisely controlled were the collapses that two 1,360-foot-tall towers fell in the densely populated heart of Manhattan and *just ten bystanders were killed!* And yet we are expected to believe that those uncannily symmetrical collapses were caused by airplanes striking the buildings at entirely random points.

Following the pattern set at the Pentagon, virtually all of the key evidence concerning the attacks on the towers has been suppressed. The contents of the infamous ‘black boxes’ remain a mystery. Only bits and pieces of the seventy-eight-minute audiotape of firefighters working within the stricken towers have been released. And perhaps most troubling of all, the structural steel from the towers was quickly shipped overseas as scrap, preempting an investigation that could have determined whether the collapses were caused by fire or explosives:

Some 185,101 tons of structural steel have been hauled away from Ground Zero. Most of the steel has been recycled as per the city’s decision to swiftly send the wreckage to salvage yards in New Jersey. The city’s hasty move has outraged many victims’ families who believe the steel should have been examined more thoroughly. Last month, fire experts told Congress that about 80% of the steel was scrapped without being examined...

*(New York Daily News, April 16, 2002)*

For more than three months, structural steel from the World Trade Center has been and continues to be cut up and sold for scrap. Crucial evidence that could answer many questions about high-rise building design practices and performance under fire conditions is on the slow boat to China, perhaps never to be seen again in America until you buy your next car... Fire Engineering has good reason to believe that the “official investigation” blessed by FEMA and run by the American Society of Civil Engineers is a half-baked farce that may already have been commandeered by political forces whose primary interests, to put it mildly, lie far afield of full disclosure. Except for the marginal benefit obtained from a three-day, visual walk-through of evidence sites conducted by ASCE investigation committee members – described by one close source as a “tourist trip” - no one’s checking the evidence for anything.

*(Fire Engineering Magazine, January 2002)*

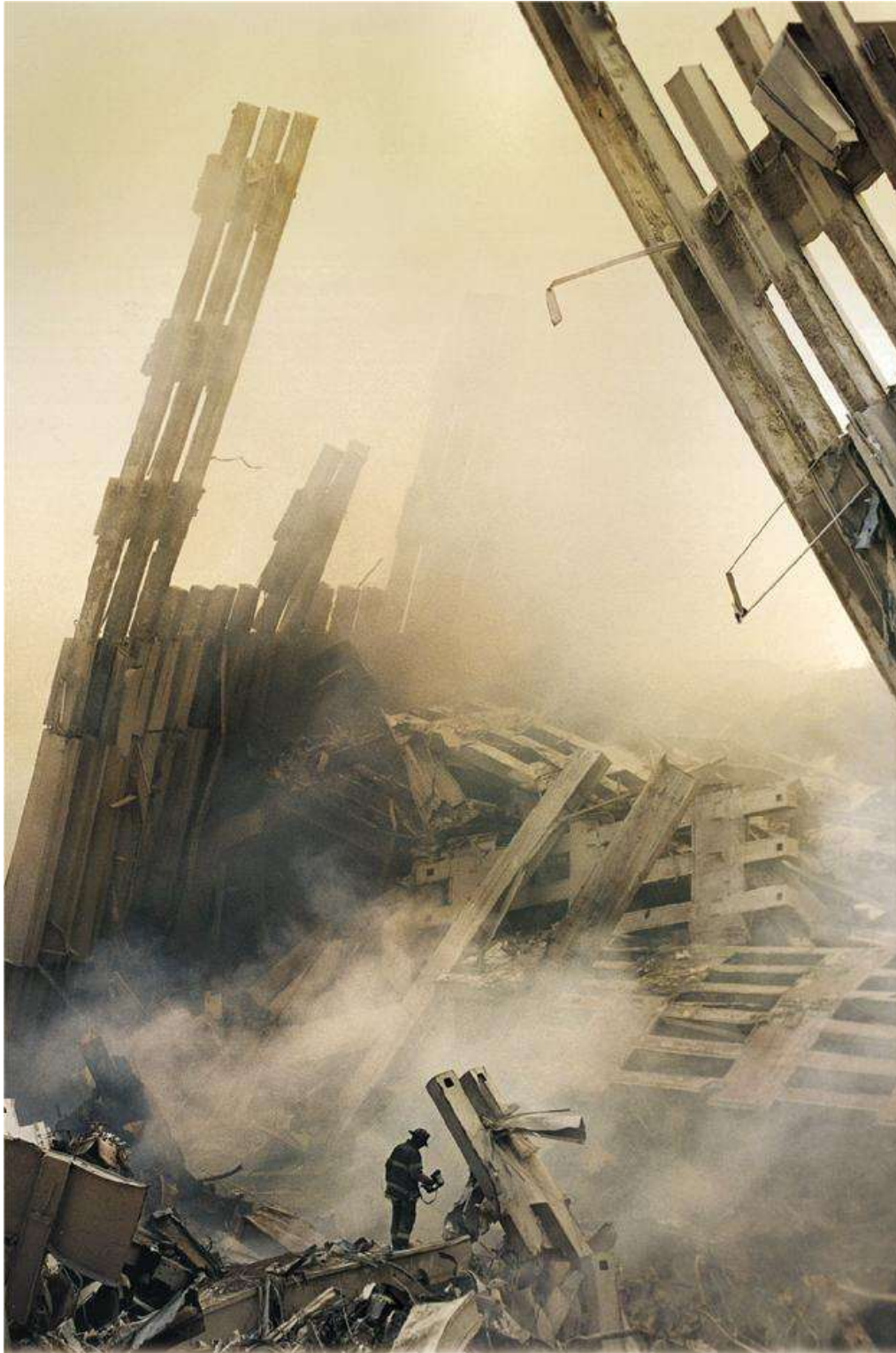
Federal officials overseeing the clean-up operation, in conjunction with Giuliani’s office, resorted to extraordinary measures to insure that none of the steel went missing on the way to the official dumpsite, purportedly to thwart an alleged criminal operation aimed at stealing the scrap steel.

On November 26, the city initiated use of an in-vehicle GPS tracking system to monitor locations of trucks hired to haul the debris to Fresh Kills, the official dump site on Staten Island ... In the weeks before launching the GPS system, the city relied on a paper-based system for tracking traffic and loading data. Police and several other agencies teamed up to monitor the trucks on their routes between Ground Zero through 20 to 30 miles of tunnels, bridges and highways to the dump on Staten Island ... To get a GPS truck-monitoring system rolling right away, DDC-NYC and the New York Port Authority (NYPA) quickly identified several possible suppliers, viewed presentations from the candidates, and sent out a request for proposal. In the end, the contract went to IDC-Criticom, a large alarm system wholesaler based in Minneapolis, and its two subcontractors: GPS hardware maker PowerLoc; and implementation specialist Mobile Installation Technologies (MIT) of Marietta, Ga. Within three weeks, the system

elements were in place, and nearly 200 trucks in New York City were being tracked in real time. Installed by MIT with assistance from PowerLoc and four trucking contractors, the solution revolved around PowerLoc's Vehicle Location Device (VLD). Each VLD unit costs about \$1,000.

([http://securitysolutions.com/ar/security\\_gps\\_job\\_massive/](http://securitysolutions.com/ar/security_gps_job_massive/))





Since 'Ground Zero' was, by all accounts, the site of a mass murder, the actions taken collectively by federal officials amounted to nothing less than the willful, deliberate destruction of evidence in a criminal investigation. If the collapse of the towers was due to an unprecedented, spontaneous failure of structural components of the buildings, then a full and rigorous investigation was mandated to insure

that new construction methods could be implemented in future highrise projects, and so that existing buildings at risk could be identified. If, on the other hand, the collapse of the towers was due to strategically placed, synchronized explosive charges, then only the *appearance* of an investigation was necessary, for two rather obvious reasons: (1) those who need to know already know why the towers collapsed; and (2) they don't want anyone else to know why the towers collapsed.

As it did with all aspects of the September 11 attacks, the Bush administration chose to go with the *appearance* of an investigation.

In addition to the suppression of the firefighter tape and the willful destruction of the forensic evidence, an invaluable source of information on the collapses was destroyed when WTC7 collapsed. Housed on the twenty-third floor of the building was Mayor Giuliani's Office of Emergency Management, a state-of-the-art command center designed to serve as a base of operations during times of crisis. On September 11, 2001, the command center was monitoring the situation in lower Manhattan — at least it was until the personnel staffing the center received an order to evacuate. One of the officials manning the command center that day told filmmakers from *The History Channel* that, "to this day, we don't know who gave that order."

("The World Trade Center: Rise and Fall of an American Icon," *The History Channel*, September 8, 2003)

*Excuse me?* How could they not know who gave that order? How many people, other than the mayor, were authorized to issue such an order? The city's emergency command center, the very entity set up to advise others how to proceed in times of crisis, was itself ordered to shut down in the middle of the worst crisis the city had ever faced, and *no one knows who gave that order?! Am I the only one who finds that a little hard to believe?*

*The History Channel* also spoke with a Colonel John O'Dowd, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. O'Dowd, who is no stranger to disaster scenes, said that he had never seen anything like what he saw at the site where the towers had once stood. "At the World Trade Center sites," he said, "it seemed like everything was pulverized." Other than the miles of twisted steel beams and columns, there was nothing recognizable in the debris pile — nothing to indicate that the pulverized debris had been, just seconds earlier, a functioning 10,000,000-square-foot office building.

Colonel O'Dowd had also been present at the scene of the partially collapsed Oklahoma City Federal Building. Though the collapse of the Murrah building was definitely facilitated by at least one powerful explosive charge, O'Dowd noted that the debris from that collapse was not pulverized to the degree that it was at the site of the WTC towers. And the towers, according to the official story, were acted upon by nothing more than the effects of fire and gravity.

Curiously enough, the contractor hired to finish off the Murrah building, and then haul all the debris off to an unmarked desert grave, was the same contractor brought in to oversee the clean-up/cover-up of the WTC tower debris. That contractor is Controlled Demolitions, Inc., which happens to be the biggest name in the controlled demolition industry, begging the question of whether CDI's WTC contract included payment for more than just cleaning up the aftermath of the collapses.

If the World Trade Center towers were brought down with explosives, which is the only reasonable explanation for what the world witnessed, then a considerable amount of advance work would have had to be done. Such an operation presumably would have had to be run through the WTC's security service,

since that is the entity given unrestricted access to the buildings, and, of equal importance, the entity with the authority to restrict the access of others.

A business entity now known as Stratesec, Inc. began performing security work at the World Trade Center in 1993. In 1996, the company, then known as Securacom, was awarded an exclusive contract to provide security for the World Trade Center complex. Stratesec/Securacom also provided security for United Airlines and Dulles International Airport, two other key players in the 9-11 story. Sitting on Stratesec's board of directors, from the time the company began working at the WTC, was a major shareholder by the name of Marvin Bush. Marvin, like Jeb and Neil, is a brother of George W. Bush. Small world, isn't it?

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As with other aspects of the September 11 story, there is, unfortunately, a considerable amount of disinformation mixed in with the '9-11 skeptics' literature concerning the collapse of the towers. One widely disseminated bit of said disinformation concerns a statement by building leaseholder Larry Silverstein, who was interviewed for a PBS documentary entitled "America Rebuilds." During that interview, Silverstein recalled "getting a call from the, uh, fire department commander, telling me that they were not sure they were gonna be able to contain the fire, and I said, 'You know, we've had such terrible loss of life, maybe the smartest thing to do is, is pull it.' And they made that decision to pull and then we watched the building collapse."

Many researchers have suggested that Silverstein admitted on public television that he and the FDNY made a joint decision to bring WTC7 down in a controlled demolition. This is a particularly nasty line of disinformation because it casts the FDNY, universally viewed (and rightfully so) as the heroes of 9-11, as co-conspirators in bringing the buildings down.

It is perfectly clear from the context of Silverstein's statement that he was not suggesting that the building be brought down, but rather that fire fighting operations be suspended. The "terrible loss of life" he referred to was obviously the loss of scores of firefighters in the twin tower collapses, and his point was that it wasn't worth putting any more firefighters at risk, particularly in a building that had long since been evacuated.

In what parallel universe would a building owner casually suggest to the fire department that his building be brought down in a controlled demolition, as if such a thing can be engineered on the spot? And how exactly would collapsing an intact building save lives? At least one researcher claims that proof that the phrase "pull it" refers to demolishing the building can be found in the same *PBS* documentary in the statement of a rescue worker who recalled "getting ready to pull building six."

Apparently, triggering the controlled demolition of highrise buildings is a fairly common tactic during rescue operations. Everybody seems to be familiar with it and everyone speaks rather openly about it. Who knew?

There is one little problem with the 'proof,' unfortunately: WTC6 wasn't actually brought down in a controlled demolition. Like WTC7, it was completely evacuated. It was also damaged beyond repair by debris from the north tower. But it did remain standing. It is quite clear then that "pull," in this context, refers to pulling firefighters out of the building, since there was no reason for anyone to further risk their life in a building that couldn't be saved.

Far from candidly admitting that he had ordered the demolition of WTC7, what Silverstein was actually doing was lying to explain why no effort was made to control the easily controllable fires that purportedly brought the building crashing down.

Another morsel of disinformation that can be found in the skeptics' literature is exemplified by Michael Ruppert's claim that "WTC Building 7, which was not struck by an aircraft at all ... collapsed faster than gravity would permit." WTC7, along with WTC1 and WTC2, fell at *nearly* the speed that gravity would permit, indicating that the building offered virtually no resistance to the collapse. It did not, however, fall "faster than gravity would permit," which would be a physical impossibility. The only function served by inserting such absurdities into the narrative is to discredit the body of research that has been developed.

([http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/112603\\_kennedy.html](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/112603_kennedy.html))

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As fate would have it, the *Los Angeles Times* announced, as I was working on this post, that a new report on the collapse of the towers will be released by the end of the year:

Federal investigators believe the second World Trade Center tower fell much more quickly than the first because it had a more concentrated, intense fire inside, officials said Tuesday. The detailed hypothesis was discussed at a meeting of investigators with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, part of the Commerce Department. The Institute's investigators are preparing a report detailing how and why the towers collapsed after being struck by fuel-filled jetliners on Sept. 11, 2001. The report is to be released by year's end.

("9/11 Tower's Fall Tied to Intensity of Fire," *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 2004)



Apparently, Washington is preparing to add yet another layer to the cover-up with yet another entirely fraudulent report. The notion that the south tower played host to a “more concentrated, intense fire” flies in the face of all the available evidence. As previously discussed, the plane that hit the south tower clipped a corner of the building, while the north tower was hit head-on. The result was that the vast majority of the fuel from the second aircraft was ejected out the side of the building, where it burned up immediately in a massive fireball, as can be clearly seen in the photo to the left.

Also clearly visible in the photo is that, in the north tower, impacted just 16½ minutes earlier, the flames had already died down and copious amounts of thick, black smoke were pouring out of the building, indicating a smoldering, oxygen-deprived fire, not a raging inferno. The truth is that there were no “concentrated, intense fires” burning in either of the towers, as photographs, videotape, survivor accounts, and the firefighter audiotape all amply document.

There were no intense fires for the simple reason that there was no fuel available to feed such blazes. Though the general public remains convinced that jet fuel fed the infernos, it has been acknowledged that such was not the case. Experts consulted by the *Discovery Channel* (“Collapse: How the Towers Fell,” September 7, 2003) noted that jet fuel can burn quite fiercely, purportedly at temperatures approaching 2,000° F, *but not for very long*. At least one-half of the aircraft’s fuel burned outside of the towers, it was acknowledged, and the remaining half, which ignited inside the towers, would have burned up in about *eight minutes*.

Even the heavily whitewashed FEMA report concurred with that assessment: “The large quantity of jet fuel carried by each aircraft ignited upon impact into each building. A significant portion of this fuel was

consumed immediately in the ensuing fireballs. The remaining fuel is believed either to have flowed down through the buildings or to have burned off within a few minutes of the aircraft impact. The heat produced by this burning jet fuel does not by itself appear to have been sufficient to initiate the structural collapses.”

We are left then with the problem of identifying a fuel source that could have allowed the fires to continue burning for a significant amount of time at the extreme temperatures required to cause the complete failure of structural steel. In a modern commercial office building, such fuel sources are hard to come by. The cores of the WTC towers, which contained elevator shafts, stairwells, and mechanical shafts, were constructed largely of concrete, steel and drywall. The exterior skeleton was a lattice work of structural steel elements. The exterior facade was constructed of aluminum and glass. The floor slabs were composed of steel trusses, corrugated steel decking, and lightweight concrete. Interior walls were constructed of light-gauge steel studs and fire-resistant drywall. Ceilings typically consist of a steel grid system and fire-resistant mineral fiber panels.

As a general rule, none of those building materials provide much fuel for a fire. The only readily available fuel would have been some of the decorative construction materials, such as carpet and draperies, and whatever was provided by the building’s tenants, primarily office furniture and paper products. None of that would have come close to sustaining a fire of sufficient intensity to cause the collapse of the towers, which were, by the way, retrofitted with fire-sprinkler systems capable of handling routine office fires.

Even if we accept the claim that fires raged in the towers with enough intensity to cause the spontaneous failure of structural steel elements, and even if we accept that those elements failed in a uniform, perfectly symmetrical manner, and even if we simply ignore the fact that the cores of the towers were inexplicably pulverized, we still are left with no explanation of how WTC7 – which did not have an open floor plan that could have rendered it susceptible to ‘pancaking,’ and which was not hit by a fuel-laden airplane – imploded in essentially the same manner as the towers, and on the very same day.

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Let’s just suppose, for the moment, that a decision was made, at some point in time, to rid New York City of the World Trade Center towers. Under normal circumstances, that would have been nearly impossible to accomplish. Even with the most carefully controlled demolitions, it simply would not be possible to bring the gargantuan towers down without doing a considerable amount of collateral damage to surrounding buildings. And it’s a fairly safe bet that the toxic clouds of dust that blanketed much of Manhattan would not have been well received.

But if those collapses could be packaged into the Hollywood-style production known as the September 11 terr’ist attacks, then two birds could be killed with one stone: the towers could be brought down, and it could be done in the most spectacular way possible, thus traumatizing the nation and properly conditioning the people to accept the prepackaged, post-911 agenda.

If that was indeed the plan, then it appears to have been a successful one.



# September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act III, Addendum I

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Feb 23, 2005

## **ACT III, ADDENDUM 1**

This first missive was sent in by reader Dennis:

One website I found helpful in the immediate aftermath of the so-called collapses (at first referred to as being implosion-like, a few times, by unwitting, but visually honest members of the news industry), was <http://www.nyfsd.org/history.htm>. This article details the events surrounding a 12-alarm fire in a 34-storey downtown Philadelphia high rise office building on January 23, 1991. Of significance to the WTC 9/11 incidents, this high rise (1) had a structural design very similar to WTC 1 and 2, (2) had a fire which burnt out of control for 18 hours, and (3) had 10 floors destroyed...but DIDN'T COLLAPSE. I mention this article because of the importance this new study you cite gives to the supposed catastrophic impact fire had on the WTC "collapses".

Until very recently, the 1991 Philadelphia fire, and the First Interstate Bank fire in Los Angeles on May 4, 1988, were the most frequently cited comparisons to the Twin Tower fires. Both of those earlier fires burned for much longer, and at far greater intensity, than did the fires in the WTC towers, and yet both buildings somehow managed to remain standing.

We now have an even more dramatic comparison. On the night of February 12, the Windsor building in Madrid, Spain caught fire. The 32-story, steel-framed structure burned out of control for nearly twenty-four hours, at temperatures approaching an astounding 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. By the time the fire was brought under control, the building had been reduced to little more than a steel skeleton. And yet that skeleton remained standing.

Incredibly enough, the upper floors of the Windsor tower appear to have partially collapsed, almost in a pancake-like fashion. What we have here then is a slightly scaled-down version of almost exactly what we are told happened at the World Trade Center towers: a raging inferno, burning at unfathomably high temperatures, initiated a partial collapse of the upper floors of a highrise structure.

There is, of course, one major difference: the Windsor building did not disappear into a cloud of dust.



**Fire Engulfs Office Building in Madrid**

**By HAROLD HECKLE**

**Associated Press**

**MADRID, Spain Feb 12, 2005** — A raging fire swept through the upper levels of a 32-story office building in downtown Madrid early Sunday, melting it like a candle and collapsing the top floors in a shower of flaming debris.

Bright orange flames shot out the sides of the Windsor Building, which is believed to be empty and is near one of Madrid's main boulevards.

The fire started around 11:30 p.m. Saturday and was still burning out of control about three hours later. At least nine upper stories were on fire and **muffled explosions could be heard in the building.**

The cause of the blaze was not immediately known, but emergency services spokesman Javier Ayuso said it might have been a short circuit.



City officials were afraid the building might collapse entirely.

"At this point the fire can't be fought and we have to wait," said Pedro Calvo, the official in charge of the fire department and other emergency services.



Firefighters and police evacuated nearby buildings and streets for fear of a total collapse. Firefighters also started hosing down neighboring office buildings to keep the fire from spreading.

Ayuso said three firefighters were treated for smoke inhalation and exhaustion.

Construction of the Windsor Building, a landmark in Madrid's business district, began in 1973 and was completed in 1979. It was surrounded by scaffolding due to recent repairs, Ayuso said.

The building housed the offices of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, a multinational financial services company.



## **Collapse Threatens Skyscraper in Madrid**

**By ED MCCULLOUGH**

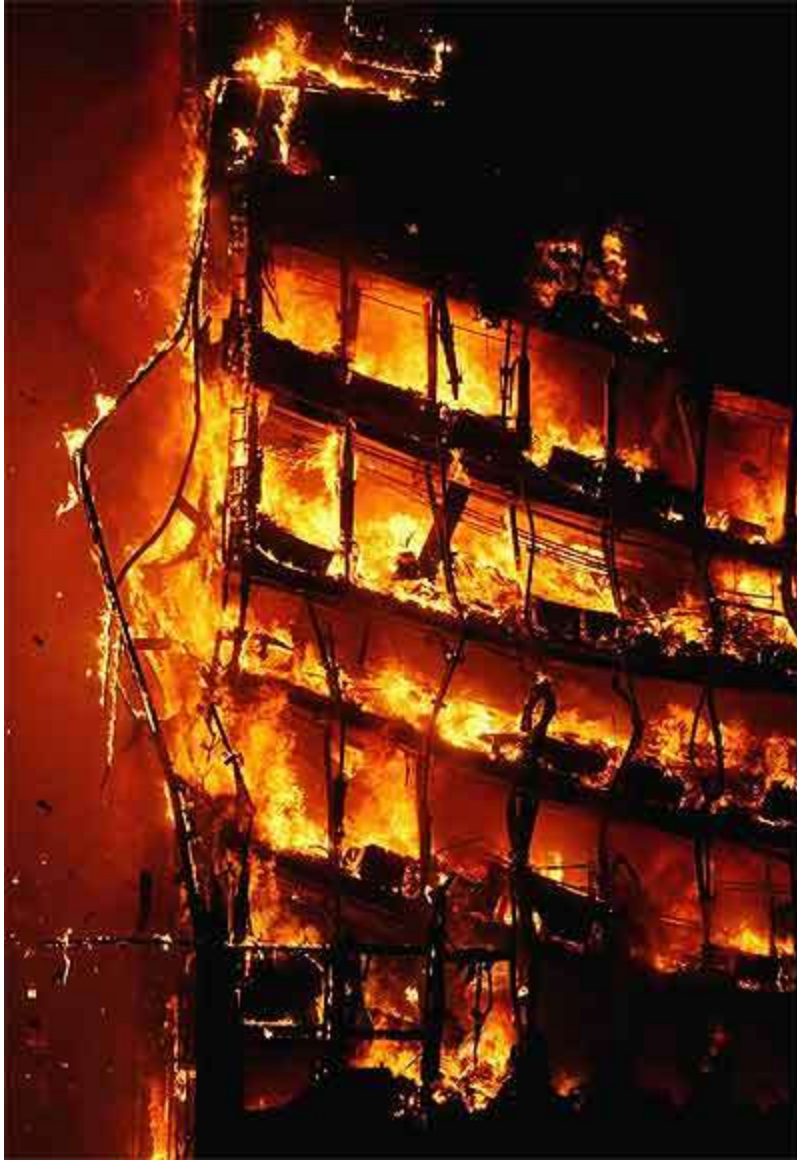
**Associated Press**

**Feb. 13, 2005** – Firefighters struggled for nearly 24 hours before finally controlling Madrid’s worst blaze in recent memory, which reduced one of the city’s tallest office buildings to a blackened hulk of twisted wreckage.

Thick smoke and temperatures that soared as high as 1,472 degrees Fahrenheit prevented firefighters from entering the 32-story Windsor building until late Sunday. The fire, which left seven people slightly injured, broke out Saturday just before midnight.







The office tower was heavily damaged but did not collapse, as had been feared. However, officials said it was unstable and closed the area around the building.

“What worries us now is its structural state because of the high temperatures it was subjected to,” said Merardo Tudelo, director of the Madrid Municipal Firefighters.

Mayor Alberto Ruiz-Gallardon said “the situation is still critical.”

Emergency officials planned to keep the area in the Spanish capital’s banking and business district cordoned off at least through Monday.



Gallardon ordered nearby businesses to remain closed for the next few days. Service on three subway lines running under or near the building would also be curtailed, he said.

"This is the biggest fire ... this city has ever had," Gallardon said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the fire, but the building was almost empty on Saturday night when the first alarm went off. Only one of seven firefighters who suffered smoke inhalation remained hospitalized Sunday, Gallardon said.

Construction of the shiny gold Windsor Building began in 1973 and was completed in 1979. It became a landmark in Madrid's business district. The building was surrounded with scaffolding due to recent repairs, and a huge crane remained perched on its roof.





### **Firefighters battle Madrid inferno**

Sunday, February 13, 2005

[CNN.com](http://www.cnn.com)

**MADRID, Spain — A fire said to be the worst in Madrid's history destroyed a skyscraper in the Spanish capital's financial district on Sunday.**

More than 100 firefighters worked to extinguish the blaze in the city's eighth-tallest building, the 32-story Windsor Tower.



“The fire is not under control,” Madrid Mayor Alberto Ruiz Gallardon told reporters. “We are all aware that we are fighting the biggest fire that the city of Madrid has had in its entire history,” he said.

“The fire department is making an extraordinary effort to stop the fire spreading to surrounding buildings,” he said.

The fire left seven people slightly injured, The Associated Press reported. Thick smoke and searing temperatures were still preventing firefighters from entering the building on Sunday night.

Gallardon told the AP the building was in danger of collapsing, and ordered nearby businesses to remain closed for the next few days. The operation of three subway lines running under or near the damaged building would also be curtailed, he said.



It was not immediately clear what caused the fire.

Magdalena Alvarez, minister of development, said a short circuit may have started the fire, but it would be investigated.



Authorities said there was no reason to believe the fire was an act of terrorism.

The building was almost empty when the first alarm went off. Only one of the seven firefighters who suffered smoke inhalation remained hospitalized Sunday, Gallardon told the AP.

Although the flames were no longer visible from outside by Sunday night, gray smoke and ash stoked by gusts of wind continued to pour from the blackened shell of the building.

Earlier in the day, several top floors collapsed onto lower ones, the AP reported. Firefighter official Fernando Munilla said the entire building — which at about 106 meters (350 feet) high is among the 10 tallest in Madrid — could collapse.



"If the partial collapses keep happening, it would be lying to say it's impossible that the whole building couldn't fall down," he said.

Emergency crews at the scene said firefighters were waiting for the temperature inside the building to drop, which they said would lessen the danger of collapse.

At their peak, temperatures reached 800 degrees Celsius (1,472 Fahrenheit), said Javier Sanz, head of Madrid's firefighters.

Construction of the shiny gold Windsor Building began in 1973 and was completed in 1979. It became a landmark structure in Madrid's business district. The building was surrounded with scaffolding because of recent repairs, and a huge crane remained perched on its roof.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are troubling questions that need to be asked here about how this fire started, how it spread so quickly, and why it burned with such ferocity. But whatever the cause, it is clear from these images that this was no run-of-the-mill fire. For nearly twenty-four hours, the Windsor building sustained temperatures that, according to official mythology, brought one of the Twin Towers down *in less than an hour*. And despite the claims in these reports that the Windsor tower melted “like a candle,” or was reduced to a “blackened hulk of twisted wreckage,” the building’s steel framework withstood the inferno.

Notably, the entire core of the structure is still intact (and still supporting the large crane temporarily mounted on the roof), as are all of the lower floors of the building — even though the tower continued to burn at exceedingly high temperatures for many hours after the partial collapses began. What the Windsor fire revealed, quite dramatically, is that even if the WTC towers had been subjected to ferocious fires, and even if those fires had instigated the collapse of the upper floor assemblies, we are still lacking an explanation for the complete and total destruction of the buildings.

So what was it again that caused the collapse of the Twin Towers (and WTC7)?

\* \* \* \* \*

When I posted Part III of this series, on October 27, 2004, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) was hard at work on a report that was allegedly going to explain how fires brought the Twin Towers crashing down. Two weeks later, on November 11, Kevin Ryan of Underwriters Laboratories dispatched the following letter to Dr. Frank Gayle of NIST.

The response to Ryan’s correspondence was almost immediate: Kevin Ryan was fired.

Dr. Gayle,

Having recently reviewed your team’s report of 10/19/04, I felt the need to contact you directly.

As I’m sure you know, the company I work for certified the steel components used in the construction of the WTC buildings. In requesting information from both our CEO and Fire Protection business manager last year, I learned that they did not agree on the essential aspects of the story, except for one thing — that the samples we certified met all requirements...

They suggested we all be patient and understand that UL was working with your team, and that tests would continue through this year. I’m aware of UL’s attempts to help, including performing tests on models of the floor assemblies. But the results of these tests appear to indicate that the buildings should have easily withstood the thermal stress caused by pools of burning jet fuel.

There continues to be a number of “experts” making public claims about how the WTC buildings fell. One such person, Dr. Hyman Brown from the WTC construction crew, claims that the buildings collapsed due to fires at 2000F melting the steel (1). He states “What caused the building to collapse is the airplane fuel...burning at 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The steel in that five-floor area melts.” Additionally, the newspaper that quotes him says “Just-released preliminary findings from a National Institute of Standards and Technology study of the World Trade Center collapse support Brown’s theory.”

We know that the steel components were certified to ASTM E119. The time temperature curves for this standard require the samples to be exposed to temperatures around 2000F for several hours. And as we



all agree, the steel applied met those specifications. Additionally, I think we can all agree that even un-fireproofed steel will not melt until reaching red-hot temperatures of nearly 3000F (2). Why Dr. Brown would imply that 2000F would melt the high-grade steel used in those buildings makes no sense at all.

The results of your recently published metallurgical tests seem to clear things up (3), and support your team's August 2003 update as detailed by the Associated Press (4), in which you were ready to "rule out weak steel as a contributing factor in the collapse." The evaluation of paint deformation and spheroidization seem very straightforward, and you noted that the samples available were adequate for the investigation. Your comments suggest that the steel was probably exposed to temperatures of only about 500F (250C), which is what one might expect from a thermodynamic analysis of the situation.

However the summary of the new NIST report seems to ignore your findings, as it suggests that these low temperatures caused exposed bits of the building's steel core to "soften and buckle." (5) Additionally this summary states that the perimeter columns softened, yet your findings make clear that "most perimeter panels (157 of 160) saw no temperature above 250C." To soften steel for the purposes of forging, normally temperatures need to be above 1100C (6). However, this new summary report suggests that much lower temperatures were able to not only soften the steel in a matter of minutes, but lead to rapid structural collapse.

This story just does not add up. If steel from those buildings did soften or melt, I'm sure we can all agree that this was certainly not due to jet fuel fires of any kind, let alone the briefly burning fires in those towers. That fact should be of great concern to all Americans. Alternatively, the contention that this steel did fail at temperatures around 250C suggests that the majority of deaths on 9/11 were due to a safety-related failure. That suggestion should be of great concern to my company.

There is no question that the events of 9/11 are the emotional driving force behind the War on Terror. And the issue of the WTC collapse is at the crux of the story of 9/11. My feeling is that your metallurgical tests are at the crux of the crux of the crux. Either you can make sense of what really happened to those buildings, and communicate this quickly, or we all face the same destruction and despair that come from global decisions based on disinformation and "chatter".

Thanks for your efforts to determine what happened on that day. You may know that there are a number of other current and former government employees that have risked a great deal to help us to know the truth. I've copied one of these people on this message as a sign of respect and support. I believe your work could also be a nucleus of fact around which the truth, and thereby global peace and justice, can grow again. Please do what you can to quickly eliminate the confusion regarding the ability of jet fuel fires to soften or melt structural steel.

1. <http://www.boulderweekly.com/archive/102104/coverstory.html>
2. CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics, 61st edition, pg D-187
3. <http://wtc.nist.gov/media/P3MechanicalandMetAnalysisofSteel.pdf>
4. <http://www.voicesofsept11.org/archive/911ic/082703.php>
5. <http://wtc.nist.gov/media/NCSTACWTCStatusFINAL101904WEB2.pdf> (pg 11)
6. <http://www.forging.org/FIERF/pdf/ffaaMacSleyne.pdf>

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# September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act III, Addendum II

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Jun 10, 2005

## **ACT III, ADDENDUM II**

Earlier in this series, I speculated that the World Trade Center towers had very likely outlived their usefulness, if in fact they ever had any. As it turns out, [Business Week Online](#) covered that same ground shortly after the attacks, on October 5, 2001, when the editors ran an excerpt from a 1999 book by Eric Darton (*Divided We Stand*, Basic Books):

Is it possible to imagine the World Trade Center as a ruin? ...

A structure begins to fall into a state of ruin when it is no longer supported by the productive relations that created it. But its transformation is complete when it is no longer physically viable and the social imagination that gave it purpose has fled or been banished. Once a building is abandoned at the level of meaning, it is only a matter of time before physical decay upholds its end of the bargain.

In this sense, the World Trade Center came prepackaged as a ruin ... From an economic standpoint, the trade center — subsidized since its inception — has never functioned, nor was it intended to function, unprotected in the rough-and-tumble real estate marketplace. And in the thirty years since it was built, the social forces of which it remains so highly visible an artifact have definitively realigned.

Relationships among banks and developers, public corporations, the city government, the statehouses of New York and New Jersey, and even the federal government have all been transformed to a point where it is inconceivable that the World Trade Center could be built today — or even for a moment considered a workable or desirable project ... Viewed as a crowning ruin, the towers take on a new symbolic power — they become eloquent in transmitting the drama of their own vanished moment.

[...]

When the World Trade Center was bombed in February, 1993, at the age of twenty, it had finally begun generating profits to offset the chronic losses the PA [Port Authority] sustained running the PATH commuter line. But it was already passing its prime as office space, overtaken by a generation of more recent, cybernetically “smart” buildings with higher ceilings and greater built-in electrical capacity. To

maintain the trade center as class-A office space commanding top rents, the PA would have had to spend \$800 million rebuilding its electrical, electronic communications, and cooling systems.

[...]

The adversary faced by the PA was not a cabal of terrorists. The threat originated in a realignment of social powers represented by a triumvirate of officials elected in the early 1990s: George Pataki, Christie Todd Whitman, and Rudolph Giuliani [*Editor's note: if that's not "a cabal of terrorists," then I don't know what is*], respectively the governors of New York and New Jersey and the mayor of New York City. Although differing on many issues, all three vigorously pursued policies of cutting social services while consolidating and privatizing public agencies. At its most ideologically distilled, their shared doctrine — popularly associated with Republican conservatives but espoused by many Democrats — sought to re-create the public sector as a function of the marketplace ...

Viewed from this perspective, the Port Authority ceases to exist as a public institution created to address the New York region's economic and social needs and becomes instead an assemblage of assets, to be broken up according to the dictates of the market. But "capturing" the value of such assets, of course, is predicated upon the dismemberment of the whole.

([BW Online | October 5, 2001 | "The Process of Creating a Ruin"](#))

As will be recalled, a major "dismemberment of the whole" just happened to occur — purely by chance, I'm sure — in July 2001, when ownership of the World Trade Center transferred from the Port Authority to Silverstein Properties and Westfield America, as reported by the *Financial Times* (September 14, 2001):

The owners of the demolished World Trade Center in lower Manhattan acquired the buildings just two months ago under a 99-year lease allowing them to walk away from their investment in the event of "an act of terrorism." The owners, Silverstein Properties and Westfield America — a shopping mall specialist — purchased the buildings from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for \$3.2bn in July and completed the financing just two weeks ago ... It is understood that the buildings are insured for more than \$3bn, enough to cover rebuilding costs.

Apparently the best way to capture the value of these particular assets, after separating them from the whole, was to destroy them.

While revisiting Darton's book, *Business Week Online* also posted a short Q&A session with the author. Some of the more intriguing dialogue from that interview is reproduced here:

*Q: Why is this terrible attack so hard to comprehend?*

A: Whoever did this thing really got us where we live: [The World Trade Center] was a tremendous psychic landmark, as well as a physical landmark. [The attack] really undermined our sense of even what Newtonian physics is. It's hard for most of us to imagine that something so solid could be pulverized so quickly and so completely. I think it's spooky for people, on a deep level.

*Q: Why did the World Trade Center become so important to us?*

A: When I was looking around for its emblematic content, I realized by itself it didn't have emblematic content. It was, in a sense, empty. The Trade Center really appeared, if anything, to be a gateway, a

gateway through which we passed as a culture from an Industrial Age into the Information Age, this New World we live in.

So I came to see it as a gateway, for New York specifically because it coincided with the eclipse of New York's port. New York, prior to the WTC moment, was a city that could finance, make, and transport things. Now, it's largely a symbolic economy, based on real estate and finance. My feeling is that, now that [the towers] are physically gone...we have crossed another threshold.

*Q: Do you think there will be a move toward the suburbs and less densely populated areas? Or do you think Manhattan and other cities will remain vibrant?*

A: There has been, for years, pressure from different sources to decentralize the major cities. There was kind of a war going on between the various factions of the ruling class in this country over whether to get out of cities or to concentrate in cities ... There has been a large-scale movement to decentralize, and I can't but imagine that [the terrorist attacks] won't help but fuel that somehow.

[\(BW Online | October 5, 2001 | What the Twin Towers Stood For\)](#)

Two years before Darton published his book, and four years before the events of September 11, 2001, *Scientific American* pondered whether *all skyscrapers* had become obsolete (William Mitchell "Do We Still Need Skyscrapers?," December 1997). The magazine's expressed opinion was that the need for centralization of the workforce was quickly becoming a thing of the past: "The burgeoning Digital Revolution has been reducing the need to bring office workers together, face-to-face, in expensive downtown locations," wrote Mitchell. "Efficient telecommunications have diminished the importance of centrality and correspondingly increased the attractiveness of less expensive suburban sites that are more convenient to the labor force."

Not to mention the even more attractive option (from the point of view of our corporate masters) of bypassing the suburbs in favor of 'outsourcing' office work to 'Third World' labor markets ...

Could the era of towering downtown skylines be headed the way of the horse-and-buggy? And if so, could hastening the decentralization of major cities be yet another hidden motive for carrying out the attacks of September 11? As has been frequently noted on this website, one of the overriding goals of our fearless leaders is the complete atomization of society — the shredding of all social, cultural and familial bonds. The reason for that, of course, is that a population set adrift, each individual in his or her own little cybersphere of existence, is much easier to deceive, much easier to control, and, lest we forget, much easier to thin. It certainly makes sense then that there would be, at this time, a covert push to decentralize large population centers.

By the way, I should probably add here that decentralization seems to be — coincidentally, I'm sure — the very same agenda that the 'Peak Oil' crowd is pitching. Hmmm ...

\* \* \* \* \*

If we are now bearing witness to the early stages of the death of the modern era of centralization, then it seems only fitting that we pause here to take a fond look back at the events surrounding the birth of that era.

It all began, as is so frequently the case with major re-weavings of the social fabric, with an unnatural disaster that traumatized the nation. On the night of October 8, 1871, a fire began to sweep through the very heart of Chicago's financial district. By the time it burned out, on the morning of October 10, it had blazed a path some 4 miles long and 3/4 of a mile wide through the city.

Fully 1/3 of Chicago's buildings were destroyed in the blaze, including virtually all of those in the city's financial district. Hundreds of businesses were reduced to smoldering heaps, including some of the Windy City's top hotels, restaurants, stores, banks, museums, and theaters. There was a human cost as well; three hundred people lost their lives and tens of thousands more were left homeless. In the aftermath, amid wildly exaggerated reports of violence and looting, martial law was declared; quicker than you can say "USA PATRIOT Act," federal troops were dispatched.

To the American people, it was a national tragedy roughly on par with the World Trade Center disaster. But to the ruling elite, it was, by any honest analysis, a very conveniently timed gift.

Chicago, you see, had a bit of a problem. Due to its central location and its rail and waterway connections, it was a natural hub of commerce for the North American continent. As such, it was one of America's fastest growing cities, and all indications were that it was going to continue its rapid growth. Indeed, it would ultimately grow up to become the nation's third largest city. But before that could happen, Chicago needed a fresh start.

It was a young city – incorporated just 34 years before the Great Fire – and it had, by necessity, grown up quickly. Much of the city was, therefore, quite shabbily constructed. Even the city's most prestigious buildings were in need of constant maintenance and renovation; some had been deemed unsafe by the local press. And space for new buildings was quickly running out.

Virtually all buildings in those days were, at most, four or five stories tall, owing both to the limitations of brick, mortar and wood construction, and to the reluctance of most people to climb endless flights of stairs. But by the time of the Great Fire in 1871, all of that was about to change, thanks in no small part to the development and refinement of the elevator by various members of the Otis family. The invention of the elevator, combined with a revolutionary new steel-framed building design that would be dubbed the "Chicago Skeleton," was about to render all of Chicago's business district obsolete. And all of those obsolete buildings were sitting on prime real estate.

The problem, in a nutshell, was that the only direction to build in Chicago was straight up. And the only way to do that was to clear away all the shoddily constructed brick-and-mortar buildings standing in the way. But that, of course, was going to be a tough-sell with the people of Chicago, just as demolishing a section of Lower Manhattan would have been a tough-sell with the people of New York.

Luckily then, the Great Chicago Fire roared through town at just about the right time. Just as a forest can be cleansed and rejuvenated through fire, so too was the city of Chicago. Soon, great buildings began to grow from the ashes of what had come before. The first was the ten-story Home Insurance Building, considered to be the world's first "skyscraper." It was soon eclipsed by much taller edifices, including the imposing, 302-foot-tall Masonic Temple that stood, for a time, as the world's tallest building.

By the early 1990s, Chicago's downtown was littered with skyscrapers. From 1880 to 1890, the city's population had more than doubled and land value had increased by some 700%. Like a Phoenix, Chicago

had risen from the ashes, and it would continue to rise, although its skyscrapers would soon be eclipsed by the even more ostentatious monoliths that began to grow in New York City.

As with the September 11 attacks, the primary beneficiaries of the Chicago Fire were the moneyed elite. But who were the perpetrators? Who was to blame for the cost paid by the American people?

According to the authoritative sources that I have consulted, the fire was started by ... (uhmm, wait a minute here, this doesn't sound quite right ... let me just check my notes real quickly and ... yeah, that's what I have down here, so I'll guess I'll go with it) ... so, like I was saying, the Great Chicago Fire was started by, uhh, Mrs. O' Leary's cow.

Whew! I can't believe I got through that one with a straight face.

So, what have we learned here today? Perhaps it is that the lies sold to the American people became more sophisticated in the 130 years between the Great Chicago Fire and the 9-11 attacks. Or maybe not. It may be tempting to conclude that only a less sophisticated generation of Americans could be sold an absurd tale about a cow and a lantern. But could that earlier generation have been sold a story about some guy named Osama sending his merry band of terr'ists into town to start the fire by using themselves as human torches — after, of course, killing some time in one of Chicago's finest tittie bars, and after thoughtfully leaving behind a passport, a copy of the Koran, and a gas can?

\* \* \* \* \*

And now it is time once again to dip into the mailbag to see what is on the minds of readers. This first query comes from Dylan:

The one question I have from my initial quick read is this: Doesn't it seem incongruous that the perpetrators would be concerned about minimizing the loss of life from the towers' collapse, as you suggest they may have taken steps to do? Wouldn't the nation as a whole be more traumatized if more people had been killed?

While a higher death toll would obviously be more traumatizing for the American people, I think that part of the answer to Dylan's question, in the immortal words of the real estate industry, is "location, location, location." If this operation had been carried out in, say, Harlem, or South-Central Los Angeles, then minimizing loss of life would probably not have been a high priority. But this operation was aimed specifically at bringing down the World Trade Center towers, which resided in the very heart of the corporate beast.

The other part of the answer is that, in the days immediately following the attacks, the actual casualty figures were irrelevant, since the American people were initially sold much higher figures. In those early days of wall-to-wall coverage, when maximum trauma was being inflicted, our trusted media mouthpieces spoke in hushed tones of tens of thousands of yet-to-be recovered bodies. We probably all remember Rudy Giuliani, suddenly revered as "America's Mayor," ominously ordering up enough body bags to accommodate those bloated estimates. It took time for those early estimates to slowly creep down to the currently accepted figures, and by then the damage had been done to the American psyche.



And what was the nature of that damage? I recently stumbled across the writings of some guy named [Tim Boucher](#), who has penned an accurate and concise appraisal of the nature and purpose of the trauma inflicted upon the American people:

Do you remember watching it all unfold on television and feeling somehow like it “wasn’t real”? That’s a crucial symptom of traumatic dissociation. Your mind splits, blinks off for a moment, creating a critical space which can be filled with a new story, a new mythos. Before that, almost none of us gave a shit about terrorism or national security. But as a result of this trauma-based rite of passage, we were suddenly conditioned to a completely new value system – one in which everything we held dear before was turned upside-down: personal freedom, the Bill of Rights, etc. It’s virtually identical to what happens to a child in a traditional culture who is re-aligned to adulthood through ritual circumcision and the supporting transformative mythos. Maybe the World Trade Center tumbling down was the ritual circumcision of the American psyche. We are now adults. We are now warriors.

I don’t think I have much to add to that.

\* \* \* \* \*

Next is a question from an anonymous reader:

Now let me say here that I have never been satisfied with the official story, and that my opinion has always been that this is an inside job. However, there is something that I don’t understand... maybe you can comment on this. If the towers were detonated from within, then why would the bombers detonate the explosives according to a standard demolition procedure? If the bombers had wanted it to appear that the buildings had collapsed due to the impact of planes, then why not set up the explosives in a more random fashion? ... Of course, it’s probably a moot point given that the official story was swallowed by the public so easily.

As far as I know, there wasn’t any other option. For the handful of companies specializing in the controlled implosion of tall structures, building demolition is a relatively exact science. The goal is to bring the building down with a minimum of collateral damage, and accomplishing that requires that the explosive charges be very precisely placed and then detonated in a very specific sequence. There is no way to do that and make it look random.

It is certainly possible that, on a subconscious level at least, the perpetrators *wanted* the public to know that the towers were not brought down by airplane crashes. That sort of cloaked revelation seems to be, in many cases, a component of the traumatization process. What better way, after all, to disempower and demoralize the American people than through an unspoken acknowledgment that the enemy is within, and can act with impunity?

My hunch is that the official story of the collapse of the towers wasn’t necessarily swallowed all that easily. I suspect that what was sold to the public was, as Eric Darton suggested, “spooky for people, on a deep level.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Next up is some feedback from researcher Jeff Strahl:

Just a couple of things re the generally excellent Newsletter 69. In a couple of sections, the text is mangled by graphics when I print it, esp. the part about WTC 7 next to the map of the area, and the part with two adjacent graphics about the core. And the last couple of paragraphs seem confused, a strange way to end the thing, just seems to trail off. I don't understand your contention about the South Tower being damaged more significantly when just a corner was damaged, it was much much easier for the load to be transferred given the core was pretty intact and fewer perimeter columns were damaged, in addition to which most of the fuel was consumed in the external fireball, the fires were much less intense. The lower elevation is made up for by thicker beams, as the beams were tapered.

As for the problems when printing the post, the only response I really have is to suggest that it is probably best not to try to print it. That should alleviate the problem. The other option would be for me to attempt to fix it, but that would probably require that I actually be able to read and edit HTML, or possess some other rudimentary level of computer expertise – which might be the case in a perfect world, but this isn't a perfect world, as evidenced by the fact that George Bush is still my illegitimate president, Arnold Schwarzenegger is still my illegitimate governor, and "Dr. Phil" is still on the air.

As for the lame ending to the series, that was primarily due to the fact that it was actually a fake ending to buy me some time until I finished all the Addenda. When I get to the real ending, it's going to be a really good one. You'll see. I'm thinking of calling it, "Act IV: Revenge of the Sith." I probably shouldn't mention it yet though because now someone will likely steal that title. If that should happen, remember that you read it here first.

As for my contention about the damage to the South Tower, I think it is pretty obvious that I was talking out of my ass when I wrote that, but I still think it is a little rude of you to bring it up. Yes, the core suffered less damage in the South Tower strike; and yes, fewer perimeter columns were damaged; and yes, the fires were indeed less intense; and yes, the columns were tapered, with the bases being absolutely massive and the tops being considerably less so. But even so, I still contend that, with all the strife in the world today, it is an inappropriate time to dwell on the flaws in my work.

As near as I can tell, my comments indicating that the South Tower suffered more damage and was therefore brought down first, before the upper stories could topple over, were a holdover from my previous post on the collapse of the towers, and they really should have been edited out.

My initial belief was that the beginnings of an actual partial collapse of the South Tower necessitated the instigation of the planned controlled collapse. But after discovering a photograph of the same phenomenon occurring immediately before the collapse of the North Tower, and after realizing that if the South Tower were to have suffered a partial collapse due to the initial impact damage, it would have occurred almost immediately after the impact, I came to a different conclusion.

I now believe that the initial toppling of the upper floors of the towers was not a condition that dictated the sequence of the collapses, but was rather an indication that the controlled demolitions had already begun. Even as those massive blocks began to topple above the impact points, as depicted in photos, their structural integrity had already been thoroughly undermined from within, and they were beginning to come apart even as they appeared to topple.

The only reasonable explanation for this phenomenon, visible in the collapse of both towers, is that all of the central core columns of both towers were instantaneously dropped and cut into sections, thus

pulling the floors and the outer shells of the buildings down towards the center of each tower's footprint. And the only way that that could happen is through the elaborately choreographed detonation of very carefully placed explosive charges.

My belief now is that the South Tower was brought down first not to preempt a potentially disastrous partial collapse, but because it was the tower that was cleared of occupants first (as much as was possible). I hope this clears up any confusion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of the feedback that I have received on Act III, the most popular topic (or perhaps I should say the most *unpopular* topic) is my commentary on the infamous quote from Larry Silverstein. "Why would you let Silverstein off the hook for his incriminating comment?" ask incredulous readers. According to some readers, I may have gone so far as to have "provided him with an alibi." Some respondents have even noted my obvious affiliation with the MOSSAD (an organization within which, as we all know, I head the secretive and powerful Irish Catholic division).

\*Sigh\* I guess I'm going to have to run through this again.

When confronted with any new piece of evidence, no matter how tempting it may appear to be, it is essential that that evidence be rigorously examined to determine whether it does indeed have merit. In fact, the more tempting the evidence is – the more it is touted as a 'smoking gun' – the more skeptical one should be. The danger, you see, is that if you let that piece of evidence become the centerpiece of your case, and then the bottom unexpectedly falls out of that centerpiece, then your case no longer has any credibility, no matter how strong your other evidence may be.

With that in mind, let's take another look now at the Silverstein quote (view the video clip [here](#)):

I remember getting a call from the, uhh, Fire Department Commander, telling me that they were not sure they were going to be able to contain the fire. I said, "You know, we've had such terrible loss of life, maybe the smartest thing to do is, is pull it." Uhh, and they made that decision to pull, and then we watched the building collapse.

As a disembodied quote, stripped of context, Silverstein's words could very easily be interpreted as a candid admission that the building was deliberately brought down. It is, to be sure, a rather ambiguously worded statement. Context, therefore, is all important.

The first thing that must be considered is the context in which Silverstein made the statement. Overlooked by many 9-11 skeptics is that this was not a spontaneous, off-the-cuff remark by the WTC's new leaseholder. It was not uttered during a live press conference or during a live appearance on a cable 'news' shout-a-thon. It was not, in other words, an unscripted response to an unexpected question, nor was it a statement that, once uttered, could not be expunged from the public record.

To the contrary, the Silverstein quote comes from a friendly interview that was taped and edited for inclusion in a documentary film that was later aired on the public airwaves, for all the world to see, just over a year after the events of September 11, 2001. The purpose of the film, as with all televised documentaries concerning the events of that day, was to further sell the American people on the sanctity of the official 9-11 story. It was, in essence, a state-sponsored propaganda film.

Larry Silverstein certainly had ample time to consider his statement both before and after making it. If he had inadvertently incriminated himself, he would surely have immediately recognized that fact, as would the filmmakers, whose goal doesn't seem to have been to bring the truth about 9-11 to the American people. Why then would a supposed 'smoking gun' admission have made it into the final version of the film? Was everyone involved with this production asleep at the wheel during the editing process? Or has *PBS* suddenly become the voice of truth – but only in this one specific instance?

Also to be considered is the context in which Silverstein's notorious segment appears in the film. Here is the narration that immediately precedes Silverstein's statement: "[WTC] Seven had been cleared faster than the rest of the site, and there had been no bodies to recover. Pelted by debris when the North Tower collapsed, Seven burned until late afternoon, allowing occupants to evacuate to safety."

I doubt that *PBS* has set any records here, but that's a fairly impressive pack of lies they managed to bundle into that second sentence. WTC7 was not, in reality, "pelted by debris" from the North Tower, but was in fact quite intact right up until the moment that it spontaneously collapsed. It also did not burn all day, at least not with fires of any significance. And the building's occupants, including the helpful folks staffing the emergency command center, were evacuated very early in the day — long before "late afternoon."

There is a more important issue here, however, than the fact that the statement is a series of outright lies. Take another look at how those lies have been strung together: "*Seven burned until late afternoon, allowing occupants to evacuate to safety.*" The *PBS* gang is not telling us that *in spite of the fact* that the building was allegedly ablaze all day, occupants were nevertheless able to evacuate to safety. No, they are saying that it is precisely *because* the building burned all day that all the occupants were able to evacuate.

I think most readers will agree that it is not often that you hear someone say: "You know what? It's a damned good thing that that building burned all day like that so that all those people could get out of there." But September 11, as we all know, was a day like no other. Employing the peculiar logic and physics of September 11, we can easily determine that the message that the narrator wished to convey was that it was fortunate for all concerned that WTC7 didn't collapse fairly quickly, as was the case with the Pentagon and both WTC towers, but rather held out for most of the day before its inevitable collapse. Because that is, as we all know, what buildings did on that particular day – even buildings that were not directly involved in the attacks.

Having planted in the viewer's mind the absurd notion that the collapse of WTC7 was not a matter of "if," but "when," the filmmakers then segue directly into Silverstein's statement, which, in case anyone has forgotten, goes something like this:

I remember getting a call from the, uhh, Fire Department Commander, telling me that they were not sure they were going to be able to contain the fire. I said, "You know, we've had such terrible loss of life, maybe the smartest thing to do is, is pull it." Uhh, and they made that decision to pull, and then we watched the building collapse.

There are at least two possible interpretations of that statement. The first one, offered on numerous 9-11 skeptics' websites, is that the phrase "pull it" refers to performing a controlled demolition. The problem with that interpretation, however, is that the statement then makes no sense. As we have

already seen, the “terrible loss of life” in Manhattan that day was directly attributable to the collapse of the Twin Towers. If Silverstein was feigning concern for the loss of life that day, and expressing an interest in avoiding any further loss of life, then why would he recommend instigating the collapse of yet another building?

Another possible interpretation of Silverstein’s statement, as I noted previously, is that the phrase “pull it” refers to suspending firefighting operations – ‘pulling’ firefighters out of the supposedly burning building. Using that interpretation, Silverstein’s statement begins to make sense, because the best way to avoid the further loss of life – particularly among firefighters, who took heavy casualties in both tower collapses – would have been to cease firefighting operations in WTC7 (if it had actually been ablaze and in danger of collapse, and if there had been any actual firefighting operations in progress). And it makes perfect sense that Silverstein, as the leaseholder, would make such a recommendation to a Fire Department Commander, thus relieving the FDNY of liability for failing to work diligently to save his building. It makes no sense, on the other hand, that Silverstein would recommend to a representative of the Fire Department that his building be immediately brought down in a controlled manner. As far as I know, the FDNY is not qualified to stage such a spectacle.

If we look at Silverstein’s statement in conjunction with the narration that immediately precedes it, there doesn’t appear to be any great mystery about what was said. The narrator first informs us that there were no bodies to recover in the rubble of WTC7, and then he begins to explain why: all the building’s occupants had been able to safely evacuate before the collapse. Silverstein then jumps in to add that there were also no firefighters in the building at the time of the collapse because he and a Fire Department official had made a timely decision to pull them out.

There are, unfortunately, a couple of problems with the benign interpretation of Silverstein’s statement. The first is that the peculiar wording of Silverstein’s final comment is difficult to explain away, since he seems to be saying that the building collapsed as a direct result of the decision to “pull it”: *“they made that decision to pull, and then we watched the building collapse.”* It is possible, however, though perhaps not plausible to many, that Silverstein was saying something entirely different. It is possible that he intended his comment to be interpreted as having a silent “and it’s a damned good thing they did” inserted into it, as in “they made that decision to pull and it’s a damned good thing they did, because those men barely had time to get out of there before we watched the building collapse.”

It is possible, in fact, that the qualifying clause wasn’t actually silent at all. It occurred to me, after repeated viewings of the video clip, that Silverstein is no longer on camera when he makes that final comment, but is instead speaking in voiceover. There is therefore no way to determine if his statement has been edited. It seems to me that it is entirely possible that Silverstein’s words were carefully scripted and edited to deliberately create ambiguity.

The other problem with a benign interpretation is that the word “pull” is clearly used elsewhere in the film to refer to the controlled demolition of WTC6. (As will be recalled, I previously stated that such a reference couldn’t be to a controlled collapse since WTC6 didn’t collapse on September 11. However, after viewing the clip, it is clear that the collapse referred to was part of the clean-up operation, not the events of 9-11-01, and the word “pull” clearly is used to refer to a controlled demolition. Oops. My bad.)

The chances of a relatively obscure phrase like “pull it” appearing twice in the same documentary film, with entirely different meanings for each occurrence, would seem to be pretty slim, to say the least. And

yet, in the case of WTC6, the phrase clearly refers to a controlled demolition, while in the case of WTC7, such an interpretation renders Silverstein's statement incomprehensible.

So what are we to make of all this? It seems that there are at least three possible interpretations of Silverstein's statement: the benign one, in which Silverstein was essentially giving his consent to suspend firefighting activities; the nefarious one, in which Silverstein was ordering the (impossible to spontaneously engineer) controlled demolition of one of his buildings; and the possibly even more nefarious one, in which Silverstein was essentially planting a red herring in the 9-11 skeptics movement by delivering a very carefully crafted bit of deliberate ambiguity.

I previously subscribed to the first interpretation, but after reconsidering the issue, I am now leaning heavily towards the third possibility. It wouldn't surprise me, in fact, if the original interview tapes were to reveal that Silverstein actually made a much less ambiguous statement. But what do I know? After all, I obviously draw my paycheck from the MOSSAD. And as we all know, the MOSSAD, and Israeli Zionists in general, control the weak, pathetic little country that we call America.

There is one thing about that that puzzles me, however – one thing that I can't seem to get a handle on. I've given this some thought, you see, and this is what I have deduced: if the nation of Israel were to suddenly cease to exist (and this is just a hypothetical situation to make a point, not an endorsement of the destruction of the nation of Israel, so calm the fuck down already), the United States would suffer at least a temporary loss of influence in the oil-soaked Middle East, but would otherwise carry on with business as usual, forcibly exerting its influence over much of the rest of the world; but if the United States were to suddenly cease to exist, then Israel would, I would think, either quickly learn to live peacefully with its neighbors or quickly find itself living on borrowed time.

It has always been my understanding that it is the puppet that is dependent upon the puppeteer. But maybe like everything else since September 11, that has changed as well.

## September 11, 2001 Revisited: Act IV, Part I

by [Dave McGowan](#) | Nov 4, 2006

### **ACT IV: PART I**

*We all know the inspiring story of Flight 93, of the heroic passengers who forced the hijacked plane to the ground, sacrificing themselves to save the lives of others. The only trouble is: it may simply not be true ... The shortage of available facts did not prevent the creation of an instant legend – a legend that the US government and the US media were pleased to propagate, and that the American public have been eager, for the most part, to accept as fact.* John Carlin "Unanswered Questions: The Mystery of Flight 93," The Independent, August 13, 2002

Before the official spin set in and United Airlines Flight 93 became forever known as the "Let's Roll" flight, immortalized in numerous articles, web postings, books and movies, early reports from local journalists on the scene strongly suggested a much different scenario than the one sold to the American people. So too does all the available photographic evidence. And the overwhelming majority of



eyewitness accounts also paint a much different picture of the fate of Flight 93 than the story sold by Washington and its media cohorts.

That official story, of course, holds that a Boeing 757 that took off for San Francisco, California out of Newark, New Jersey at 8:42 AM, well past its scheduled liftoff time, was hijacked somewhere over Pennsylvania by four knife-wielding terrorists, all wearing red bandannas, with one sporting a fake bomb strapped around his waist. At about 9:35 AM, the aircraft abruptly turned around somewhere over the Cleveland area and began heading back towards Washington, presumably with the intention of impacting a target of strategic importance. From about 9:30 until just before 10:00 AM, as the aircraft headed east over Ohio and Pennsylvania, numerous passengers and crew members frantically placed calls to loved ones. During some of those calls, passengers learned of the attacks in New York and, quickly deducing what their likely fate would be, decided to attempt to overpower the hijackers and gain control of the aircraft. During the ensuing struggle, control of the plane was lost and it plummeted to the ground, plowing into abandoned coal-mining land near Shanksville, Pennsylvania at 10:06 AM, killing all forty-four people on board (seven crew members, four hijackers and thirty-three passengers).

Needless to say, Hollywood just loves the Flight 93 story, with its iconic images of the heroism and patriotism of ordinary Americans. And there quite likely was heroism exhibited aboard that aircraft that day. But perpetuating a lie does nothing to honor the memory of those who died on September 11, particularly if that lie is brazenly exploited by the very people responsible for the death and destruction that day. If we are to do more than just crassly exploit the dead, we first have to understand how they really died.

Despite the magnitude of the events of September 11, 2001, and despite the monumental changes in our lives that have occurred in the aftermath of those attacks, the vast majority of Americans have never bothered to look at any of the details of what happened that day. Having read the above one-paragraph summary of the saga of Flight 93, you, the reader, probably already know more about what supposedly happened in Shanksville that day than the average American. As a nation, we have accepted that our world must fundamentally change as a result of what happened that day, and yet we can't be bothered with actually taking the time to look at what really did happen that day. We have accepted the notion that torture is now a legitimate tool of the state, and that anyone deemed an enemy of that state can be tried and convicted with 'evidence' that need never be revealed. In doing so, we have sacrificed not only our most basic rights, and not only the lives of our sons and daughters, but, most tragically of all, our very humanity, and we have done so on blind faith, never bothering to look at any evidence beyond the endlessly replayed images of crashing jets and collapsing towers.

To say that this is a pathetic state of affairs would be quite an understatement.

Most Americans probably assume that they saw footage of a crashed airplane in Pennsylvania sometime during the day of September 11, 2001, or shortly thereafter. We were, after all, provided with nonstop coverage of the attacks across the television dial for several weeks, so there was certainly ample time to air some footage of the smoldering wreckage of Flight 93, or at least some eyewitnesses describing the wreckage of Flight 93, or maybe a location interview with a rescue worker describing the harrowing task of recovering bodies. But though we may think that we saw such images amid the chaos of that day, we most certainly did not – just as we did not see any footage of aircraft wreckage at the Pentagon.

And we never will, for the simple reason that images such as those do not exist – and if someone were going to manufacture them using Hollywood wizardry, they would have already done so.

Don't get me wrong here: images of the purported crash site of Flight 93 do exist. Some of those photographs and digital images were taken within minutes of the alleged event, long before any cleanup efforts began. Some of the photographs were even taken by the government's own crash investigators. None of them, however, depict the site of the actual crash of a large passenger plane. We know this because, as a general rule of thumb, aircraft crash sites contain recognizable aircraft wreckage.





Just as one would expect to find some recognizable vehicle wreckage at the scene of even the most horrendous of car crashes, one likewise expects to find aircraft wreckage at the scene of a plane crash. Historically, at least, that is how these things have always worked, as can be seen in the above photos of various Boeing 737 aircraft that have crashed over the years. According to *all* early reports, however, there was no such wreckage to be seen anywhere near the alleged crash site of Flight 93.



An early report from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, for example, contained several eyewitness accounts, all of which noted a curious lack of recognizable aircraft debris. Co-workers Homer Barron and Jeff Phillips, for example, “drove to the crash scene and found a smoky hole in the ground ... ‘It didn’t look like a plane crash because there was nothing that looked like a plane,’ Barron said. ‘There was one part of a seat burning up there,’ Phillips said. ‘That was something you could recognize.’ ‘I never seen anything like it,’ Barron said. ‘Just a big pile of charcoal.’” (“The Crash in Somerset: ‘It Dropped Out of the Clouds,’” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 12, 2001)

Nina Lensbouer, identified as a former volunteer firefighter, told reporters that her “instinct was to run toward it, to try to help. But I got there and there was nothing, nothing there but charcoal. Instantly, it was charcoal.” Similarly, “Charles Sturtz, 53, who lives just over the hillside from the crash site, said a fireball 200 feet high shot up over the hill. He got to the crash scene even before the firefighters. ‘The biggest pieces you could find were probably four feet [long]. Most of the pieces you could put into a shopping bag.’” (“The Crash in Somerset: ‘It Dropped Out of the Clouds,’” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 12, 2001)

Mark Stahl, digital camera in hand, was one of the first witnesses on the scene, just minutes after the alleged crash. He had an unobstructed view of the crater and surrounding area, which he took the time to photograph. Nevertheless, he had no clue that he was photographing the site of a purported plane crash: “He didn’t realize a passenger jet had crashed until a firefighter told him.” Ron Delano was another early arrival at the scene; “He was stunned by what he saw. ‘If they hadn’t told us a plane had wrecked, you wouldn’t have known.’” (“Homes, Neighbors Rattled by Crash,” Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 12, 2001)

Area resident Eric Peterson, according to the Post-Gazette, “rushed to the scene on an all-terrain vehicle and when he arrived he saw bits and pieces of an airliner spread over a large area of an abandoned strip-mine in Stonycreek Township. ‘There was a crater in the ground that was really burning,’ Peterson said. Strewn about were pieces of clothing hanging from trees and parts of the Boeing 757, but nothing bigger than a couple of feet long, he said. Many of the items were burning. Peterson said he saw no bodies, but there also was no sign of life.” (Jonathan D. Silver “Day of Terror: Outside Tiny Shanksville, a Fourth Deadly Stroke,” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 12, 2001)

In a similar vein, a Reuters wire report held that the impact “was so powerful that police investigators who cordoned off the site as a crime scene on Tuesday reported finding no pieces of debris larger than a phone book, and no bodies.” (“Passengers on Flight 93 May Have Struggled With Hijackers,” Reuters, September 12, 2001)

Remarkably enough, the government’s own official photographs of the crime scene, introduced as evidence during the hopelessly tainted Zacarias Moussaoui trial earlier this year, confirm those early reports. The three aerial photographs below (which can be enlarged for a better look) reveal that not only was there no significant wreckage visible in the supposed impact crater, *there was no significant wreckage visible anywhere near the crater!*



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GOVERNMENT  
EXHIBIT  
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According to the official 9-11 narrative, the lack of visible wreckage is attributable to the fact that the plane is actually buried in the ground beneath the crater. Flight 93 impacted with such tremendous force, we are told, that virtually the entire aircraft burrowed into the soil. As we all know, September 11, 2001 was 'the day that everything changed.' Enormous office buildings, for example, suddenly and inexplicably acquired the ability to drop into their own footprints with no assistance from demolitions experts. Five-story masonry buildings suddenly acquired the extraordinary ability to swallow enormous airliners without leaving behind an appropriate entry hole or any trace of aircraft wreckage. And now we find, perhaps most amazingly of all, that *the ground itself* somehow also acquired the ability to swallow commercial aircraft. On that fateful day, and only on that day, a 100+ ton airplane measuring 155 feet long, 125 feet wide and 45 feet tall disappeared into a crater measuring, at most, "about 30 to 40 feet long, 15 to 20 feet wide and 18 feet deep." ("Crews Begin Investigation Into Somerset County 757 Crash," [ThePittsburghChannel.com](http://ThePittsburghChannel.com), September 11, 2001)

Any skilled magician, I suppose, could make an airplane disappear into a building. But making an entire airplane disappear without a trace in an empty field? I have to admit that that is pretty impressive.



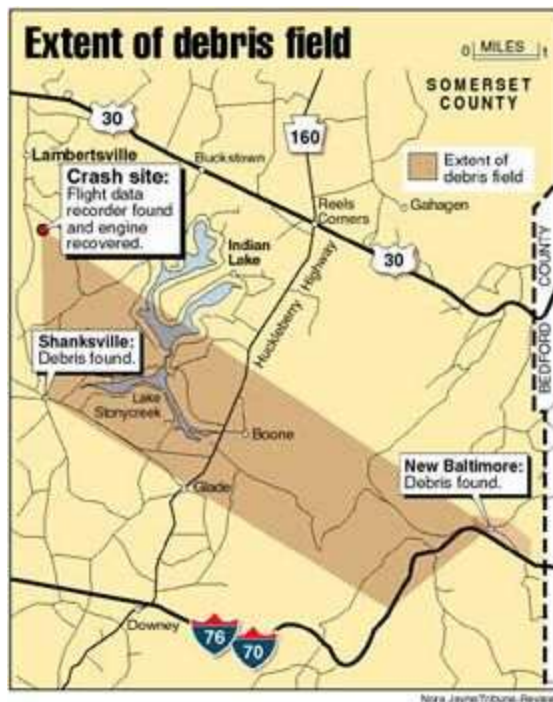
The patch of soil that purportedly swallowed United Airlines Flight 93 seems to have had some peculiar physical properties. The photo to the left purports to show one of the aircraft's engines being excavated from the alleged impact crater (other parts were allegedly dug out of the ridiculously small hole as well, including the flight recorder, which reportedly burrowed to a depth of about twenty-five feet). Curiously though, several published reports noted that a "section of engine weighing a ton was located 2,000 yards – over a mile – from the crash site." (Richard Wallace "What Did Happen to Flight 93?" Daily Mirror, September 12, 2002; some reports place the engine section at about a third that distance from the 'crash' site, or vaguely specify that it was found a "considerable distance" from the alleged impact crater.)

So what appears to have happened in Shanksville, as best I can determine, is that Flight 93 impacted what MSNBC referred to as "the loose, porous soil of a deserted strip mine" in such a way that the engine on one side of the aircraft burrowed deeply into the ground, while the engine on the other side of the plane, encountering the very same loose soil at the exact same moment in time, snapped off and bounced thousands of feet away! If this had happened on any other day, it would obviously beg for a rational explanation. But since it happened on September 11, 2001, and since we have already established that the physical properties of the world were in a strange state of flux that day, no further explanation is necessary.

If a nose-diving plane did in fact impact relatively soft earth at some 580 miles per hour, as the Warren 9/11 Commission has claimed, then it is conceivable that *a portion of the plane* could have

burrowed into the ground – but certainly not the entire 155-foot-long aircraft. A substantial portion of the plane would surely have been visible jutting out of the alleged impact crater. And if the entire aircraft did somehow plow into the ground, then wouldn't the buried wreckage consist of a 100-ton compacted mass of metal, fabric and human tissue, rather than a few scattered bits and pieces of the airplane?

If you're like me, you're probably wondering right about now what exactly happened to the rest of the airplane. If none of it was visible outside the crater, and only a few pieces were allegedly exhumed from within the crater, then what became of the rest of the plane, along with all its passengers, luggage and cargo?



As it turns out, much of the wreckage was distributed, in tiny bits and pieces, over a debris field of roughly 15 square miles. As the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported, "United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 757-200 en route from New Jersey to San Francisco, fell from the sky near Shanksville at 10:06 a.m., about two hours after it took off, *leaving a trail of debris five miles long.*" That trail of debris, it turns out, was later found to extend more than eight miles. (Jonathan D. Silver "Day of Terror: Outside Tiny Shanksville, a Fourth Deadly Stroke," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 12, 2001)

Under normal circumstances, an airplane that nose-dives into the ground and burrows into the soil will not leave a miles-long trail of debris, though an airplane that blows apart in the air certainly will. Flight 93, of course, did not blow apart in the air, so the only explanation for the debris trail, once again, is the mysterious break in the time/space continuum that fateful day.

According to numerous published reports, debris from the aircraft was "found up to 8 miles from the crash site ... Papers and other light objects were carried aloft by the explosion after impact of the plane and they were transported by a nine-knot wind." (Bill Heltzel and Tom Gibb "2 Planes Had No Part in Crash of Flight 93," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 16, 2001) According to my crude calculations,

that means that debris allegedly ejected from the plane when it impacted the ground somehow remained aloft for nearly a full hour as it drifted for miles across the local terrain. And this was not, it should be noted, relatively flat terrain that the debris allegedly drifted over. To the contrary, for the detritus to travel the length of the debris field, from the alleged crash site to the town of New Baltimore, it would have had to pass – are you ready for this? – up and over a mountain ridge! “Authorities,” understandably enough, “initially insisted crash debris could not have traveled over a mountain ridge more than eight miles from the crash.” Those same authorities, however, later came to their senses and insisted that such a scenario was “not only plausible, but probable.” (Debra Erdly “Crash Debris Found 8 Miles Away,” Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 14, 2001)

Much of the debris seems to have landed on the Indian Lake area, roughly two to three miles from the purported ‘crash’ site. And this was not isolated bits and pieces of debris; what “workers at Indian Lake Marina said they saw [was] *a cloud of confetti-like debris* descend on the lake and nearby farms.” (Tom Gibb, James O’Toole and Cindi Lash “Investigators Locate ‘Black Box’ From Flight 93; Widen Search Area in Somerset Crash,” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 13, 2001) Witness Carol Delasko also spoke of what “looked like confetti raining down all over the air above the lake.” (Debra Erdly “Crash Debris Found 8 Miles Away,” Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 13, 2001)

These witness accounts would seem to indicate that there had been some kind of explosive event in the air above Indian Lake, rather than on the ground a couple miles away. At least one early report quoted witnesses who claimed that an airplane had literally broken apart in the air over the Indian Lake area: “investigators also are combing a second crime scene in nearby Indian Lake, where residents reported hearing the doomed jetliner flying over at a low altitude before ‘falling apart on their homes.’ ‘People were calling in and reporting pieces of plane falling,’ a state trooper said. Jim Stop reported he had seen the hijacked Boeing 757 fly over him as he was fishing. He said he could see parts falling from the plane.” (Robin Acton and Richard Gazarik “Human Remains Recovered in Somerset,” Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 13, 2001)

The ‘gopher plane’ theory, alas, provides no explanation for these reports and witness accounts. How is it possible, after all, for an airplane to hit the ground intact and burrow underground, and yet simultaneously break up into thousands of pieces that come to rest up to eight miles away, on the other side of a mountain ridge? And while we ponder that question, here is another one that begs for an answer: what became of the aircraft’s considerable load of aviation fuel (given that Flight 93 was fueled for a cross-country flight)?

Some of that fuel purportedly burned up in a fireball that arose from the crash site, but if the plane did in fact burrow into the ground, then logic dictates that a substantial amount of the fuel load would have been injected into the loose soil. The reality, however, is that *no trace of jet fuel was found in any of the soil excavated from the crater and the surrounding area*: “By today, Environmental Resources Management Inc. of Pine, a contractor hired by United, expects to return 5,000 to 6,000 cubic yards of soil to the 50-foot hole dug around the crater left by the crash. The soil is being tested for jet fuel, and at least three test wells have been sunk to monitor groundwater, since three nearby homes are served by wells, Betsy Mallison, a state Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman, said. So far, no contamination has been discovered, she said.” (Tom Gibb “Latest Somerset Crash Site Findings May Yield Added IDs,” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, October 3, 2001)





Also missing from the crater was any sign of the forty-four humans reportedly on board the plane. You would think that, at the very least, the remains of the flight crew and/or hijackers, who would have been in the nose of the aircraft when it plowed into the ground, would have ended up at the bottom of the Shanksville crater. But there is no indication from any local or national reports that *any* human remains were exhumed from that crater. As the Washington Post reported, “Immediately after the crash, the seeming absence of human remains led the mind of coroner Wally Miller to a surreal fantasy: that Flight 93 had somehow stopped in mid-flight and discharged all of its passengers before crashing. ‘There was just nothing visible,’ he says. ‘It was the strangest feeling.’ It would be nearly an hour before Miller came upon his first trace of a body part.” (Peter Perl “Hallowed Ground,” Washington Post, May 12, 2002)

Perhaps when the plane stopped to discharge its passengers, it also jettisoned its load of fuel.

Despite extensive recovery efforts, nothing resembling a human corpse was ever found, officially at least, anywhere within the eight-mile-long debris field. According to the official storyline, all that was recovered, “apart from, here and there, a finger, a toe or a tooth ... were small pieces of tissue and bone.” (John Carlin “Unanswered Questions: The Mystery of Flight 93,” The Independent, August 13, 2002) The largest piece of human tissue reportedly found was “a section of spine eight inches long.” (Richard Wallace “What Did Happen to Flight 93?” Daily Mirror, September 12, 2002) No torsos, no arms, no legs, no hands, no feet – not even a head, or at least a portion of one of the forty-four skulls.

To briefly recap then, what we have learned thus far is that United Airlines Flight 93, as per the official narrative, nose-dived into some former strip-mining land in rural Pennsylvania. Encountering loosely packed soil, the entire aircraft, or at least a significant portion of it, slipped rather effortlessly into the ground. A small portion of the aircraft, however – the portion containing all the passengers and flight crew, and all the luggage, and all the cargo, and all the fuel, and the vast majority of the airplane itself – exploded on the ground and was reduced to scraps that soared over mountaintops to reach destinations up to eight miles away.

Such a scenario, while laughably absurd, is no harder to believe than most of the other claims that we have been fed concerning the events of September 11, so there is little reason to suspect that we have been lied to about the fate of Flight 93. But just to be sure, we should probably look a little deeper into the ‘crash’ of Flight 93.

# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part I***

***October 1, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

*“It is commonly believed that man will fly directly from the earth to the moon, but to do this, we would require a vehicle of such gigantic proportions that it would prove an economic impossibility. It would have to develop sufficient speed to penetrate the atmosphere and overcome the earth’s gravity and, having traveled all the way to the moon, it must still have enough fuel to land safely and make the return trip to earth. Furthermore, in order to give the expedition a margin of safety, we would not use one ship alone, but a minimum of three ... each rocket ship would be taller than New York’s Empire State Building [almost ¼ mile high] and weigh about ten times the tonnage of the Queen Mary, or some 800,000 tons.”*

Wernher von Braun, the father of the Apollo space program, writing in *Conquest of the Moon*

I can see all of you scratching your heads out there and I know exactly what it is that you are thinking: “Why the hell are we taking this detour to the Moon? What happened to Laurel Canyon? Have you completely lost your mind?”

*\*Sigh\**

It all began a few months ago, when I became very busy at my day job as well as with family drama and with what turned out to be a very time-consuming side project, all of which made it increasingly difficult for me to carve out chunks of time to work on the remaining chapters in the series. Over the next two months or so, I pretty much lost all momentum and soon found it hard to motivate myself to write even when I could find the time.

That happens sometimes. Though it sounds rather cliché, ‘writer’s block’ is a very real phenomenon. There are many times when I can sit down at the keyboard and the words flow out of my head faster than I can get them down on the page. But there are also times when producing just one halfway decent sentence seems a near impossible task. This was one of those times.



I found a new source of inspiration, however, when my wife e-mailed me the recent story about the fake Dutch Moon rock, which I and many others found quite amusing, and which also reminded me that I had a lot of other bits and pieces of information concerning the Apollo project that I had collected over the nine years that have passed since I first wrote about the alleged Moon landings. After taking that first look, back in 2000, I was pretty well convinced that the landings were, in fact, faked, but it was perfectly obvious that the rather short, mostly tongue-in-cheek post that I put up back in July of 2000 was not going to convince anyone else of that.

So I contemplated taking a more comprehensive look at the Apollo program. Toward that end, I pulled up my original Apollo post along with various other bits and pieces scattered throughout past newsletters, threw in all the newer material that had never made it onto my website, and then combed the Internet for additional information. In doing so, I realized that a far better case could be made than what I had previously offered to readers.

I also realized that a far better case could be made than what is currently available on the ‘net.

I was rather surprised actually by how little there is out there – a couple of books by Bill Kaysing and Ralph Rene, a smattering of websites and a variety of *YouTube* videos of varying quality. Virtually all of the websites and videos tend to stick to the same ground covered by Kaysing and Rene, and they almost all use the same NASA photographs to argue the same points. So too do the sites devoted to ‘debunking’ the notion that the landings were faked, and those sites seem to actually outnumber the hoax sites.

While suffering through the numbing uniformity of the various websites on both sides of the aisle, it became perfectly clear that the hoax side of the debate was in serious need of a fresh approach and some new insights. So I began writing again. Feverishly. That does not mean, however, that I have abandoned the Laurel Canyon series. I intend to get back to it quite soon.

And truth be told, while the Apollo story may initially appear to be a radical departure from the ongoing Laurel Canyon series, it actually isn’t much of a detour at all. After all, we’re still going to be living in the 1960s and 1970s. And to a significant degree, we’re probably still going to be hanging out in Laurel Canyon – because who else, after all, was NASA going to trust to handle the post-production work on all that Apollo footage if not Lookout Mountain Laboratory?

I am very well aware, by the way, that there are many, many people out there – even many of the people who have seen through other tall tales told by our government – who think that Moon hoax theorists are complete kooks. And a whole lot of coordinated effort has gone into casting them as such. That makes wading into the Moon hoax debate a potentially dangerous affair.

Remember when Luther (played by Don Knotts) gets taken to court and sued for slander in *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken*? And don't try to pretend like you've never seen it, because we both know that you have. So anyway, he goes to court and a character witness is called and the guy delivers credible testimony favoring Luther and it is clear that the courtroom is impressed and everything is looking good for our nebbish hero, Luther. Remember what happens next though? On cross-examination, the witness reveals that he is the president of a UFO club that holds their meetings on Mars!

The courtroom, of course, erupts with laughter and all of that formerly credible testimony immediately flies right out the window.

I have already received e-mails warning that I will suffer a similar fate (from people who heard me discussing the topic on Meria Heller's radio show). Not to worry though – I have somewhat of an advantage over others who have attempted to travel this path: I don't really care. My mission is to ferret out the truth, wherever it may lie; if at various points along the way, some folks are offended and others question my sanity, that's not really something that I lose a lot of sleep over.

Anyway, a whole lot of people are *extremely* reluctant to give up their belief in the success of the Apollo missions. A lot of people, in fact, pretty much shut down at the mere mention of the Moon landings being faked, refusing to even consider the possibility ([Facebook](#), by the way, is definitely not the best place to promote the notion that the landings were faked, in case anyone was wondering). And yet there are some among the True Believers who will allow that, though they firmly believe that we did indeed land on the Moon, they would have understood if it had been a hoax. Given the climate of the times, with Cold War tensions simmering and anxious Americans looking for some sign that their country was still dominant and not technologically inferior to the Soviets, it could be excused if NASA had duped the world.

Such sentiments made me realize that the Moon landing lie is somewhat unique among the big lies told to the American people in that it was, in the grand scheme of things, a relatively benign lie, and one that could be easily spun. Admitting that the landings were faked would not have nearly the same impact as, say, admitting to mass murdering 3,000 Americans and destroying billions of dollars worth of real estate and then using that crime as a pretext to wage two illegal wars and strip away civil, legal and privacy rights.

And yet, despite the fact that it was a relatively benign lie, there is a tremendous reluctance among the American people to let go of the notion that we sent men to the Moon. There are a couple of reasons for that, one of them being that there is a romanticized notion that those were great years – years when one was proud to be an American. And in this day and age, people need that kind of romanticized nostalgia to cling to.

But that is not the main reason that people cling so tenaciously, often even angrily, to what is essentially the adult version of Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy. What primarily

motivates them is fear. But it is not the lie itself that scares people; it is what that lie says about the world around us and how it really functions. For if NASA was able to pull off such an outrageous hoax before the entire world, and then keep that lie in place for four decades, what does that say about the control of the information we receive? What does that say about the media, and the scientific community, and the educational community, and all the other institutions we depend on to tell us the truth? What does that say about the very nature of the world we live in?

That is what scares the hell out of people and prevents them from even considering the possibility that they could have been so thoroughly duped. It's not being lied to about the Moon landings that people have a problem with, it is the realization that comes with that revelation: *if they could lie about that, they could lie about anything.*

It has been my experience that the vast majority of the people who truly believe in the Moon landings know virtually nothing about the alleged missions. And when confronted with some of the more implausible aspects of those alleged missions, the most frequently offered argument is the one that every 'conspiracy theorist' has heard at least a thousand times: "That can't possibly be true because there is no way that a lie that big could have been covered up all this time ... too many people would have known about it ... yadda, yadda, yadda."

But what if your own eyes and your innate (though suppressed) ability to think critically and independently tell you that what all the institutions of the State insist is true is actually a lie? What do you do then? Do you trust in your own cognitive abilities, or do you blindly follow authority and pretend as though everything can be explained away? If your worldview will not allow you to believe what you can see with your own eyes, then the problem, it would appear, is with your worldview. So do you change that worldview, or do you live in denial?

The Moon landing lie is unique among the big lies in another way as well: it is a lie that seemingly cannot be maintained indefinitely. Washington need never come clean on, say, the Kennedy assassinations. After all, they've been lying about the Lincoln assassination for nearly a century-and-a-half now and getting away with it. But the Moon landing hoax, I would think, has to have some kind of expiration date.

How many decades can pass, after all, without anyone coming even close to a reenactment before people start to catch on? Four obviously haven't been enough, but how about five, or six, or seven? How about when we hit the 100-year anniversary?

If the first trans-Atlantic flight had not been followed up with another one for over forty years, would anyone have found that unusual? If during the early days of the automobile, when folks were happily cruising along in their Model T's at a top speed of 40 MPH, someone had suddenly developed a car that could be driven safely at 500 MPH, and then after a few years that car disappeared and for many decades thereafter, despite tremendous advances in automotive technology, no one ever again came close to building a car that could perform like that, would *that* seem at all odd?

There are indications that this lie does indeed have a shelf life. According to a July 17, 2009 post on [CNN.com](http://CNN.com), "It's been 37 years since the last Apollo moon mission, and tens of millions of younger Americans have no memories of watching the moon landings live. A 2005-2006 poll by Mary Lynne Dittmar, a space consultant based in Houston, Texas, found that more than a quarter of Americans 18 to 25 expressed some doubt that humans set foot on the moon."

The goal of any dissident writer is to crack open the doors of perception enough to let a little light in – so that hopefully the seeds of a political reawakening will be planted. There are many doors that can be pried open to achieve that goal, but this one seems particularly vulnerable. Join me then as we take a little trip to the Moon. Or at least pretend to.

*"If NASA had really wanted to fake the moon landings – we're talking purely hypothetical here – the timing was certainly right. The advent of television, having reached worldwide critical mass only years prior to the moon landing, would prove instrumental to the fraud's success."*

*Wired Magazine*

Adolph Hitler knew a little bit about the fine art of lying. In Mein Kampf, he wrote that, "If you're going to tell a lie, make sure it's a really fucking big lie."

Truth be told, I'm not exactly conversant in the German language so that may not be an exact translation, but it certainly captures the gist of what the future Fuhrer was trying to say. He went on to explain that this was so because everyone in their everyday lives tells little lies, and so they fully expect others to do so as well. But most people do not expect anyone to tell a real whopper ... you know, the kind of brazen, outlandish lie that is just too absurd to actually be a lie. The kind of lie that is so over-the-top that no one would dare utter it if it was in fact a lie.

That is the type of lie, according to Hitler, that will fool the great masses of people, even when the lie is so transparently thin that it couldn't possibly stand up to any kind of critical analysis by anyone actually exercising their brain rather than just blindly accepting the legitimacy of the information they are fed. Take, for example, the rather fanciful notion that the United States landed men on the Moon in the late 1960's and early 1970's. That's the kind of lie we're talking about here: the kind that seems to defy logic and reason and yet has become ingrained in the national psyche to such an extent that it passes for historical fact.

And anyone who would dare question that 'historical fact,' needless to say, must surely be stark raving mad.

Before proceeding any further, I should probably mention here that, until relatively recently, if I had heard anyone putting forth the obviously drug-addled notion that the Moon landings were faked, I would have been among the first to offer said person a ride down to the grip store. While conducting research into various other topics, however, it has become increasingly apparent that there are almost always a few morsels of truth in any 'conspiracy theory,' no matter how outlandish that theory may initially appear to be, and so despite my initial skepticism, I was compelled to take a closer look at the Apollo program.

The first thing that I discovered was that the Soviet Union, right up until the time that we allegedly landed the first Apollo spacecraft on the Moon, was solidly kicking our ass in the space race. It wasn't even close. The world wouldn't see another mismatch of this magnitude until decades later when Kelly Clarkson and Justin Guarini came along. The Soviets launched the first orbiting satellite, sent the first animal into space, sent the first man into space, performed the first space walk, sent the first three-man crew into space, was the first nation to have two spacecraft in orbit simultaneously, performed the first unmanned docking maneuver in space, and landed the first unmanned probe on the Moon.

Everything the U.S. did, prior to actually sending a manned spacecraft to the Moon, had already been done by the Soviets, who clearly were staying at least a step or two ahead of our top-notch team of [imported Nazi scientists](#). The smart money was clearly on the Soviets to make it to the Moon first, if anyone was to do so. Their astronauts had logged five times as many hours in space as had ours. And they had a considerable amount of time, money, scientific talent and, perhaps most of all, national pride riding on that goal.

And yet, amazingly enough, despite the incredibly long odds, the underdog Americans made it first. And not only did we make it first, but after a full forty years, the Soviets apparently still haven't quite figured out how we did it. The question that is clearly begged here is a simple one: Why is it that the nation that was leading the world in the field of space travel not only didn't make it to the Moon back in the 1960s, but still to this day have never made it there? Could it be that they were just really poor losers? I am imagining that perhaps the conversation over in Moscow's equivalent of NASA went something like this:

Boris: Comrade Ivan, there is terrible news today: the Yankee imperialists have beaten us to the Moon. What should we do?

Ivan: Let's just shit-can our entire space program.

Boris: But comrade, we are so close to success! And we have so much invested in the effort!

Ivan: Fuck it! If we can't be first, we aren't going at all.

Boris: But I beg of you comrade! The moon has so much to teach us, and the Americans will surely not share with us the knowledge they have gained.

Ivan: Nyet!

In truth, the entire space program has largely been, from its inception, little more than an elaborate cover for the research, development and deployment of space-based weaponry and surveillance systems. The media never talk about such things, of course, but [government documents](#) make clear that the goals being pursued through space research are largely military in nature. For this reason alone, it is inconceivable that the Soviets would not have followed the Americans onto the Moon for the sake of their own national defense.

It is not just the Soviets, of course, who have never made it to the Moon. The Chinese haven't either. Nor has any other industrialized nation, despite the rather obvious fact that every such nation on the planet now possesses technology that is light-years beyond what was available to NASA scientists in the 1960s.

Some readers will recall that (and younger readers might want to cover their eyes here, because the information to follow is quite shocking), in the 1960s, a full complement of home electronics consisted of a fuzzy, 13-channel, black-and-white television set with a rotary tuning dial, rabbit ears and no remote. Such cutting-edge technology as the pocket calculator was still five years away from hitting the consumer market.

It is perfectly obvious, of course, that it was not consumer electronics that allegedly sent men to the Moon. The point here though is that advances in aerospace technology mirror advances in consumer technology, and just as there has been revolutionary change in entertainment and communications technology, so too has aerospace technology advanced by light-years in the last four decades. Technologically speaking, the NASA scientists working on the Apollo project were working in the Dark Ages. So if they could pull it off back then, then just about anyone should be able to do it now.

It would be particularly easy, needless to say, for America to do it again, since we've already done all the research and development and testing. Why then, I wonder, have we not returned to the Moon since the last Apollo flight? Following the alleged landings, there was considerable talk of establishing a space station on the Moon, and of possibly even colonizing Earth's satellite. Yet all such talk was quickly dropped and soon forgotten and for nearly four decades now not a single human has been to the Moon.

Again, the question that immediately comes to mind is: Why? Why has no nation ever duplicated, or even attempted to duplicate, this miraculous feat? Why has no other nation even sent a manned spacecraft to *orbit* the Moon? Why has no other nation ever attempted to send a manned spacecraft *anywhere* beyond low-Earth orbit?



Is it because we already learned everything there was to learn about the Moon? If so, then could it reasonably be argued that it would be possible to make six random landings on the surface of the Earth and come away with a complete and thorough understanding of this heavenly body? Are we to believe that the international scientific community has no open questions that could be answered by a, ahem, 'return' trip to the Moon? And is there no military advantage to be gained by sending men to the Moon? Has man's keen interest in exploring celestial bodies, evident throughout recorded history, suddenly gone into remission?

Maybe, you say, it's just too damned expensive. But the 1960s were not a particularly prosperous time in U.S. history and we were engaged in an expensive Cold War throughout the decade as well as an even more expensive 'hot' war in Southeast Asia, and yet we still managed to finance no less than seven manned missions to the Moon, using a new, disposable, multi-sectioned spacecraft each time. And yet in the four decades since then, we are apparently supposed to believe that no other nation has been able to afford to do it even *once*.

While we're on the subject of the passage of time, exactly how much time do you suppose will have to pass before people in significant numbers begin to question the Moon landings? NASA has recently announced that we will not be returning, as previously advertised, by the year 2020. That means that we will pass the fifty-year anniversary of the first alleged landing without a sequel. Will that be enough elapsed time that people will begin to wonder? What about after a full century has passed by? Will our history books still talk about the Moon landings? And if so, what will people make of such stories? When they watch old preserved films from the 1960s, how will they reconcile the laughably primitive technology of the era with the notion that NASA sent men to the Moon?

Consider this peculiar fact: in order to reach the surface of the Moon from the surface of the Earth, the Apollo astronauts would have had to travel a minimum of 234,000 miles\*. Since the last Apollo flight allegedly returned from the Moon in 1972, the furthest that *any* astronaut from *any* country has traveled from the surface of the Earth is about 400 miles. And very few have even gone that far. The primary components of the current U.S. space program – the space shuttles, the space station, and the Hubble Telescope – operate at an orbiting altitude of about 200 miles.

(\*NASA gives the distance from the center of Earth to the center of the Moon as 239,000 miles. Since the Earth has a radius of about 4,000 miles and the Moon's radius is roughly 1,000 miles, that leaves a surface-to-surface distance of 234,000 miles. The total distance traveled during the alleged missions, including Earth and Moon orbits, ranged from 622,268 miles for Apollo 13 to 1,484,934 miles for Apollo 17. All on a single tank of gas.)

To briefly recap then, in the twenty-first century, utilizing the most cutting-edge modern technology, the best manned spaceship the U.S. can build will only reach an altitude of 200 miles. But in the 1960s, we built a half-dozen of them that flew almost 1,200 times further into space. *And then flew back*. And they were able to do that despite the fact that the Saturn V rockets that powered the Apollo flights weighed in at a paltry 3,000 tons, about .004% of the size that the principal designer of those

very same Saturn rockets had previously said would be required to actually get to the Moon and back (primarily due to the unfathomably large load of fuel that would be required).

To put that into more Earthly terms, U.S. astronauts today travel no further into space than the distance between the San Fernando Valley and Fresno. The Apollo astronauts, on the other hand, traveled a distance equivalent to circumnavigating the planet around the equator nine-and-a-half times! And they did it with roughly the same amount of fuel that it now takes to make that 200 mile journey, which is why I want NASA to build my next car for me. I figure I'll only have to fill up the tank once and it should last me for the rest of my life.

“But wait,” you say, “NASA has solid evidence of the validity of the Moon landings. They have, for example, all of that film footage shot on the moon and beamed live directly into our television sets.”

Since we're on the subject, I have to mention that transmitting live footage back from the Moon was another rather innovative use of 1960s technology. More than two decades later, we would have trouble broadcasting live footage from the deserts of the Middle East, but in 1969, we could beam that shit back from the Moon with nary a technical glitch!

As it turns out, however, NASA doesn't actually have all of that Moonwalking footage anymore. Truth be told, they don't have *any* of it. According to the agency, all the tapes were lost back in the late 1970s. All 700 cartons of them. As [Reuters](#) reported on August 15, 2006, “The U.S. government has misplaced the original recording of the first moon landing, including astronaut Neil Armstrong's famous ‘one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind’ ... Armstrong's famous moonwalk, seen by millions of viewers on July 20, 1969, is among transmissions that NASA has failed to turn up in a year of searching, spokesman Grey Hautaluoma said. ‘We haven't seen them for quite a while. We've been looking for over a year, and they haven't turned up,’ Hautaluoma said ... In all, some 700 boxes of transmissions from the Apollo lunar missions are missing.”

Given that these tapes allegedly documented an unprecedented and unduplicated historical event, one that is said to be the greatest technological achievement of the twentieth century, how in the world would it be possible to, uhmm, ‘lose’ 700 cartons of them? Would not an irreplaceable national treasure such as that be very carefully inventoried and locked away in a secure film vault? And would not copies have been made, and would not those copies also be securely tucked away somewhere? Come to think of it, would not multiple copies have been made for study by the scientific and academic communities?

Had NASA claimed that a *few* tapes, or even a *few cartons* of tapes, had been misplaced, then maybe we could give them the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps some careless NASA employee, for example,

absent-mindedly taped a Super Bowl game over one of them. Or maybe some home porn. But does it really seem at all credible to claim that the entire collection of tapes has gone missing – all 700 cartons of them, the entire film record of the alleged Moon landings? In what alternative reality would that happen ‘accidentally’?

Some of you are probably thinking that everyone has already seen the footage anyway, when it was allegedly broadcast live back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, or on NASA’s website, or on *YouTube*, or on numerous television documentaries. But you would be mistaken. The truth is that the original footage *has never been aired*, anytime or anywhere – and now, since the tapes seem to have conveniently gone missing, it quite obviously never will be.

The fact that the tapes are missing (and according to NASA, have been for over three decades), amazingly enough, was not even the most compelling information that the *Reuters* article had to offer. Also to be found was an explanation of how the alleged Moonwalk tapes that we all know and love were created: “Because NASA’s equipment was not compatible with TV technology of the day, the original transmissions had to be displayed on a monitor and re-shot by a TV camera for broadcast.”

So what we saw then, and what we have seen in all the footage ever released by NASA since then, were not in fact live transmissions. To the contrary, it was footage shot off a television monitor, and a tiny black-and-white monitor at that. That monitor *may* have been running live footage, I suppose, but it seems far more likely that it was running taped footage. NASA of course has never explained why, even if it were true that the original broadcasts had to be ‘re-shot,’ they never subsequently released any of the actual ‘live’ footage. But I guess that’s a moot point now, what with the tapes having gone missing.

With NASA’s admission of how the original broadcasts were created, it is certainly not hard to imagine how fake Moon landing footage could have been produced. As I have already noted, the 1960s were a decidedly low-tech era, and NASA appears to have taken a very low-tech approach. As Moon landing skeptics have duly noted, if the broadcast tapes are played back at roughly twice their normal running speed, the astronauts appear to move about in ways entirely consistent with the way ordinary humans move about right here on planet Earth. Here then is the formula for creating Moonwalk footage: take original footage of guys in ridiculous costumes moving around awkwardly right here on our home planet, broadcast it over a tiny, low-resolution television monitor at about half speed, and then re-film it with a camera focused on that screen. The end result will be broadcast-ready tapes that, in addition to having that all-important grainy, ghostly, rather surreal ‘broadcast from the Moon’ look, also appear to show the astronauts moving about in entirely unnatural ways.

But not, it should be noted, too unnatural. And doesn’t that seem a little odd as well? If we’re being honest here (and for my testosterone-producing readers, this one is directed at you), the average male specimen, whether astronaut or plumber, never really grows up and stops being a little boy. And what guy, given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend some time in a reduced gravity environment,

isn't going to want to see how high he can jump? Or how far he can jump? *Hitting a golf ball?* Who the hell wants to see that? How about tossing a football for a 200-yard touchdown pass? Or how about the boys dazzling the viewing audience with some otherworldly acrobatics?

And yes, Neil and the guys did exhibit some playfulness at times while allegedly walking on the Moon, but doesn't it seem a bit odd that they failed to do *anything* that couldn't be faked simply by changing the tape speed? When I attended college, I knew a guy on the volleyball team who had a 32" vertical leap right here on Earth. So when I see guys jumping maybe 12", if that, in a 1/6 gravity environment with no air resistance, I'm not really all that impressed.

Am I the only one, by the way, who finds it odd that people would move in slow motion on the Moon? Why would a reduced gravitational pull cause everything to move much more slowly? Given the fact that they were much lighter on their feet and not subject to air and wind resistance, shouldn't the astronauts have been able to move quicker on the Moon than here on Earth? Was slow motion the only thing NASA could come up with to give the video footage an otherworldly feel?

Needless to say, if what has been proposed here is indeed how the 'Moon landing' footage in the public domain was created, then the highly incriminating original footage – which would have looked like any other footage shot here on Earth, except for the silly costumes and props – would have had to have been destroyed. Perhaps it's not surprising then that NASA now takes the position that the original footage has been missing since "sometime in the late 1970s."

Unfortunately, it isn't just the video footage that is missing. Also allegedly beamed back from the Moon was voice data, biomedical monitoring data, and telemetry data to monitor the location and mechanical functioning of the spaceship. All of that data, *the entire alleged record of the Moon landings*, was on the 13,000+ reels that are said to be 'missing.' Also missing, according to NASA and its various subcontractors, are the original plans/blueprints for the lunar modules. And for the lunar rovers. And for the entire multi-sectioned Saturn V rockets.

There is, therefore, no way for the modern scientific community to determine whether all of that fancy 1960s technology was even close to being functional or whether it was all for show. Nor is there any way to review the physical record, so to speak, of the alleged flights. We cannot, for example, check the fuel consumption throughout the flights to determine what kind of magic trick NASA used to get the boys there and back with less than 1% of the required fuel. And we will never, it would appear, see the original, first-generation video footage.

You would think that someone at NASA would have thought to preserve such things. No wonder we haven't given them the money to go back to the Moon; they'd probably just lose it.

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part II***

***October 1, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

“Well,” you now say, “what about all those cool Moon rocks? How did they get those? The Moon is, you know, the only source of Moon rocks, so doesn’t that prove that we were there?”

No, as a matter of fact, it does not prove that we were there, and as odd as it may sound, the Moon is not the only source of Moon rocks. As it turns out, authentic Moon rocks are available right here on Earth, in the form of lunar meteorites. Because the Moon lacks a protective atmosphere, you see, it gets smacked around quite a bit, which is why it is heavily cratered. And when things smash into it to form those craters, lots of bits and pieces of the Moon fly off into space. Some of them end up right here on Earth.

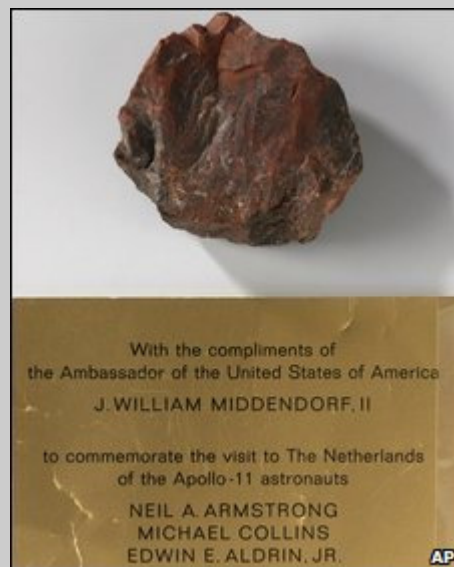
By far the best place to find them is in Antarctica, where they are most plentiful and, due to the terrain, relatively easy to find and well preserved. And that is why it is curious that Antarctica just happens to be where a team of Apollo scientists led by Wernher von Braun ventured off to in the summer of 1967, two years before Apollo 11 blasted off. You would think that, what with the demanding task of perfecting the hugely complex Saturn V rockets, von Braun and his cronies at NASA would have had their hands full, but apparently there was something even more important for them to do down in Antarctica. NASA has never offered much of an explanation for the curiously timed expedition.

Some skeptics have said that it is possible that Moon rocks could have been gathered from the Moon with robotic probes. But while it isn’t being argued here that unmanned craft haven’t reached the Moon, it seems virtually inconceivable that any unmanned spacecraft could have landed on and then *been brought back from* the surface of the Moon in the 1960s or 1970s. There is no indication that it can even be done today. It’s been more than three decades since anyone has claimed to do it, and that claim, by the Soviets, is highly suspect.

What is known for sure is that even some of the ‘debunking’ websites have, albeit reluctantly, acknowledged that meteorite samples gathered from Antarctica are virtually indistinguishable from NASA’s collection of Moon rocks. Of course, as we very recently learned, that is not true of all of NASA’s Moon rocks. Some of them apparently bear no resemblance at all to lunar meteorites. Instead, they look an awful lot like petrified wood from the Arizona desert.



Such was the case with a ‘Moon rock’ that the Dutch national museum has been carefully safeguarding for many years now, before discovering, in August of 2009, that they were in reality the proud owners of the most over-insured [piece of petrified wood](#) on the planet. The ‘Moon rock’ had been a gift to the Dutch from the U.S. State Department, and its authenticity had reportedly been verified through a phone call to NASA. I’m guessing that NASA was probably running low on meteorite fragments and figured the Dutch wouldn’t know the difference anyway. Or maybe Washington was a little peeved over the fact that Dutch newspapers reportedly called NASA’s bluff at the time of the first alleged Moon landing.



This is not to suggest, of course, that all of the Moon rocks passed out by NASA and the State Department are obvious fakes. Most, presumably, are of lunar origin – but that doesn’t necessarily mean they were gathered by American astronauts walking on the surface of the Moon; they could just as easily have come to Earth as meteorites. It is also possible that they are of otherworldly origin but not from the Moon at all – such as meteorites from other sources that have been collected here on Earth. The only way to know for sure what NASA’s Moon rocks are, of course, would be to compare them to a ‘control rock’ that is known to be from the Moon.

The problem, alas, is that the only known source for ‘authenticated’ Moon rocks is NASA, the very same folks who are known to occasionally hand out chunks of petrified wood. The other problem, it turns out, is that most of the Moon rocks are, uhmm, missing. Does anyone see a pattern developing here?

Since the discovery of the fake Moon rock in the Dutch museum, ‘debunkers’ have claimed that the fact that no other Moon rocks have been declared fake proves that the Dutch case is an isolated one. “After that announcement,” goes the argument, “wouldn’t every other country in possession of a Moon rock have rushed to have them authenticated? And since no other country has made a similar announcement, doesn’t that prove that the Moon rocks are real?”

At first glance, that would appear to be a valid argument. The problem, however, is that the vast majority of those countries can't test their 'Moon rocks' because, shockingly enough, no one knows where they are! As the *Associated Press* reported on September 13, 2009, "Nearly 270 rocks scooped up by U.S. astronauts were given to foreign countries by the Nixon administration ... Of 135 rocks from the Apollo 17 mission given away to nations or their leaders, only about 25 have been located by *CollectSpace.com*, a Web site for space history buffs that has long attempted to compile a list ... The outlook for tracking the estimated 134 Apollo 11 rocks is even bleaker. The locations of fewer than a dozen are known."

It appears then that having a 'control rock' wouldn't really be of much help after all, since nearly 90% of the alleged Moon rocks that we would want to test don't seem to be around any more.

"But I have also heard," you now say, "that photos have been taken of the equipment left behind by the Apollo astronauts on the surface of the Moon, like the descent stages of the lunar modules. How do you account for that?"

It is certainly true that there have been numerous claims over the years that various satellites or unmanned space probes or space telescopes were going to capture images that would definitively prove that man walked on the Moon, thus settling the controversy once and for all. And in recent years, the 'debunkers' have openly gloated whenever such an announcement has been made, boldly proclaiming that all the "hoax believers" will soon be exposed as the ignorant buffoons that they are.

Despite all the promises, however, no such images have ever been produced, a fact that the 'debunkers' seem to conveniently overlook while forever rushing to announce that the hoax theories are about to be discredited.

For at least two decades now, since the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope, we have been promised dazzling images of the lunar modules sitting on the surface of the Moon. The Hubble technology, needless to say, never managed to deliver. More recently, in 2002, the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope (whose inventor apparently coined the name while watching *Sesame Street*) was also supposed to deliver the promised images. And seven years later, the fabled images have yet to materialize.

In March of 2005, [Space.com](http://www.space.com) boldly announced that a "European spacecraft now orbiting the Moon could turn out to be a time machine of sorts as it photographs old landing sites of Soviet robotic probes and the areas where American Apollo crews set down and explored. New imagery of old Apollo touchdown spots, from the European Space Agency's (ESA) SMART-1 probe, might put to rest conspiratorial thoughts that U.S. astronauts didn't go the distance and scuff up the lunar landscape.

NASA carried out six piloted landings on the Moon in the time period 1969 through 1972. Fringe theorists have said ... that NASA never really went to the Moon.”

I’m guessing that most “fringe theorists” will continue to harbor “conspiratorial thoughts” for as long as pompous websites like *Space.com* continue making arrogant proclamations such as that and then not following them up with so much as a single image in well over four years.

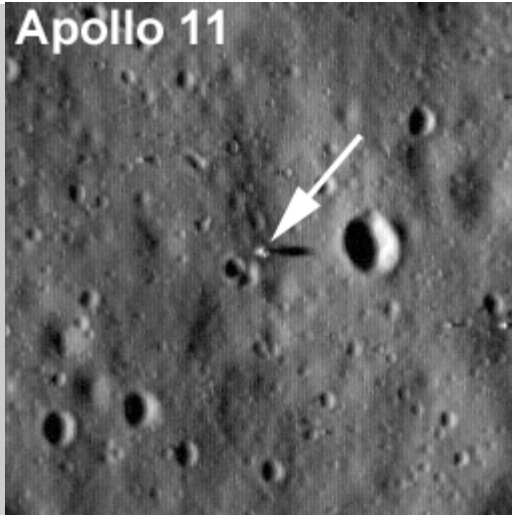
Who knew, by the way, that the European Space Agency had the technology and the budget to send a spacecraft off to orbit the Moon? Who knew that the Europeans even had a space agency? I wonder, given that they obviously have the technology to send spacecraft to the Moon, why they haven’t sent any manned missions there? I would think that it should be fairly easy to send some guys to at least *orbit* the Moon ... right? I mean, all they have to do is add a couple seats to the spacecraft design that they already have and they should be ready to go.

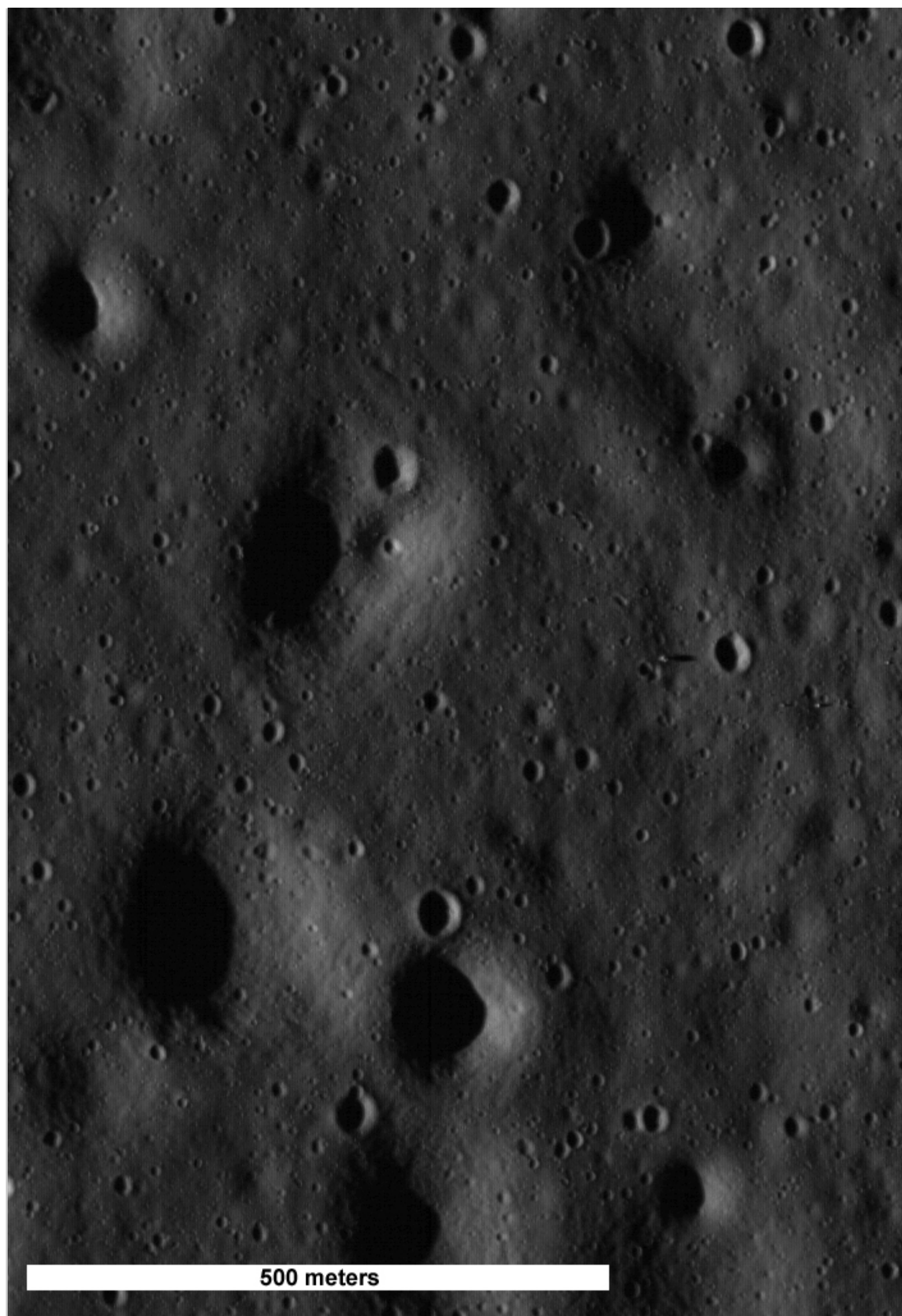
Here is another thing that I sometimes wonder about: why it is that in the 1960s we possessed the advanced technology required to actually *land* men on the Moon, but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we don’t even have the technology required to get an unmanned craft close enough to the Moon to take usable photographs? Or could it be that there’s just nothing there to photograph?

Just this year, NASA itself boldly announced that it’s “Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, or LRO, has returned its first imagery of the Apollo moon landing sites. The pictures show the Apollo missions’ lunar module descent stages sitting on the moon’s surface, as long shadows from a low sun angle make the modules’ locations evident ... ‘The LROC team anxiously awaited each image,’ said LROC principal investigator Mark Robinson of Arizona State University. ‘We were very interested in getting our first peek at the lunar module descent stages just for the thrill – and to see how well the cameras had come into focus. Indeed, the images are fantastic and so is the focus.’”

Sounds promising, doesn’t it? The images, however, hardly live up to the billing. They are, in fact, completely worthless. All they depict are tiny white dots on the lunar surface that could be just about anything and that would barely be visible at all without those handy “long shadows from a low sun angle.” And the weird thing about those shadows is that, in the very same NASA article, it says that “because the sun was so low to the horizon when the images were made, even subtle variations in topography create long shadows.” And yet while it is perfectly obvious that there are more than just “subtle variations” in the lunar topography in the images, the alleged lunar modules are the only things casting the long shadows.

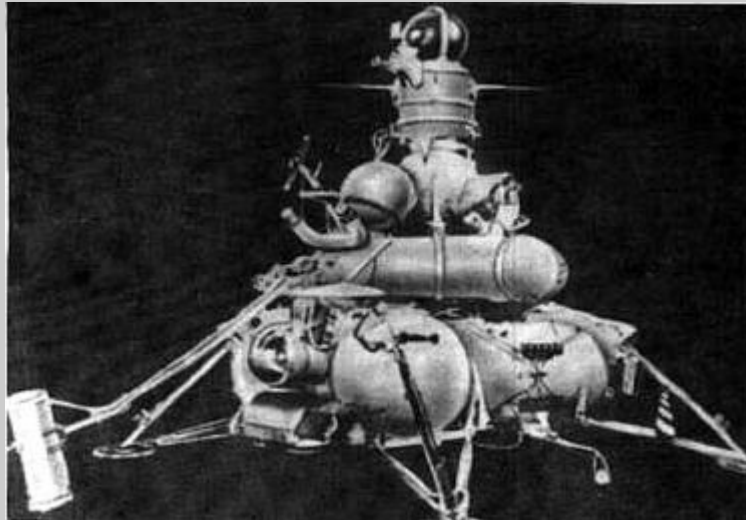
Apollo 11





500 meters

Even if we give NASA every benefit of the doubt and assume that the images have not been amateurishly Photoshopped and that the indiscernible white dots are indeed something of man-made origin, the most likely culprit would be those Soviet robotic probes mentioned by *Space.com*, which presumably did land on the Moon. A number of those probes, which were part of the Apollo-era Luna Program, were very similar in size and shape to the lunar modules – certainly enough so that images of much higher resolution would be required to make a definitive judgment.



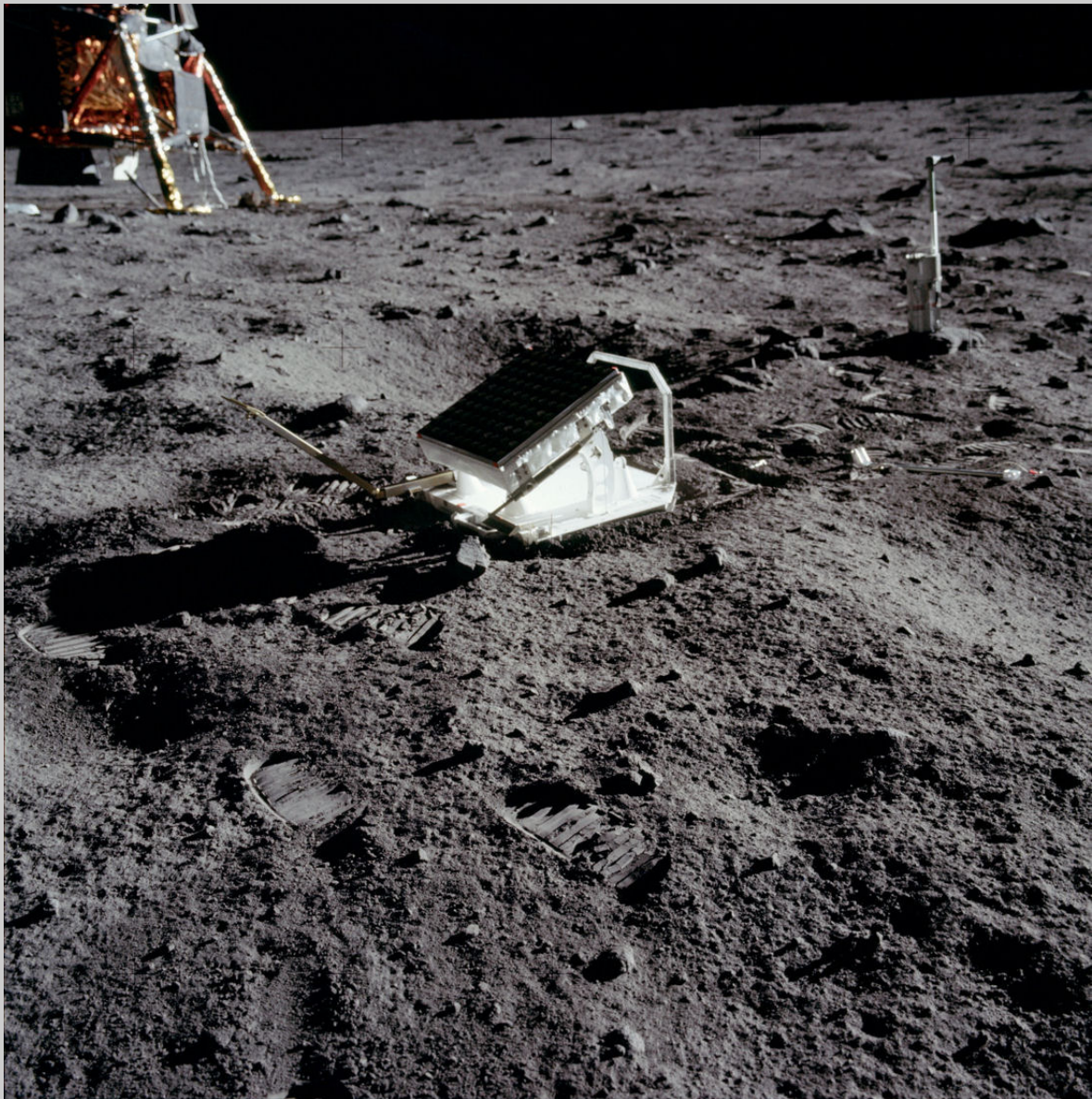
Actually, after studying the image above, of one of the alleged Luna probes, I'm going to have to say that the Soviets were lying their asses off almost as much as NASA was. There is no way I'm going to buy into the notion that the Soviets sent a freeform abstract sculpture, which appears to have been constructed by Fred Sanford and Granny Clampett, on a 234,000 mile journey from the Earth to the Moon. Careful study of the central area of the photo, however, does reveal why the spacecraft were known as 'probes.' I wonder if they were capable of performing docking maneuvers?

According to NASA, Japan and India have also sent unmanned orbiting spacecraft to the Moon in recent years, as has China. As with the ESA's and NASA's orbiters, they too have failed to return any images of Earthly artifacts left behind on the surface of the Moon. If the hoax 'debunking' websites are to be believed, by the way, the reason that no one has returned to the Moon in thirty-seven years is because we pretty much already tapped that celestial body for all the information it had to offer. There's really, you see, nothing much left to see there.

A 'debunking' article posted by [ABCNews.com](http://ABCNews.com), for example, quoted Val Germann, the president of the Central Missouri Astronomical Association, as saying, "There's no reason to go back ... Quite frankly, the moon is a giant parking lot, there's just not much there." I wonder why it is then that just about everyone seems to want to send unmanned probes there, or to train enormously powerful telescopes on the Moon's surface? What could they possibly learn about the "parking lot" from those distances that our astronauts didn't already discover by actually being there?



Some True Believers also claim that what was dubbed the Lunar Laser Ranging experiment also proves that we really went to the Moon. As the story goes, the astronauts on Apollo 11, Apollo 14, and Apollo 15 all allegedly left small laser targets sitting on the lunar terrain (one of them can be seen in the official NASA photo reproduced below), so that scientists back home could then bounce lasers off the targets to precisely gauge the distance from the Earth to the Moon.



According to the ‘debunkers,’ the fact that observatories to this day bounce lasers off the alleged targets proves that the Apollo missions succeeded. It is perfectly obvious though that the targets, if there, could have been placed robotically - most likely by the Soviets. It is also possible that there are no laser targets on the Moon. In December 1966, *National Geographic* reported that scientists at MIT

had been achieving essentially the same result for four years by bouncing a laser off the surface of the Moon. The *New York Times* added that the Soviets had been doing the same thing since at least 1963.

There was much about the Apollo flights that was truly miraculous, but arguably the greatest technological achievement was the design of the lunar modules. Has anyone, by the way, ever really taken a good look at one of those contraptions? I mean a detailed, up-close look? I'm guessing that the vast majority of people have not, but luckily we can quickly remedy that situation because I happen to have some really good, high-resolution images that come directly from the good people at NASA.









While what is depicted in the images may initially appear, to the untrained eye, to be some kind of mock-up that someone cobbled together in their backyard to make fun of NASA, I can assure you that it is actually an extremely high-tech manned spacecraft capable of landing on the surface of the Moon. And incredibly enough, it was also capable of blasting off from the Moon and flying 69 miles back up into lunar orbit! Though not immediately apparent, it is actually a two-stage craft, the lower half (the part that looks like a tubular aluminum framework covered with Mylar and old Christmas wrapping paper) being the *descent* stage, and the upper half (the part that looks as though it was cobbled together from old air conditioning ductwork and is primarily held together, as can be seen in the close-up, with zippers and gold tape) being the *ascent* stage.

The upper half, of course, is the more sophisticated portion, being capable of lifting off and flying with enough power to break free of the Moon's gravity and reach lunar orbit. It also, of course, possessed sophisticated enough navigational capabilities for it to locate, literally out in the middle of fucking nowhere, the command module that it had to dock with in order to get the astronauts safely back to Earth. It also had to catch that command module, which was orbiting the Moon at a leisurely 4,000 miles per hour.



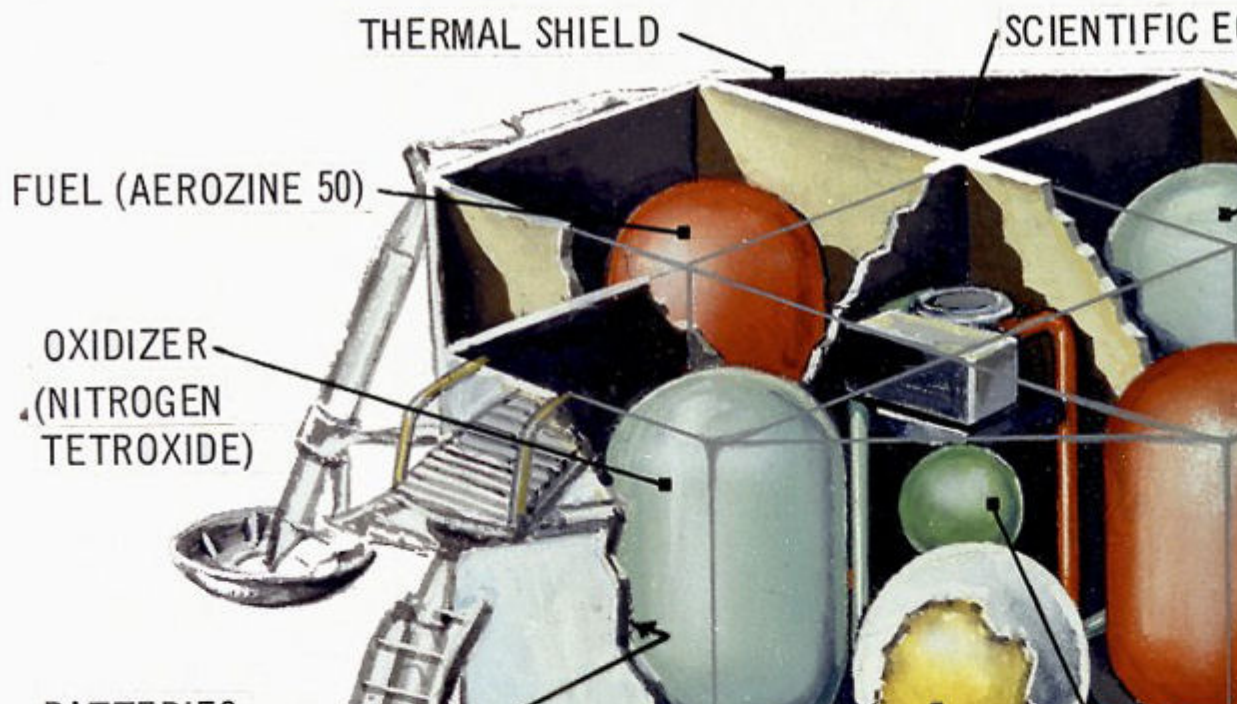
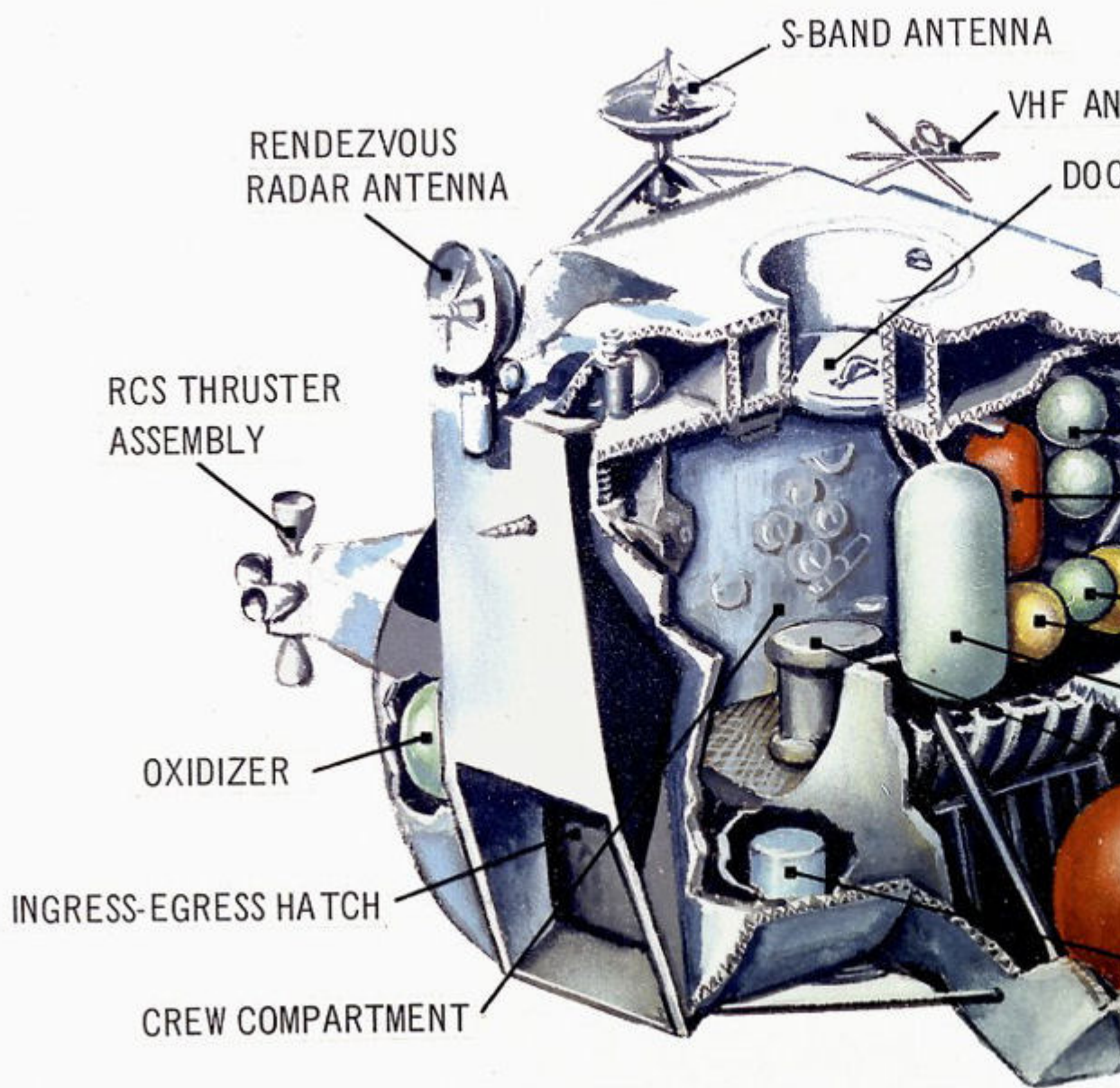


But we'll get to all that a little later. I think we can all agree for now that such a sleek, stylish, well-designed craft would have no problem flying with that kind of power, precision and stability.

There is one thing that appears to be a problem though: how did they get everything on board the modules that they were going to need to successfully complete their missions? According to NASA, the modules were (excluding the landing pads) only about twelve feet in diameter. That is obviously not a whole lot of space to work with, so let's try to think of everything that we would need if we were astronauts venturing off on a little journey to the Moon.

First of all, of course, we have to account for the space taken up by the various components of the ship itself. There is the framework and the, uhh, let's call it the 'fuselage' of the craft. And we will need a lot of very sophisticated navigation and guidance and communications equipment, all of which took up a whole lot more space back in the '60s than it would today. And then, needless to say, there is the power supply – or rather multiple power supplies. For the descent stage, there is the reverse-thrust rocket that allegedly allowed the craft to make a soft landing on the Moon. And then for the ascent stage, there is a powerful rocket to propel the random bundle of sheet metal into lunar orbit. There are also additional rockets to allegedly stabilize the vessel in flight (the random clusters of what look like bicycle horns).





Next up is the massive amount of fuel that will be required to power all of those rockets, for both the ascent and descent stages of the mission. The ascent stage in particular is going to be a bit of a fuel hog, as ascending 69 miles and breaking free of the Moon's gravity is a formidable challenge, to say the least. Though it may only have 1/6 the gravitational pull of Earth, keep in mind that it is still a force strong enough to create the tides here on Earth, 234,000 miles away.

I'm not a rocket scientist, by the way, so I am sure that there are quite a few components that I am leaving off of my lunar module – but that's okay, because our spaceship is already feeling really cramped just with the stuff listed so far. And we're just getting started.

Next we have to include everything required to keep ourselves alive and well. We aren't going to be there very long, of course, and space is obviously limited, but we will still require some basic amenities. We will, after all, have to sleep somewhere in the ship, won't we? Or will we just unfold cots on the lunar surface? We will also require a sanitation/septic system of some kind. Or did those missions bring about another 'first' that NASA has been reluctant to brag about? Was Neil Armstrong, unbeknownst to the American people, the first man to take a dump on lunar soil? Or was it Buzz Aldrin? Which astronaut has the distinction of being the first to soil the lunar landscape?

Anyway, getting back to our packing list, in addition to a sanitation system, it is imperative that we bring along an adequate supply of food, water and oxygen – and not just enough to last for the planned duration of our visit, but enough to supply a small safety cushion should anything go wrong. Because from what I have heard, running out of food, water or oxygen while on the Moon can really fuck up an otherwise perfectly good trip. The oxygen is especially important, so we're going to need a really good, reliable system to deliver that oxygen, and to, you know, recharge the oxygen tanks in our spacesuits so we can walk around on the Moon and jump like 8" or 9" high like the Apollo guys did. And a back-up oxygen system probably wouldn't be a bad idea.

We are also going to need to install a top-of-the-line heating and cooling system. Probably several of them, actually. Because the 'weather' on the Moon, so to speak, can be a bit unpleasant. According to the experts over at NASA, daytime highs average a balmy +260° F, but it cools off quite a bit at night, dropping to an average of -280° F. If you're looking for anything between those two extremes, you won't really find it on the Moon. It's pretty much one or the other. If you're in the sun, you're going to be boiled alive, and if you're out of the sun, you're going to be flash frozen.

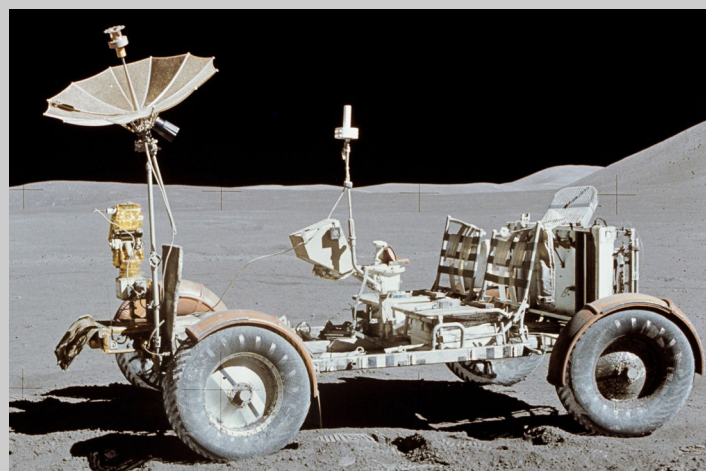
I'm not at all sure how the air conditioning system is going to work, come to think of it, since air conditioning requires a steady supply of – and please stop me if I am stating the obvious here – air. And the Moon doesn't really have a lot of that.

It would help, of course, if our spacecraft was heavily insulated in some manner, but that doesn't appear to be the case, so we'll need a really, really good heating and cooling system, and plenty of freon or whatever it is that we'll need to keep it running. So now we have to add all of the following to our already crowded spacecraft: ourselves; a minimal amount of room to sleep and otherwise take care of the basic necessities of life; some type of plumbing and sewage system; a really good heating and cooling system, and a considerable supply of food, water and oxygen. And we're still not done packing for our trip.

Now we have to add all of the equipment that will be required to maintain the ship and complete our planned missions. First of all, we are definitely going to need to pack an exhaustive supply of spare parts and a wide variety of tools. That is an absolute must. From what I have heard, there are a few stores on the Moon that do stock spaceship parts, but they tend to close on certain days of the week. And orders from the mainland can take a frustratingly long time to arrive, so it's always best to be prepared for any emergency. There are a lot of things that can go wrong with our spaceship and the only thing harder than finding a good mechanic here on Earth is finding one on the Moon.

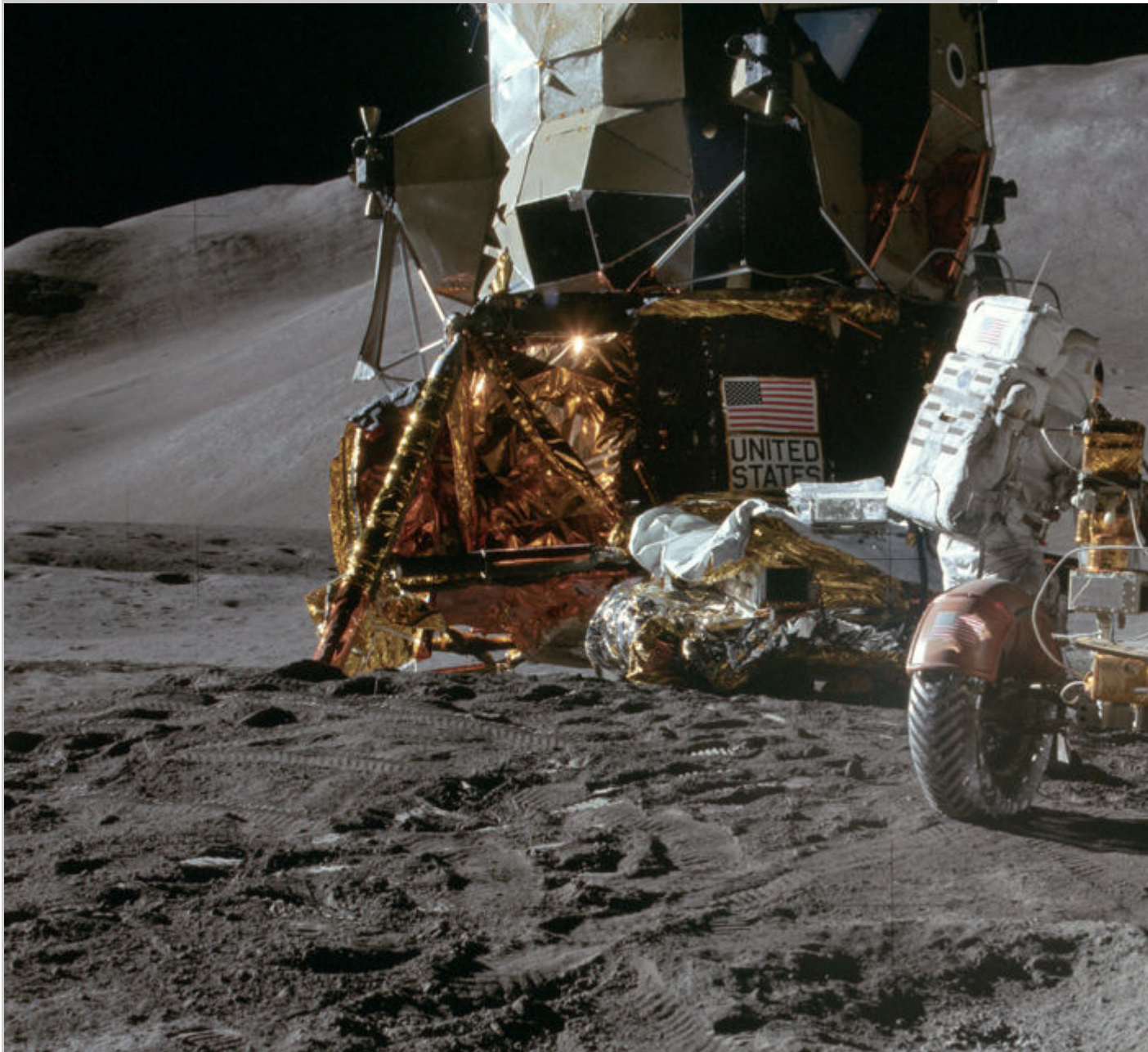
And then, of course, we'll have to bring all the fancy testing equipment that we will use to pretend to conduct experiments. Some of it is quite bulky, so we'll need to set aside some storage space for all of that. And we're going to need some additional storage space to bring back all those petrified wood samples, but we should have room for that after we jettison most of the fake testing equipment.

Our spaceship is now so ridiculously overloaded that we may have had to add a roof-rack and we still aren't quite done yet. We still have a couple more items to pack, and we probably should have gotten them on sooner because they are going to require a lot of space. Since this is one of the later Apollo flights, you see, we also have to pack a dune buggy, otherwise known as a lunar rover. And the rovers, according to NASA, are a full ten feet long, just two feet less than the diameter of our craft. But not to worry – according to NASA, the rovers (pictured below) *folded up to the size of a large suitcase*. When released, they would just sort of magically unfold and snap into place, ready to roam the lunar terrain.





To be perfectly honest, I'm not really sure why we have to pack the damn rover. There is no real compelling reason to take it to the Moon ... except for the fact that they make for good TV, and that seems to be of paramount importance. And as can be seen below, it should easily fit into our spaceship.



One last thing we're going to need is a whole lot of batteries. Lots and lots of batteries. That's going to be the only way to power the ship while we're on the Moon, and we'll definitely need to run the communications systems, and the oxygen supply system, and the heating and cooling system, and the cabin lights, and the television cameras and transmitters, and all the testing equipment, and our spacesuits, and that damn rover. And we won't be able to recharge any of the various batteries, so we're going to need a lot of back-ups. Especially of the really big batteries that run the ship. We may need a separate ship just to carry all the batteries we're going to need.



By the way, I can't possibly be the only one who is disappointed that we never followed up on that breakthrough folding-vehicle technology. If we had folding Moon buggies back in the early 1970s, then how far behind could folding automobiles have been had we chosen to stay the course? Had NASA's pioneering vision been followed up, we could all be folding up our cars and tucking them away under our office desks. But as with all the Apollo technology, it existed only in that specific period of time and has now, sadly, been lost to the ages.

NASA has done something very odd, by the way, with the lunar module that it has on display for museum visitors to marvel at: it has staffed it with miniature astronauts wearing miniature space suits (the module may also be scaled slightly larger than the 'real' modules that allegedly landed on the Moon). I wonder why they would do that? I'm pretty sure that Buzz and Neil were of normal stature, so the only reason that I can think of that they would use miniature astronauts would be to portray the modules as larger than what they actually were. And in better condition too. Did they pick up the ones they sent to the Moon at a used car lot?



Before moving on, I need to emphasize here just how sophisticated the lunar modules actually were. These remarkable spacecraft – and I understandably get a little choked up here talking about this, because I am just so damn proud of our team of Nazi scientists – managed to make six perfect take-offs *from the surface of the Moon!* And understand here people that they did that, amazingly enough, *with completely untested technology!*

You can't duplicate the conditions on the Moon here at home, you see, or even provide a rough approximation. And since no one had ever been to the Moon, they didn't know exactly what to replicate anyway, so this part of the mission was pretty much of a crapshoot. Conditions on the Moon are, to say the least, a bit different than here on Earth. The gravitational pull is only about 1/6 of what it is here. And then there is that whole 'lack of atmosphere' thing. And the decidedly unearthly temperatures. And then, of course, there are the high levels of space radiation.

I'm quite sure that we had the best minds available working on the Apollo project, but none of them could have accurately predicted and compensated for how all those unearthly conditions would combine to affect the flight potential of the lunar modules. So the ability of the modules to actually blast off from the Moon and fly was, at best, a theoretical concept.





It is also important to remember that, unlike the initial blast-off from Earth (seen above), which involved the collective efforts of thousands of people and the use of all types of peripheral equipment, the astronauts taking off from the Moon had only themselves and a strange vessel that looked like it had been salvaged from the set of *Lost in Space*. What would you be thinking, by the way, if you suddenly found yourself on the surface of the Moon with what looked like a cheap movie prop as your only way home? Would you feel comfortable hanging around for a few days doing experiments, confident that, when the time came, the untested contraption behind you would actually get you back home from the Moon? Or would the words “bad career choice” be running through your head?

But as it turns out, America kicked ass back then and those lunar modules performed like champions every single time! They didn’t even need any modifications! Despite the completely foreign environment, they worked perfectly the very first time and every time thereafter!

On Earth, it took many long years of trial and error, many failed test flights, many unfortunate accidents, and many, many trips back to the drawing board before we could safely and reliably launch men into low-Earth orbit. But on the Moon? We nailed that shit the very first time.

Today, of course, we can’t even launch a space shuttle from right here on planet Earth without occasionally blowing one up, even though we have lowered our sights considerably. After all, sending spacecraft into low-Earth orbit is considerably easier than sending spacecraft all the way to the friggin’ Moon and back. It would appear then that we can draw the following conclusion: although technology has advanced immeasurably since the first Apollo Moon landing and we have significantly downgraded our goals in space, we can’t come close to matching the kick-ass safety record we had in the Apollo days.

The thing is that, back in the frontier days, we didn’t need all that fancy technology and book-learnin’ to send Buzz and the boys to the Moon and back. Back then, we had that American can-do spirit and we just cowboyed up and MacGyvered those spaceships to the Moon. All we needed was an old Volkswagen engine, some duct tape and a roll of bailing wire. Throw a roll of butt-wipe and a little Tang on board and you were good to go.

And how about the speed with which we cranked out those Apollo spacecraft? Once we figured out how to make them, we were stamping them out like Coke cans. We fired off seven of them in just under three-and-a-half years, or about one every six months. Given the extreme complexity of those vessels, and the fact that every component had to perform flawlessly under largely unknown conditions, that is a pretty impressive production schedule. America, I think it is safe to say, totally rocked back then!

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part III***

***October 1, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

If the Moon landings were faked, then one question that naturally arises is: why would any government go to such extreme lengths to mount such an elaborate hoax?

The most obvious answer (and the one most frequently cited by skeptics) is to reclaim a sense of national pride that had been stripped away by America's having played follow-the-leader with the Soviets for an entire decade. While this undoubtedly played a large role, there are other factors as well – factors that haven't been as fully explored. But before we look at those, we must first deal with the question of whether it would have even been possible to pull off such an enormous hoax.

Could so many people have really been duped into believing such an outrageous lie, if that in fact was what it was? To answer that question, we have to keep in mind that we are talking about the summer of 1969 here. Those old enough to have been there will recall that they – along with the vast majority of politically active people in the country – spent that particular period of time primarily engaged in tripping on some really good acid (most likely from the lab of Mr. Owsley).

How hard then would it really have been to fool most of you? I probably could have stuck a fish bowl on my head, wrapped myself in aluminum foil, and then filmed myself high-stepping across my backyard and most of you would have believed that I was Moonwalking. Some of you couldn't entirely rule out the possibility that *everyone* was walking on the Moon.

In truth, not everyone was fooled by the alleged Moon landings. Though it is rarely discussed these days, a significant number of people gave NASA's television productions a thumbs-down. As [Wired](#) magazine has reported, "when *Knight Newspapers* polled 1,721 US residents one year after the first moon landing, it found that more than 30 percent of respondents were suspicious of NASA's trips to the moon." Given that overall trust in government was considerably higher in those pre-Watergate days, the fact that nearly a third of Americans doubted what they were 'witnessing' through their television sets is rather remarkable.

When *Fox* ran a special on the Moon landings some years back and reported that 1-in-5 Americans had doubts about the Apollo missions, various ‘debunking’ websites cried foul and claimed that the actual percentage was much lower. [BadAstronomy.com](http://BadAstronomy.com), for example, claims that the actual figure is about 6%, and that roughly that many people will agree “with almost any question that is asked of them.” Hence, there are only a relative handful of kooks who don’t believe that we’ve ever been to the Moon.

All of those websites fail to mention, of course, that among the people who experienced the events *as they were occurring*, nearly 1-in-3 had doubts, a number considerably *higher* than the number that *Fox* used. And, needless to say, the ‘debunkers’ also failed to mention that 1-in-4 young Americans, a number also higher than the figure *Fox* used, have doubts about the Moon landings.

Returning then to the question of *why* such a ruse would be perpetrated, we must transport ourselves back to the year 1969. Richard Nixon has just been inaugurated as our brand new president, and his ascension to the throne is in part due to his promises to the American people that he will disengage from the increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam. But Tricky Dick has a bit of a problem on his hands in that he has absolutely no intention of ending the war. In fact, he would really, really like to escalate the conflict as much as possible. But to do so, he needs to set up a diversion – some means of stoking the patriotic fervor of the American people so that they will blindly rally behind him.

In short, he needs to wag the dog.

This has, of course, traditionally been done by embarking on some short-term, low-risk military endeavor. The problem for Big Dick, however, is that a military mission is exactly what he is trying to divert attention *away from*. What, then, is a beleaguered president to do? Why, send Neil and Buzz to the Moon, of course! Instead of wagging the dog, it's time to try something new: wagging the Moondoggie!

Nixon's actions from the very moment he takes office belie his campaign pledges to the American people (not unlike that Barry Obama guy, who also led the American people to believe that he opposed an unpopular war). In May of 1969, with Nixon just a few months into his term, the press begins publicizing the illegal B-52 carpetbombing of Cambodia engineered by that irrepressible war criminal, Henry Kissinger. By June, Nixon is scrambling to announce what is dubbed the 'Vietnamization' of the war, which comes with a concomitant withdrawal of U.S. troops.

In truth, however, only 25,000 of the 540,000 U.S. troops then deployed will be brought home. This ruse is, therefore, transparently thin and it will buy the new president little time. To make matters worse, on July 14th, Francis Reitemeyer is granted Conscientious Objector status on the basis of a petition his attorney has filed which explicitly details the training and instruction he has just received in assassination and torture techniques in conjunction with his assignment to the CIA's Phoenix

Program. With these documents entering the public domain, the full horrors of the war are beginning to emerge.

Just in time to save the day, however, Apollo 11 blasts off on July 16<sup>th</sup> on its allegedly historic mission, and – with the entire nation enthralled – four days later the Eagle purportedly makes its landing on the pristine lunar surface. Vietnam is temporarily forgotten as America swells with patriotic pride for having beaten the Evil Empire to the Moon. There is little time to worry about the brutality of war when Neil is taking that “one giant leap for mankind.”

The honeymoon is short-lived, however, for just four months later, in November of 1969, Seymour Hersch publishes a story about the massacre of 504 civilians in the village of My Lai, bringing home to America the full savagery of the war in Southeast Asia. It's time then for another Moon launch, and Apollo 12 dutifully lifts off on November 14th, making another picture-perfect lunar landing before returning on November 24th. The country is once again entranced by the exploits of America's new breed of hero, and suddenly every kid in the country wants to grow up to be an astronaut.

All is well again until March of 1970, at which time a U.S.-backed coup deposes Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia and Lon Nol is handpicked by the CIA to replace him. Cambodia then immediately jumps in the fray by committing troops to the U.S. war effort. The war is further escalated the next month when Nixon authorizes an invasion of Cambodia by U.S. and ARVN ground forces, another move engineered by Henry Kissinger. Nixon has been in office just over a year and the war, far from winding down, has now expanded into Cambodia both in the air and on the ground.

Meanwhile, it's time for yet another Moon launch. But this one is not going to be just any Moon launch. This one, you see, is going to introduce the element of danger. With the first two having gone off without a hitch, the American people – known for having notoriously short attention spans – are already adopting a 'been there, done that' attitude. The problem, in a nutshell, is that it looks just a little too damn easy. In order to regain the attention of the American people, it has to be impressed upon them that our brave astronauts are placing themselves in grave danger.

And so it is that on April 11th, 1970, Apollo 13 blasts off with Tom Hanks and a couple of somewhat lesser known actors on board, but unlike the first two missions, this Apollo spacecraft fails to reach the Moon and instead drifts about for the next six days with the crew in mortal danger of being forever lost in space! Now *that* gets our attention! So much so that when three Vietnam vets hold a multi-city press conference in New York, San Francisco and Rome on April 14th, attempting to publicize the ongoing Phoenix Program in which they have participated and have firsthand knowledge, nobody can really be bothered with paying much attention. It's hard to be too concerned about the fate of Vietnamese villagers, you see, when Tom and the boys are clearly in trouble.

Awaiting news of the fate of the Apollo 13 crew, we all have our eyes glued to our TVs as though we are watching postmortem coverage of Michael Jackson. When our heroes somehow make it back

alive, defying seemingly impossible odds, we are all so goddamned proud of them that we decide to award Tom another Oscar. And all is well again for the remainder of the year.

I really have to repeat here, by the way, that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, America really did rock! I mean, how about that Apollo safety record? Seven manned Moon launches with seven perfect take-offs! Tom and the boys obviously never did make it to the Moon, but the other six crews sure as hell did, and all six set those lunar modules down like the consummate professionals that they were, and all six used that untested technology to successfully blast off from the Moon and attain lunar orbit, and then all six successfully docked with the orbiting command modules. And all seven of those command modules, even Apollo 13's, returned intact and with their crews happy and healthy.

That was just an awesome time to be an American and especially to be an American astronaut ... well, except for the three guys (Virgil "Gus" Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee) who were burned alive during a test procedure in the command module of what was to be the Apollo 1 rocket. But they were troublemakers anyway who probably wouldn't have wanted to go along with the Moon landing fable. And then there was that Thomas Baron guy who was a safety inspector for NASA and who delivered highly critical testimony and a 1,500-page report to Congress, only to then be killed a week later. That report seems to have been sucked into the same Black Hole that swallowed up all the other Apollo evidence.

Anyway, returning now to our timeline, the dawn of 1971 brings the trial of Lt. William Calley on charges that he personally ordered and oversaw the mass murder of the inhabitants of the village of My Lai. And on January 31st, Apollo 14 is launched and once again makes a flawless lunar landing. On February 9th, the Apollo team returns, just a few weeks before Calley is convicted of murder (he served an absurdly short sentence under 'house arrest' and none of his superiors were ever held accountable).

A few months after that, the *New York Times* begins publication of the infamous Pentagon Papers, revealing American policy in Vietnam to be a complex web of lies. Publication is quickly stopped by the Justice Department but resumes once again as June turns to July. This is quickly followed, on July 26th, by the launch of Apollo 15. Four days later, yet another flawless lunar landing clearly demonstrates that America is the most bad-ass nation on Earth. But Moonwalking has become a bit of a bore for the American people, so a new element is introduced and from now on our beloved astronauts will roam the lunar surface in dune buggies. The lunar modules haven't gotten any bigger, but now they can transport vehicles to the Moon. Cool!

Back on Earth, the astronauts return on August 7th and the rest of the year passes uneventfully. On March 30, 1972, North Vietnamese troops mount a massive offensive across the DMZ into Quang Tri Province, revealing as lies the pompous statements by numerous Washington hacks that victory is close at hand. Nixon and Co. respond to the offensive with deep penetration bombing of North Vietnam and, for good measure, the illegal mining of North Vietnam's ports. They also respond by launching, on April 16th, another rocket (and another dune buggy) to the Moon. On April 27th, the crew of Apollo 16 once again return to a hero's welcome.

By the end of the year, a ceasefire is finally looming on the horizon. Beginning in October, Kissinger and David Bruce (a member of the infamous Mellon family) are secretly negotiating peace terms with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam. In December, however, those talks break down – but not before Apollo 17 is launched on December 7th in a most spectacular way: it is the first night launch of a Saturn V rocket. With the latest Apollo mission still a few days away from returning, the talks cease and Dick and Henry unleash a final ruthless carpetbombing campaign against North Vietnam, snuffing out countless thousands of civilian lives. Meanwhile, America warmly greets its returning astronauts.

Just five weeks later, the talks having resumed, a peace agreement is announced. Within a few days a ceasefire is in effect, thereby officially ending America's involvement in Southeast Asia. Though the CIA will remain to continue directing the war by proxy, America's men and women in uniform come home. And the Apollo program – despite several additional missions having been planned and discussed, and despite the additional funding that should have been available with the war drawing to a close – will never be heard from again.

In addition to restoring national pride and providing a diversion from the savage colonial war being waged in Southeast Asia, the Apollo program undoubtedly served another function as well: covert funding of that war effort. Needless to say, faking Moon landings is less expensive than actually making Moon landings, and a whole lot of money was funneled NASA's way during the Vietnam years to accomplish the latter. It stands to reason that a considerable amount of that money could well have been diverted into covert operations being conducted in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. In addition, a portion of the Apollo funding likely financed the early stages of the militarization of space.

There is no shortage of Moon hoax 'debunking' sites out there on the wild and woolly World Wide Web. The majority of them are not particularly well written or argued and yet they tend to be rather smug and self-congratulatory. Most of them tend to stick to 'debunking' the same facts and they use the same arguments to do so.

One thing they like to talk a lot about is the Van Allen radiation belts. The Moon hoax sites talk a lot about them as well. The hoaxers will tell you that man cannot pass through the belts without a considerable amount of radiation protection – protection that could not have been provided in the 1960s through any known technology. And the 'debunkers' claim that the Apollo astronauts would have passed through the belts quickly enough that, given the levels of radiation, no harm would have come to them. The hoaxers, say the 'debunkers,' are just being girlie men.

As it turns out, both sides are wrong: the 'debunkers,' shockingly enough, are completely full of shit, and the hoaxers have actually understated the problem by focusing exclusively on the belts. We know this because NASA itself – whom the 'debunkers' like to treat as a virtually unimpeachable source on all things Apollo, except, apparently, when the agency posts an article that implicitly acknowledges that we haven't actually been to the Moon – has told us that it is so. They have told us that in order to leave low-Earth orbit on any future space flights, our astronauts would need to be protected throughout

*the entirety of the flight*, as well as – and once again, this comes directly from NASA – *while working on the surface of the Moon*.

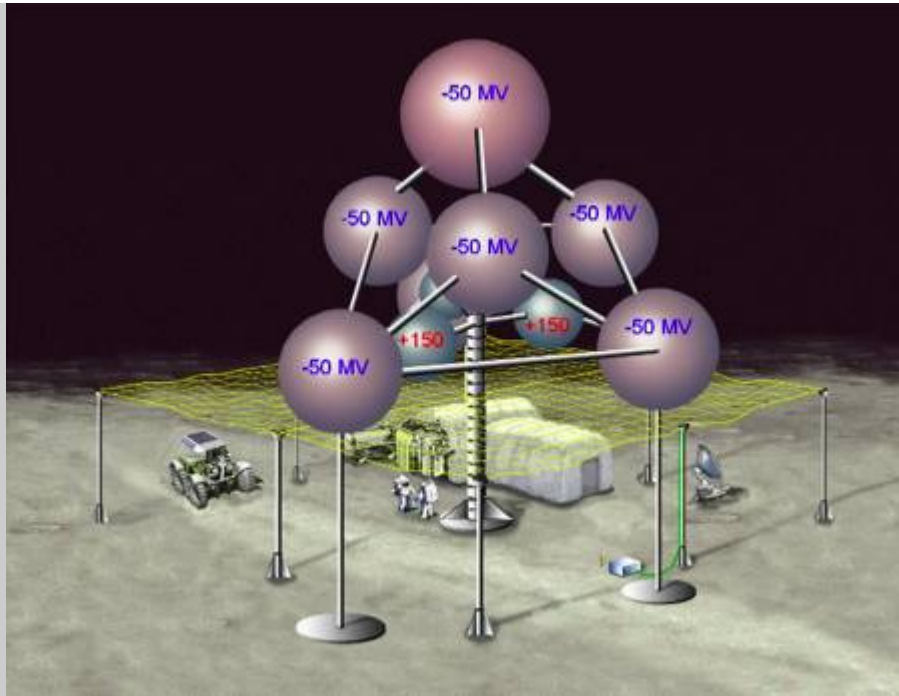
On June 24, 2005, NASA made this rather remarkable admission: “NASA's Vision for Space Exploration calls for a return to the Moon as preparation for even longer journeys to Mars and beyond. But there's a potential showstopper: radiation. Space beyond low-Earth orbit is awash with intense radiation from the Sun and from deep galactic sources such as supernovas ... Finding a good shield is important.”  
([http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2005/24jun\\_electrostatics.htm](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2005/24jun_electrostatics.htm))

You're damn right finding a good shield is important!! Back in the 1960s, of course, we didn't let a little thing like space radiation get in the way of us beating the Ruskies to the Moon. But now, I guess, being that we are more cultured and sophisticated, we want to do it *the right way* so we have to come up with some way of shielding our spaceships. And our temporary Moon bases. And figuring out how to do that, according to NASA, could be a real “showstopper.”

As NASA notes, “the most common way to deal with radiation is simply to physically block it, as the thick concrete around a nuclear reactor does. But making spaceships from concrete is not an option.” Lead, which is considerably denser than concrete, is actually the preferred material to use for radiation shielding, but lead also isn't very popular with spaceship designers. In fact, word on the street is that one of the main reasons the Soviets never made it to the Moon was because their scientists calculated that four feet of lead shielding would be required to protect their astronauts, and those same scientists apparently felt that spaceships wouldn't fly all that well when clad in four feet of lead.

Now NASA is thinking outside the box and contemplating using ‘force fields’ to repel the radiation, a seemingly ridiculous idea that, whether workable in the future or not, certainly wasn't available to NASA in the 1960s. Below is NASA's own artist rendering of a proposed ‘force field’ radiation shield that would allow astronauts to work safely on the Moon. As you may have noticed in the earlier photos of the lunar modules, our guys didn't bring anything like that with them on their, uhmm, earlier missions to the Moon. And you may have also noticed that the modules did not have any type of physical shielding.





How then did they do it? My guess is that the answer lies in that gold foil wrap. While it may look like an amateurish attempt to make the modules appear more 'high-tech,' I have a hunch that what we are looking at is another example of the lost technology of the 1960s – this time in the form of a highly-advanced superpolymer that provided maximum radiation shielding while adding virtually no weight. So all we have to do is track down a few leftover rolls of that stuff and we should be well on our way to sending guys back to the Moon.

According to Charles Buhler, a NASA scientist currently working on the force field concept, "Using electric fields to repel radiation was one of the first ideas back in the 1950s, when scientists started to look at the problem of protecting astronauts from radiation. They quickly dropped the idea though because it seemed like the high voltages needed and the awkward designs that they thought would be necessary ... would make such an electric shield impractical."

What a real journalist would have asked here, of course, is: "After dropping the electric shield concept, exactly what did they decide to use to get our astronauts safely to the Moon and back on the Apollo missions? And why can't we do the same thing now, rather than reinventing the wheel? Don't you guys have some of that gold foil in a closet somewhere?" No one in the American media, of course, bothered to ask such painfully obvious questions.

The 2005 report from NASA ends as follows: "But, who knows, perhaps one day astronauts on the Moon ... will work safely." Yes, and while we're dreaming the impossible dream, let's add a few more things to our wish list as well, like perhaps one day we'll be able to listen to music on 8-track tape players, and talk to people on rotary dial telephones, and carry portable

transistor radios, and use cameras that shoot pictures on special film that develops right before our eyes. Only time will tell, I suppose.

The Van Allen belts, by the way, trap most Earth-bound radiation, thus making it safe for us mortals down here on the surface of planet Earth, as well as for astronauts in low-Earth orbit (the belts extend from 1,000 to 25,000 miles above the surface of the Earth). The danger is in sending men through *and beyond* the belts, which, apart from the Apollo missions, has never been attempted ... well, actually there was that one time, but I think we all remember how badly that turned out. In case anyone has forgotten, the astronauts returned to a world dominated by extremely poor acting, apes speaking with British accents, and a shirtless Charleton Heston. And I don't think anyone wants to see that happen again.

The 2005 report was not the first time that NASA had openly discussed the high levels of radiation that exist beyond the Van Allen belts. In February 2001, the space agency posted a 'debunking' article that argued that the rocks allegedly brought back from the Moon were so distinctive in nature that they proved definitively that man had gone to the Moon. The problem though with maintaining a lie of the magnitude of the Moon landing lie is that there is always the danger that in defending one part of the lie, another part will be exposed. Such was the case with NASA's ill-conceived [\*The Great Moon Hoax\*](#) post, in which it was acknowledged that what are referred to as "cosmic rays" have a tendency to "constantly bombard the Moon and they leave their fingerprints on Moon rocks."

NASA scientist David McKay explained that "There are isotopes in Moon rocks, isotopes we don't normally find on Earth, that were created by nuclear reactions with the highest-energy cosmic rays." The article went on to explain how "Earth is spared from such radiation by our protective atmosphere and magnetosphere. Even if scientists wanted to make something like a Moon rock by, say, bombarding an Earth rock with high energy atomic nuclei, they couldn't. Earth's most powerful particle accelerators can't energize particles to match the most potent cosmic rays, which are themselves accelerated in supernova blastwaves and in the violent cores of galaxies."

So one of the reasons that we know the Moon rocks are real, you see, is because they were blasted with ridiculously high levels of radiation while sitting on the surface of the Moon. And our astronauts, one would assume, would have been blasted with the very same ridiculously high levels of radiation, but since this was NASA's attempt at a 'debunking' article, they apparently would prefer that you don't spend too much time analyzing what they have to say.

How exactly are we to reconcile NASA's current position on space radiation with the same agency's simultaneous claim that we have already sent men to the Moon? There are a few different possibilities that come to mind, the first of which is that, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, we simply threw caution to the wind and sent our boys off to the Moon with no protection whatsoever from space radiation. If that were true, however, then the question that would naturally be raised is: why not just do it again? After all, all of our Moonwalkers made it home safe and sound and most all have lived long, healthy, cancer-free lives. So why all the fuss over space radiation?

NASA could, I suppose, take the position that space radiation is a recent problem. Perhaps in the '60s and early '70s, space was relatively free of radiation, allowing unshielded Apollo rockets to cruise about without a care in the world while crew members primarily busied themselves with such important tasks as trying to capture all the stems and seeds that were floating around the command module as a result of cleaning their stash of low-grade '60s marijuana. It was just a different solar system back in those days. As aging hippies like to say, if you remember the solar system of the sixties, you weren't really flying around in it.

If it proves not to be the case that this space radiation "showstopper" is a new development, then I suppose that the only explanation that we are left with is that we did indeed have the technology to shield our astronauts from radiation back in the 1960s, but at some time during the last four decades, that technology was simply lost. What probably happened was that an overzealous night custodian simply threw the data away. The conversation around the NASA water cooler the next day probably went something like this: "Holy shit! Has anyone seen that folder that I left on my desk last night? It contained the only copy of the secret formula that I devised for building a weightless space radiation shield. It could be forty years or more before someone else can duplicate it! My ass is so fired!"

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part IV***

***October 1, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

*"Once on the Moon, on the lunar surface in the dress, in the life support system, you couldn't see the camera. They couldn't bend their head that far down to see the scale ... They had no viewfinder - they had to aim by moving their body."*

Jan Lundberg, chief designer of the Hasselblad cameras allegedly used by the Apollo astronauts

*"They had to effectively guess where they were pointing the camera."*  
HJP Arnold, the Kodak executive who supplied the Ektachrome film for the missions

The issue that most of the Moon hoax and 'debunking' sites spend the most time on, by far, is the photographic anomalies. And that, I suppose, is to be expected, since with the original videotapes, telemetry tapes and blueprints all having conveniently disappeared, and with most of the Moon rocks missing and their legitimacy being unverifiable, there isn't much else in the way of physical evidence to examine.

Skeptics have identified a number of problems with [NASA's official photographs](#) of the alleged Moon landings, including; flags appearing to wave despite the lack of atmosphere; non-parallel shadows, suggesting multiple light sources; objects in the shadows that are clearly visible when they shouldn't be, again indicating multiple light sources; the complete lack of stars in the lunar sky; identical backgrounds in photos that NASA has claimed were shot at different locations; and inconsistencies with the crosshair reference marks.

We will look at each of these in some detail – well, actually we will look at *most* of them in some detail. Because as it turns out – and I know that this will come as a huge disappointment to all the 'debunkers' – I don't really give a shit whether the flag is waving or not. Many of the 'debunking' websites devote an inordinate amount of time to the issue, as though it were the primary plank on which the 'conspiracy theories' rested. They do this because the videos and photos are ambiguous and open to interpretation, and the 'debunkers' realize that people are going to see in them what they want to see.

The truth though is that it does not matter in the least whether the flag is waving. That is just one tiny drop of potential evidence in an overflowing bucket.

Some of the other problems with the images are considerably less ambiguous. But before we even get to those, we must first discuss the fact that the very existence of the photographs is a technical impossibility. Simply stated, it would not have been possible to capture *any* of the images allegedly shot on the Moon in the manner that NASA says they were captured.

Back in the day, you see (and younger readers may again want to cover their eyes), cameras weren't all that smart, so everything had to be done manually. The photographer had to manually focus each shot by peering through the viewfinder and rotating the lens until the scene came into focus. The proper aperture and shutter speeds had to be manually selected for each shot as well, to insure a proper exposure. That required peering through the viewfinder as well, to meter the shot. Finally, each shot had to be properly composed and framed, which obviously also required looking through the viewfinder.

The problem for the astronauts is that the cameras were mounted to their chests, which made it impossible to see through the viewfinder to meter, frame and focus the shots. Everything, therefore, was pretty much of a guess. Focusing would have been entirely guesswork, as would the framing of each shot. An experienced photographer can accurately estimate the exposure settings, but the astronauts lacked such experience and they were also handicapped by the fact that they were viewing the scenes through heavily tinted visors, which meant that what they were seeing was not what the camera was seeing.

To add to their troubles, they were wearing space helmets that seriously restricted their field of vision, along with enormously bulky, pressurized gloves that severely limited their manual dexterity. The odds then of getting *even one* of the three elements (exposure, focus and framing) correct under those conditions on any given shot would have been exceedingly low. And yet, amazingly enough, on the overwhelming majority of the photos, they got all three right!

A rather self-important gent by the name of Jay Windley, one of the most prominent of the NASA-approved 'debunkers,' attempts to spin all this away on his website, [www.clavius.org](http://www.clavius.org). According to Windley, "The exposures were worked out ahead of time based on experimentation. The ASA/ISO rating of the film was known, and NASA photographers precomputed the necessary exposures ... In many cases the camera settings for planned photos were given in the astronauts' cuff checklists."

No shit, Jay? Did they send an advance team to the Moon to do that "experimentation"? Because the lighting conditions on the Moon are pretty unique, as you well know, and nobody had ever been there before, so I'm not really seeing how NASA's photographers were able to work the exposures out "ahead of time." And what "planned photos" are you referring to? How did they know what they were going to photograph before they even knew what was there? They knew they were going to take photos of each other, I suppose, and of the flag and lander, but they would have had no clue how those

things were going to be lit, and it's the lighting, not the subject, that primarily determines the exposure settings.

Windley of course knows that, since he claims on his site that he is "an experienced photographer [who] has worked professionally in that area from time to time." He must also know then that his comments about the unimportance of properly focusing a shot are intentionally misleading. He starts off on the right track, more or less, advising readers that an increased depth of field "means that when the lens is set to focus at a certain distance, objects somewhat nearer and farther from this ideal distance are also sharply focused. The narrower the aperture, the greater the depth of field."

It is certainly true that the smaller the aperture, the greater the depth of field will be. And the greater the depth of field, the more of the background and foreground will be in focus, assuming that the subject is in proper focus. Windley, like the rest of the 'debunkers,' would like us to believe that all of the photos shot on the lunar surface were shot with a very small aperture setting (which supposedly explains the lack of stars in the lunar sky, but we'll get to that soon enough), which would maximize the depth of field. And the greater the depth of field, according to Windley, "the sloppier the photographer can be about his focus settings."

That last statement, for those who may have missed it, is the part that isn't actually true. An increased depth of field most certainly does not mean that you can use the 'close enough' technique to focus your camera. Depth of field has nothing to do with whether your subject is sharply focused or not. *If* your subject is sharply focused, then depth of field determines how many of the other objects in the background and foreground of your photo will be in focus as well. If your subject is not sharply focused, however, then your photo is going to suck regardless of the amount of depth of field.

As for framing the shots, Windley claims that mostly wide-angle lenses were used, which meant that, "It was sufficient to point the camera in the general direction of the subject and you would be likely to frame it well enough." So apparently all the fuss about framing, exposure and focus is much ado about nothing. All you need do is write the exposure settings down on your sleeve, ballpark the focus, and point your camera in "the general direction of the subject" and you'll get great shots nearly every time!

Windley then adds (and this is my favorite part of his photography tutorial) that on the later missions, "a 500mm telephoto lens was also taken, and the cameras were modified with sighting rings to help aim them. Normally the camera would be mounted on the space suit chest bracket, but for telephoto use the astronaut would have to remove it and hold it at eye level in order to sight down the rings."

As any photographer knows, getting a decent shot with a 500mm lens without the use of a tripod is a pretty tall order, even for a seasoned professional. Getting a decent hand-held shot with a 500mm lens while wearing bulky, pressurized gloves would be just about impossible. And the notion that you could come anywhere close to properly framing or focusing an image captured with a 500mm lens without looking through the viewfinder is laughably absurd.



The ‘debunkers’ will also tell you that it is not true that all the Moon landing images were keepers, and that NASA only released the best of the photos. The ‘debunkers,’ however, don’t know what they are talking about. The reality is that NASA has released *all* of the alleged photos taken during the Apollo missions, including indecipherable ones that are labeled “inadvertent shutter release” (which, I have to admit, is a nice touch). With the exception of what are most likely deliberate mistakes, the clear majority of the shots are pretty well composed, exposed and focused.

For those who don’t find that at all unusual, here is an experiment that you can try at home: grab the nearest 35MM SLR camera and strap it around your neck. It is probably an automatic camera so you will have to set it for manual focus and manual exposure. Now you will need to put on the thickest pair of winter gloves that you can find, as well as a motorcycle helmet with a visor. Once you have done all that, here is your assignment: walk around your neighborhood with the camera pressed firmly to your chest and snap a bunch of photos. You will need to fiddle with the focus and exposure settings, of course, which is going to be a real bitch since you won’t be able to see or feel what you are doing. Also, needless to say, you’ll just have to guess on the framing of all the shots.

You should probably use a digital camera, by the way, so that you don’t waste a lot of film, because you’re not going to have a lot of keepers. Of course, part of the fun of this challenge is changing the film with the gloves and helmet on, and you’ll miss out on that by going digital. Anyway, after you fill up your memory card, head back home and download all your newly captured images. While looking through your collection of unimpressive photos, marvel at the incredible awesomeness of our Apollo astronauts, who not only risked life and limb to expand man’s frontiers, but who were also amazingly talented photographers. I’m more than a little surprised that none of them went on to lucrative careers as professional shutterbugs.

Even if our fine astronauts could have captured all of those images, the film would have never survived the journey in such pristine condition. Even very brief exposure to the relatively low levels of radiation used in airport security terminals can damage photographic film, so how would the film have fared after prolonged, continuous exposure to far higher levels of radiation? And what of the 540° F temperature fluctuations? That must have been some amazingly resilient film stock – and yet another example of the lost technology of the 1960s.

Even though the images are clearly not what NASA claims they are, we are going to play along and pretend as though Neil and Buzz and all of the rest of the guys could have actually taken them. The question then is: where did they take them?

Hoax theorists, ‘debunkers’ and NASA are all in agreement on at least one thing: conditions on the surface of the Moon are decidedly different than conditions here on the surface of planet Earth. For one thing, the Moon has no atmosphere. Also, there is only one source of light, which is, of course, the sun (NASA has verified that no other light source was available to the astronauts).

Due to the lack of atmosphere on the Moon, light is not scattered and travels only in a straight line from the sun and is reflected back in the same direction. What that means is that anything that falls in

the shadows will be in virtually complete darkness. It also means that all shadows will be cast in the same direction. And it means that the sky is always black, and, with no atmosphere filtering the view, that sky will be filled at all times with a dazzling display of stars unlike anything ever before seen by man.

As other skeptics have noted, none of the photos supposedly brought home from the Moon show a single star in the sky. ‘Debunkers’ have claimed that this is because the exposure settings on the cameras didn’t allow for the stars to be captured on film. In order to properly expose for the objects being photographed, ‘debunkers’ claim, shutter speeds had to be too fast and apertures too small to capture the stars. And that applies, according to the ‘debunkers,’ *to every single photo taken on the Moon*. Even all the ones that, according to those same ‘debunkers,’ were improperly exposed!

NASA’s own website has boldly stated that, “Astronauts striding across the bright lunar soil in their sunlit spacesuits were literally dazzling. Setting a camera with the proper exposure for a glaring spacesuit would naturally render background stars too faint to see.”

The problem with this claim, which should be obvious to any photographer, is that *a variety of different exposure settings* would have been required to shoot all the photos allegedly taken on the Moon (Windley acknowledged as much when he claimed that NASA “precomputed the necessary exposures”). All of the scenes below, for example, which are obviously not very well lit, would have required long exposures – exposures that would have definitely captured the brilliantly shining stars, since they would have been the brightest objects in the camera’s field of view.















One thing that I love about the ‘debunking’ websites, by the way, is how frequently they contradict themselves while working their way through their ‘debunking’ checklists. The ever-pompous Phil Plait, proprietor of the appropriately named [BadAstronomy.com](http://BadAstronomy.com) website, is a prime example. Fairly early on in his ‘debunking’ rant, he writes as follows: “I’ll say this here now, and return to it many times: the Moon is not the Earth. Conditions there are weird, and our common sense is likely to fail us.”

Plait does indeed return to it often, whenever it advances his argument to do so, but he just as frequently tosses his own cardinal rule aside when that is what serves his purposes – like, for example, just four paragraphs later, when he advises readers to “go outside here on Earth on the darkest night imaginable and take a picture with the exact same camera settings the astronauts used, you won’t see any stars! It’s that simple.”

Ever the coy one, Phil doesn’t tell us what those “camera settings” are, but he clearly implies that the same settings were used in every photo, which clearly is not the case. Phil also conveniently forgets that the view from the Moon is not filtered through an atmosphere, so the stars have many times the luminosity as here on Earth. Phil’s little experiment, therefore, is entirely invalid, since he forgot to take into account that conditions on the Moon “are weird.” And as with all the ‘debunkers,’ he also forgot to explain why it is that no one thought to expose a photo or two to *specifically capture the brilliant display of stars*.



Legend holds that a dozen astronauts walked upon the surface of the Moon for varying amounts of time. The Apollo 17 astronauts alone were purportedly there for three days. For the duration of their visits, each of the twelve would have been treated to what was by far the most dazzling display of stars ever seen by the human eye. What they would have seen was many times more stars burning many times brighter than can be seen anywhere here on planet Earth.

Collectively, the dirty dozen took thousands of photos throughout their alleged journeys. And yet, amazingly enough, not one of them thought it might be a good idea to snap even a single photograph of such a wondrous sight. Of course, endless photos of the lunar modules and the monotonous lunar surface are exciting too, but just one or two photos of that dazzling lunar sky might have been nice as well. It's as if someone went to Niagara Falls and the only photos they brought back were of the car they drove sitting in a nondescript parking lot.

Now let's turn our attention to the subject of shadows. As skeptics have noted, some of NASA's photos seem to depict nonparallel shadows, indicating more than one light source. 'Debunkers' have claimed that all such discrepancies can be explained by "perspective" and topographical variations on the surface of the Moon. And truth be told, many of the images that I have seen on websites on both sides of the aisle are ambiguous enough that such explanations can be plausibly argued. But there are, as it turns out, images in NASA's collection that aren't quite so easy to debunk.

There are, in fact, images that demonstrate unequivocally that more than one light source was used. Take, for example, the image below of one of the landing pods of the Apollo 11 lunar module, allegedly parked on the surface of the Moon.



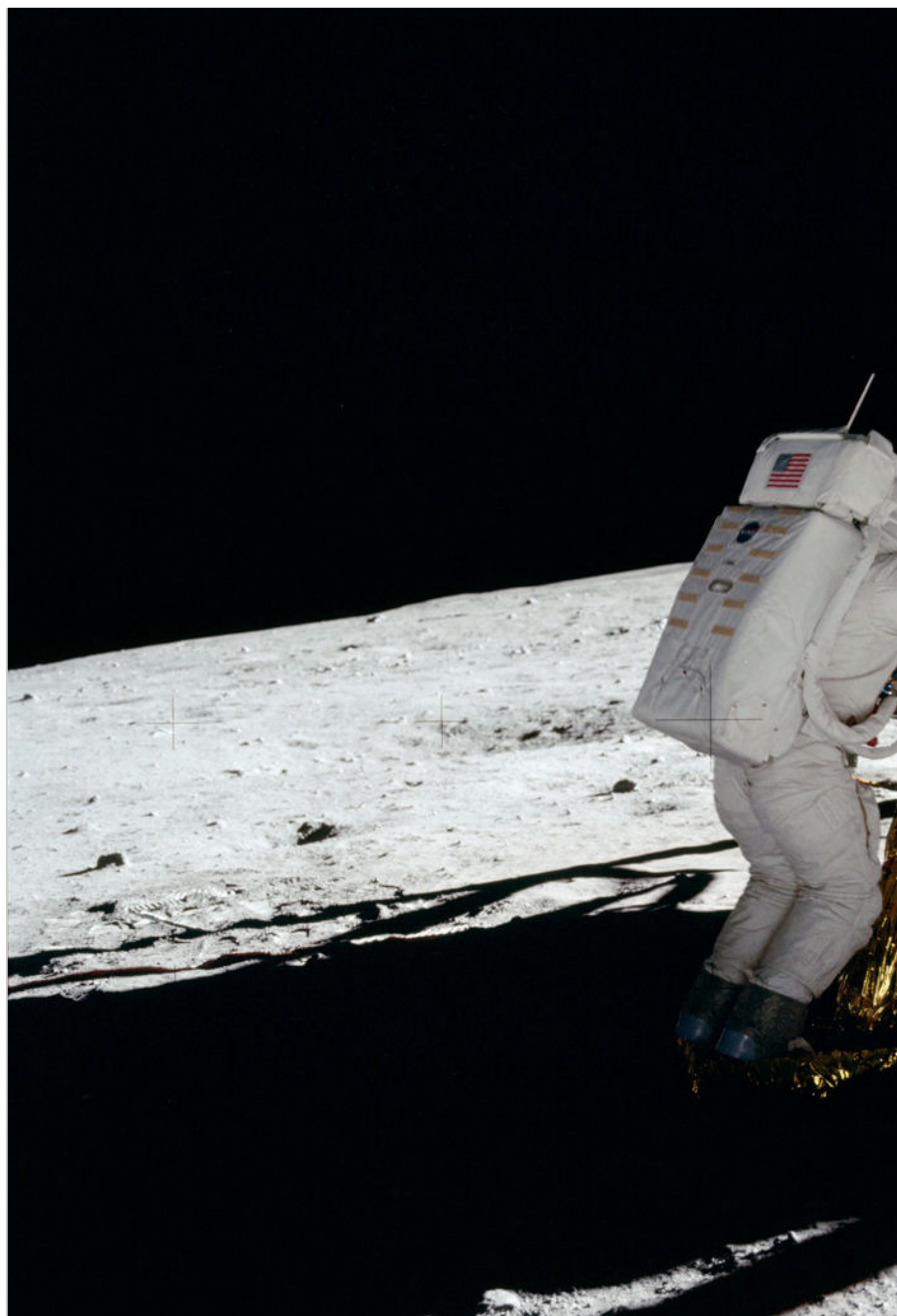


The primary light source, meant to simulate the sun, is obviously positioned to the right of the scene, as is clearly demonstrated by the shadows of all of the objects in the background. But there is just as obviously a secondary light source coming from the direction of the photographer. We know this because we can see in the foreground that the shadows coming off the small 'Moon rocks' point away from us. We know it also because we can see the light being reflected off of the gold foil wrap onto the ground in front of the pod. But we know it most of all because *we can actually see the light reflected in the foil wrap on the leg of the pod!*

The shadows in the foreground and in the background are at nearly right angles, a phenomenon that cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be explained away as a perceptual problem – especially when *we can clearly see the reflection of the secondary light!* One other question concerning this particular photo: how do you suppose you would go about capturing such a low-angle shot with a chest-mounted camera? Was the astronaut/photographer standing in a foxhole?

The other issue involving shadows concerns the fact that, in the majority of the photos allegedly taken on the Moon, objects lying in the shadows are clearly visible even though, due to the Moon's lack of atmosphere and the fact that sunlight therefore does not scatter, those shadowed areas should be completely black. The Moon, you see, is kind of a black and white world. If something is in the direct path of the unfiltered sunlight, it should be well lit (on one side); if it's not, it should be as black as NASA's starless lunar sky.





The ‘debunkers,’ of course, have an explanation for this. Let’s turn once again to [BadAstronomy.com](http://BadAstronomy.com) for that explanation, since that seems to be the website that all the other ‘debunking’ websites consistently reference and link to, the one that all the major media outlets endorse, and the one that even NASA apparently refers skeptics to. According to the site, “The lunar dust has a peculiar property: it tends to reflect light back in the direction from where it came.” Plait then goes on to provide the following explanation of the lighted shadows phenomenon: “Let’s say the sun is off to the right in a picture. It is illuminating the right side of the lander, and the left is in shadow. However, the sunlight falling beyond the lander on the left is being reflected back toward the Sun. That light hits the surface and reflects to the right and up, *directly onto the shadowed part of the lander.*”

In the previously cited example, Plait managed to make it through four entire paragraphs before contradicting himself. Here he has easily shattered that record by, incredibly enough, contradicting himself in back-to-back sentences! And this, keep in mind, seems to be the best ‘debunker’ that NASA has to offer (it is unclear whether Plait is a paid shill or simply a useful idiot; in other words, it is unclear whether he actually believes the stuff he writes or whether he is knowingly lying his ass off, but the latter seems far more likely).

Plait is right on the money when he says that the light falling beyond the LM on the left would be reflected “back toward the sun.” Unfortunately, he then immediately contradicts himself by claiming that that same light would be reflected “to the right,” onto the module. The only way that that could happen, as Plait surely knows, is if the light were to shine *through* the lander and reflect off the shaded portion of the soil. But that makes no sense, of course, just as Phil’s explanation makes no sense.

Light does not disperse on the Moon, as Plait himself notes elsewhere on his website. And the surface of the Moon (or at least what passes for the surface of the Moon in NASA’s photos) is not a very reflective surface, as can be clearly discerned in the photographs. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that the Moon is a very selectively reflective surface, with the light choosing to reflect only on the astronauts and on flags and other patriotic symbols.

Not too surprisingly, Plait once again invites readers to reproduce the effect right here at home, completely ignoring the fact that, as he himself has acknowledged, light behaves in entirely different ways here on Earth than it does on the Moon. Plait also claims that, “A nifty demonstration of the shadow filling was done by Ian Goddard and can be found [here](#). His demos are great and really drive the point home.” In truth, Goddard’s “nifty demonstrations” are entirely dependent upon the effects of atmosphere causing the light to disperse, and thus they have no validity whatsoever.

I forgot to mention in the earlier discussion, by the way, that Plait also appealed to readers to conduct an Earth-bound experiment to ‘debunk’ the diverging shadows conundrum. According to Phil, “You can experience this for yourself; go outside on a clear day when the Sun is low in the sky and compare

the direction of the shadows of near and far objects. You'll see that they appear to diverge. Here is a major claim of the HBs that you can disprove all by yourself!"

Here is another experiment that Plait might want to try himself: go outside during the daytime on any day of your choosing and look up at the sky. If it is absolutely jet black, then feel free to continue advising your readers to conduct Moon simulations here at home. If it is blue, however (or gray, or white, or pretty much any color other than black), then stop pretending as though conditions on the Moon can be replicated here on Earth when we all know better (or we all should).

And when you're done with that experiment? Give the camera-to-the-chest challenge a try and let everyone know how well that works out for you. And try to get some of those low-angle shots that NASA likes.

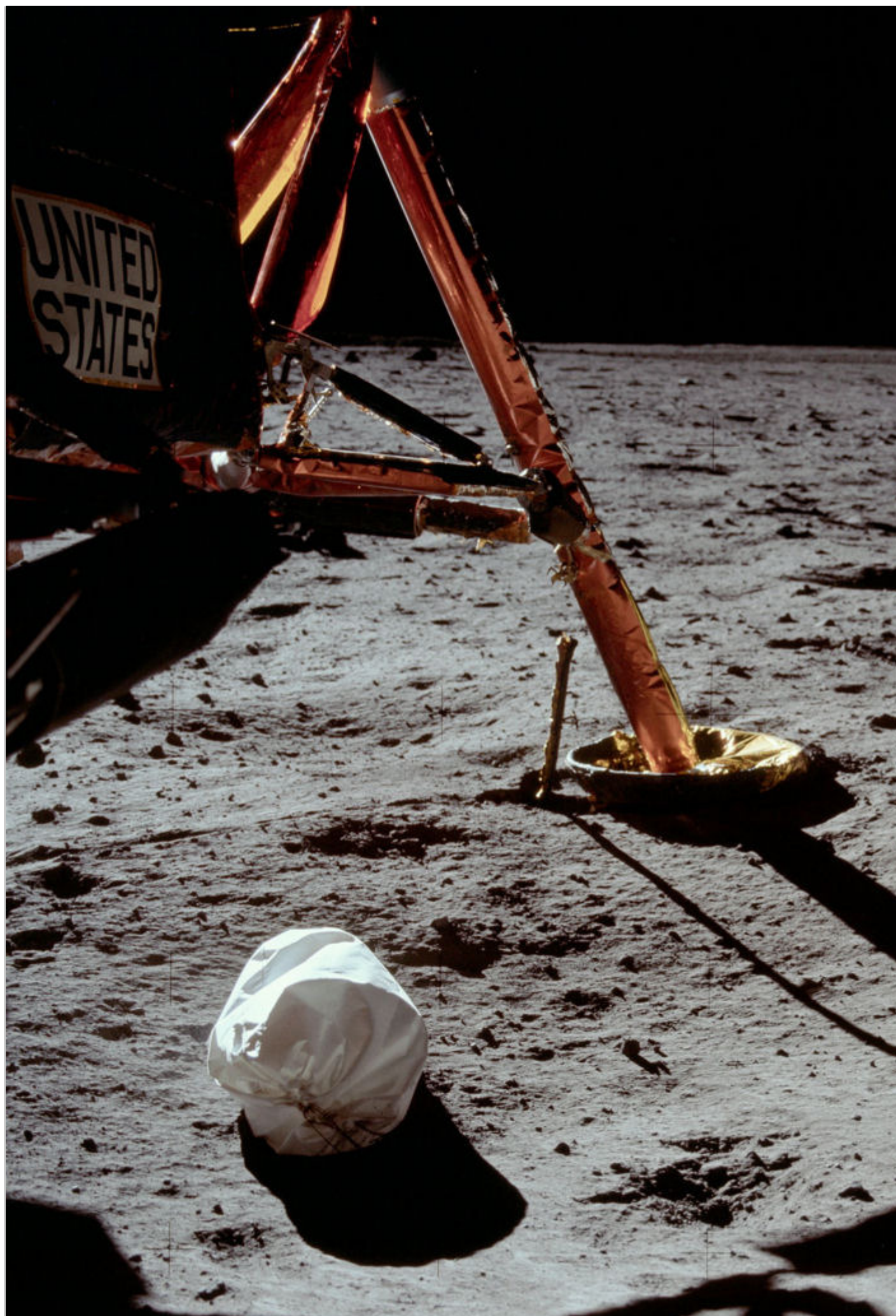
The truth is that even though a limited amount of light would reflect into the shadows, there is still way too much detail visible in the shadows in virtually all of NASA's photos – if the arguments that NASA and Plait put forth earlier are at all accurate. As readers will recall, the earlier claim was that the lunar surface and the astronauts' spacesuits were so dazzlingly bright in the unfiltered sunlight that very fast shutter speeds and very small apertures were required to avoid overexposing the shots.

The problem for NASA and its attack dogs is that you can't have it both ways. If the camera is stopped down to avoid overexposing extremely bright highlights, it cannot simultaneously capture full detail in the shadows. And if the aperture and shutter speeds are set to capture detail in the shadows, the camera would necessarily also capture the brilliant stars, which would be far brighter than anything lying in the lunar shadows. Other planets would be pretty hard to miss in the lunar sky as well, though none can be seen in any of NASA's photos.

Do you remember, by the way, what Windley told us earlier about the relationship between the aperture setting and depth of field? The basic rule is that the smaller the aperture setting, the greater the depth of field will be. With a wide aperture, conversely, the photo will have little depth of field. That is why portrait photographers tend to shoot with the lens wide open, to deliberately isolate the subject from foreground and background elements. Landscape photographers, on the other hand, stop the lens down to keep the entire scene in focus.

With that bit of basic photographic knowledge in hand, it is fairly easy to determine whether NASA's photographs were, in fact, taken with a very small aperture setting. And a good place to start, I suppose, is with the very first photo allegedly taken by a man standing on lunar soil. Below is what is alleged to be Armstrong's very first attempt at lunar photography, just after climbing down from the module.





First off, I think we can all agree that, under the circumstances, it's a pretty damn good first effort. There are problems right off the bat, of course, with the fact that the shadows are obviously lit with a diffused secondary light source, or else we wouldn't be able to see the top of the bag, or the United States sign, or the shadowed side of the landing strut, but what we're really looking for here is depth of field, which this photo has very little of. The photographer has focused on the United States sign (and he did it blindly!), but little else is sharply focused. Hence we know, from the very first shot, that the 'debunkers' are lying about the exposure settings.

Moving on to Armstrong's second alleged photo, seen below, we again find that there is very little depth of field. Both the foreground and the background are quite blurry, indicating that it clearly was not taken with a small aperture setting. And yet there is nary a star to be seen.







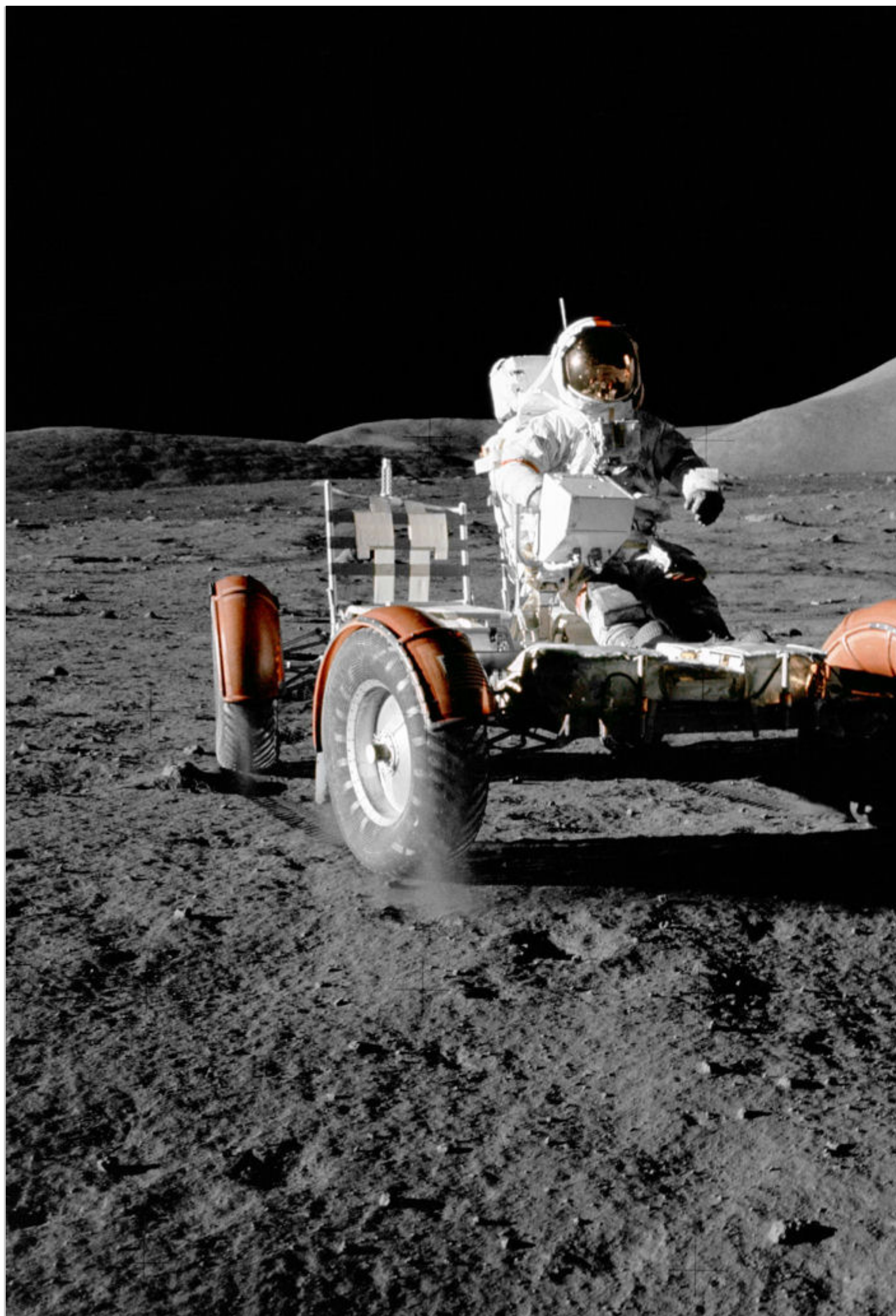
Before moving on, there is one more of Armstrong's photos that I feel obligated to present here. It is, after all, his masterpiece, as well as being probably the most iconic of all the Apollo photos. I am talking, of course, about the so-called "Man on the Moon" shot of cohort Buzz Aldrin, seen below (which is probably not actually Aldrin; my guess is that the same two actors did all the Moonwalking in the videos and photos from the alleged missions).



We must first, of course, compliment Neil on the awesome composition. It hardly looks staged at all. But there are problems here. Once again, I'm just not seeing the depth of field that Windley promised us. It's also pretty hard not to notice that Buzz's spacesuit isn't pressurized. Furthermore, the surface of the 'Moon' is quite unevenly lit, indicating that the light source used was much closer than the sun. And then there is the noticeable lack of any shadowing on Buzz's spacesuit. He's casting a shadow on the ground, but there is no corresponding shadowing of his body. Even here on Earth, that is only possible with a secondary light source.

There are some photos in NASA's collection that were taken without a secondary light source, so we do know what fake Moon landing pictures should look like. The action shot below of the lunar rover, for example, was taken without a secondary light to fill in the shadows. The shadows still aren't quite as dark as they would be on the Moon, but the difference between a fake Moon shot taken with a fill light and a fake Moon shot taken without a fill light couldn't be more obvious.





NASA liked the “Man on the Moon” image so much, by the way, that they essentially restaged it for the Apollo 12 mission. As can be seen below, a secondary light was used for that shot as well. Without the fill light, there is simply no way that a portion of the astronaut’s spacesuit would not be shadowed, as it is in the rover photo above.



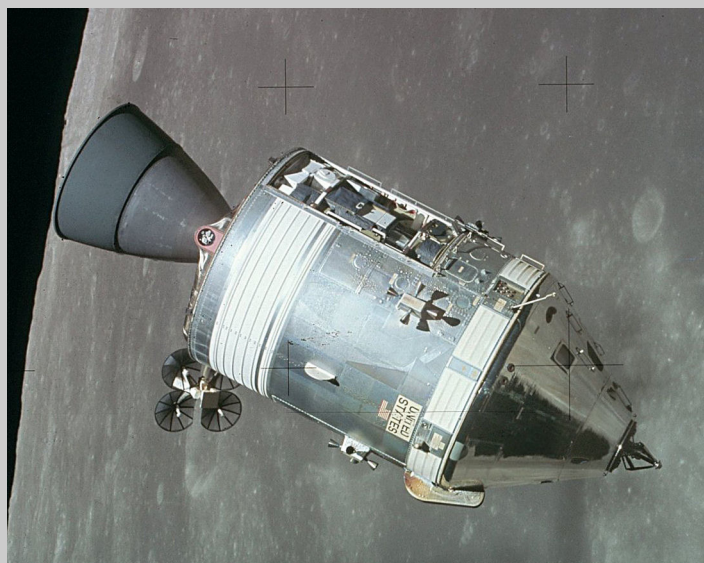


Moving on then to the next issue, we have the mystery of the disappearing crosshairs. The problem, according to skeptics, is that the crosshair reference marks, which were etched into the camera's lenses and therefore should always appear on top of any objects in the photos, sometimes disappear behind those objects.

Plait actually gets this one correct in explaining the phenomenon as a problem of overexposure and contrast. When some of the brighter objects in the photos are overexposed, the fine crosshairs tend to get washed out. That is in fact a reasonable explanation for the effect (by the way, I mentioned before that I was not a rocket scientist; I am, however, a photographer).

The claim that the crosshairs should be visible presupposes that NASA added objects to the photos, creating composites. I seriously doubt though that that would have happened. The scenes appear to have been very carefully staged *before* the photos were taken, so there would have been no need for cutting and pasting. And if NASA had planned on adding additional elements to the photos, I doubt that they would have complicated that process by using cameras with crosshairs; it would have been much easier to create the composites first and then overlay the grid marks on top of them.

However ... the same can certainly not be said of the images that purport to show various parts of the ship flying through space. Take the image below, for example, which is supposed to be a two-dimensional rendering of a three-dimensional scene of the command and service modules in lunar orbit. If it were an actual three-dimensional scene, the spaceship would be 69 miles above the lunar surface – which would, I would think, make it difficult for a portion of that lunar terrain to obscure part of the ship's S-band antennae assembly.



The shot, as can be seen in the enlargement below, is clearly a composite. And not even a very good one. So it is entirely possible that some of the photos allegedly shot *on* the Moon are composites as well. I obviously haven't studied every one of them. I'm just saying that the ones that I have seen that have disappearing crosshairs do not appear to be composites.



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## *Wagging the Moondoggie, Part V*

*October 1, 2009*

*by David McGowan*

Stars are not the only thing missing in the Moon photos. Also conspicuously absent is any indication that the lunar modules actually landed in the locations in which they were photographed. Specifically, there is no crater visible under any of the modules, despite the fact that NASA's own artist renderings clearly showed the presence of a substantial crater. Also, not a speck of dust appears to have been displaced by the 10,000 lb reverse-thrust engine that powered the alleged descent.

NASA's artist renderings also depict a considerable quantity of smoke and flames shooting out from the bottom of the modules, though nothing of the sort is visible in the purported video footage of the [first landing of a lunar module](#), allegedly shot from inside the module as it set down on lunar soil. In addition, despite the ridiculously close proximity of the immensely powerful rocket engine, no noise from that engine can be heard on the video.





As can be seen in the photo above, the area directly under what is supposed to be the nozzle of the descent stage engine is completely undisturbed. Not only is there no crater, there is no sign of scorching and none of the small 'Moon rocks' and not a speck of 'lunar soil' has been displaced! And if you refer back to the earlier close-up of the module's landing pod, you will see that not so much as a single grain of 'lunar soil' settled onto the lunar modules while they were setting down.





Your initial response to this may well be, “Well, duh! ... why shouldn't the surface of the Moon be undisturbed?”

Glad you asked. The answer is that the lunar modules were not placed upon the Moon by the hand of God. They had to actually *land* there. And in order for them to land there in one piece, they had to make use of powerful reverse-thrust rockets. If they hadn't, they would have made landings roughly comparable to a piano falling off the balcony of a high-rise apartment building.

“But,” you say, “isn't the gravitational pull of the Moon considerably less than that of the Earth?” Of course it is, but that does not render objects weightless. A vehicle with a curb weight of 33,000 pounds here on Earth (what the lunar modules weighed, according to NASA) still weighs close to three tons on the Moon, so it's not going to make a very soft landing without assistance. And the assistance options were necessarily limited.

NASA could not have used parachutes, such as were used with the returning command modules, because parachutes don't really work without air, so that would have been a dead giveaway that the landings were faked. They also couldn't use a helicopter-type rotor, because those also don't work in an environment devoid of atmosphere. What they allegedly used then to provide the necessary ‘brakes’ was a powerful, reverse-thrust rocket engine.

That is why, in the artist renderings of the landings (the landings obviously couldn't be filmed, because no one was supposed to be there yet), an enormous blast of flame and hot gas is seen shooting out of the bottom of the module. This massive reverse force would have served to counteract the effects of the Moon's gravitational pull, allowing the module to gently set down in the lunar dust, unharmed and intact. And needless to say, that is kind of important when that very same vehicle is your only ride home.

The ‘debunkers,’ by the way, like to pretend as if the hoax theorists made those artist renderings up themselves, as if to say, “Hey, look over here! I just made up this drawing of what *I* think the landings should look like and NASA's landings looked nothing like my drawing!” The reality though is that NASA's own artists provided those images, based on the way that NASA claimed the modules would perform. What the ‘debunkers’ are telling you, in other words, is that NASA didn't really understand how their own technology was supposed to work.

Given the manner in which the modules allegedly landed, the problem here is that – unless the landing surface was paved with, say, concrete – an inordinate amount of material should have been displaced by the force of the rocket blast as the module was setting down. As Plait likes to say, you can easily

verify this yourself. All you have to do is get hold of a rocket with 10,000 pounds of thrust (there probably are some surviving members of the von Braun clan that can hook you up), and head out to the nearest desert location.

Once you find a suitable spot to conduct this experiment, hold the rocket aloft (you might want to wear gloves and an asbestos suit for this part, but it's up to you) and fire that son-of-a-bitch up, directing the blast towards the desert floor (it might also be a good idea to grab on to a stationary object with your free hand and hold on real tight). Let it rip for whatever you think would be a reasonable amount of time to complete a landing procedure, and then shut it off.

If you've done this correctly, the result will be a fairly large crater and a blinding dust storm. That dust will, of course, eventually settle, leaving a heavy coating of dust on you and your rocket. You may also notice that the blast has lent the desert floor a distinctive scorched look. If you run the experiment for too long, you may even find that the intense heat has fused the cratered sand into something resembling a large bowl of glass.

The point here, of course, is that nothing of the sort is evident in the pictures allegedly brought back from the Moon. The lunar surface is, as noted, completely undisturbed and the modules are as clean as if they had just rolled off the assembly line. It appears as though they did not land at all, but were rather set in place with a crane or other such device. And of course we all know that there were very few crane operators on the Moon in the late '60s and early '70s.

How then did the modules get there? Could it be that the lunar surface was so compact that even the considerable force of the rocket could not dislodge it? That might be a credible explanation were it not for the fact that the astronauts themselves, who with the Moon's reduced gravitational pull weighed in at about 30 pounds apiece (maybe 60 pounds each with the additional alleged weight of their packs), made readily identifiable footprints from the moment their feet hit the ground. It appeared, in fact, as though the lunar soil had roughly the same consistency as baby powder. And yet, amazingly enough, not a single grain of this soil seems to have been displaced by the landing of the modules.

The 'debunkers,' naturally enough, have an explanation for this. According to them, it's all about throttle control. As Plait explains, "Sure, the rocket on the lander was capable of 10,000 pounds of thrust, but *they had a throttle*. They fired the rocket hard to deorbit and slow enough to land on the Moon, but they didn't need to thrust that hard as they approached the lunar surface; they throttled down to about 3000 pounds of thrust."

Plait also notes that originally on his site he had said "that the engines also cut off early, before the moment of touchdown, to prevent dust from getting blown around and disturbing the Astronauts' view of the surface. This was an incorrect assertion." The funny thing is though that he voiced that "incorrect assertion" just as forcefully and as arrogantly as he voices all the other assertions on his page – which makes sense, I guess, since everything else on his page is incorrect as well.



Phil has obviously never landed a lunar module. Or given much thought to how you would go about doing so. Actually, that's probably not true. Phil is most likely just a shameless liar. Not a particularly good one, mind you, but you have to remember that he is working with a handicap – he has to weave all of his 'debunking' arguments around NASA's lies.

Let's try to inject a little sanity into this discussion, shall we? First of all, no one with an ounce of common sense is going to cut the engine and let their three-ton spaceship simply drop onto the lunar surface. Nor are they going to cruise on in while progressively easing up on the throttle, effortlessly setting the module down, as Plait claims, like "a car pulls into a parking spot," as if they had been landing lunar modules since the day they were born. Because the reality is that the six astronauts who allegedly landed the six lunar modules hadn't done it before and *they only had one chance to get it right*.

And do you know why, Phil? Because that module was their only ride home, and if they damaged it in any way, they weren't going home. Ever. They weren't going to do anything except die within days in the most desolate place imaginable. And that is why it is perfectly obvious that, *if* they had really gone to the Moon, they would not under any circumstances have landed the modules in either of the ways that Plait has suggested.

Has anyone ever seen a helicopter land? That is essentially how you would land a lunar module as well. The basic technique is to line yourself up with your landing site while hovering a fairly short distance above the ground (with the module, I presume, you would hold your position by utilizing those clusters of horns). Then, when you're stabilized and lined up just where you want to be, you *very slowly* ease off the throttle so as to very gently set it down. And if you've never done it before, you're definitely going to want to take your time.

And that is why there quite obviously should be blast craters under those lunar modules. That is why NASA itself indicated that there would be blast craters under the lunar modules. And that is also why it is fundamentally impossible for the modules to be as impeccably clean and dust-free as they are in all of NASA's photos. And no amount of spinning from the 'debunkers' will ever explain that away.

As previously mentioned, there was much about the Apollo project to stand in awe of. Every individual phase of the missions was, in and of itself, a breathtaking technological achievement. Just blasting men into Earth orbit is a daunting task – so much so that in the nearly half-century that has passed since the first two nations did it (the US and the USSR), only one other (China) has managed to join that elite club. And China has only done it a few times. In the entire history of space exploration, just over 500 men and women have ever orbited the Earth.

And achieving Earth orbit was just the beginning. Then there was the 234,000-mile journey through the unknown to get to the Moon – on a single tank of gas in an unshielded spaceship. Then there was the main ship giving birth to the lunar module, and that untested lunar module then flying down and making a perfect landing on the surface of the Moon. Then there was that same untested lunar module blasting off from the surface of the Moon without the assistance of any ground crew and ascending 69 miles to attain lunar orbit. Then there was the ever-reliable lunar module finding, catching and docking with another ship while in lunar orbit, utilizing yet more untested technology. Then there was the command module shedding the lunar module and then commencing that 234,000-mile journey back home.

But as remarkable as it was to get the astronauts safely to and from the Moon, their survival while on the Moon was equally remarkable. To say that the Moon is an environment incompatible with the survival of humans would be a considerable understatement – which brings us to our next topic of discussion: those amazing NASA Moonwalking suits.

Those suits were able to provide the astronauts with everything they needed to stay alive in the Moon's harsh environment. Remember NASA's elaborate rendering of what a Moon work station protected from space radiation would look like? Neil and Buzz didn't need any of that fancy stuff because they were wearing the magic suits. And those extreme temperatures of +260° F to -280° F? Not a problem when you're wearing the magic suit. Not only could they provide the cooling needed to combat the searing temperatures in the sun, but they could also provide the heat to counteract those frigid shadows.

As can be seen in NASA's photos, the egress side of the lunar modules (the side with the ladder and hatch) was usually in the shade (though almost always well lit). What that means is that, after traipsing around in the sun for a spell, the astronauts would have had to step into the shadows to reenter the spacecraft. And when they did so, those spacesuits were apparently smart enough to react instantly and switch over from turbo-charged air conditioning to blast-furnace heating in the blink of an eye. Awesome!

In addition to providing radiation protection that today's technology is unable to match, and a climate control system that is beyond anything available in the twenty-first century, the magic suits also provided the astronauts with breathable air, which definitely came in handy. What the suits did, in essence, was provide the astronauts with their own little portable, climate-controlled, radiation-protected atmosphere.

Of course, to actually do that (if we're pretending that it could be done at all), the suits would have had to have been pressurized. And it is perfectly obvious from all the photos that the suits were not, in fact, pressurized, because if they were, the astronauts would have looked like the Michelin Man bouncing around on the surface of the Moon.

The magic suits had to perform one other function as well: they had to serve as head-to-toe body armor. Because the Moon, according to NASA, has a serious problem with drive-by shootings from outer space. Seriously. I'm not making that up. I read it on NASA's own website.

In the very same NASA post that discusses Moon rocks being constantly bombarded with absurdly high levels of radiation, another curious admission can be found: "meteoroids constantly bombard the Moon." Our old friend from NASA, David McKay, explains that "Apollo moon rocks are peppered with tiny craters from meteoroid impacts." NASA then explains that that "could only happen to rocks from a planet with little or no atmosphere ... like the Moon."

"Meteoroids," NASA continues, "are nearly-microscopic specks of space dust that fly through space at speeds often exceeding 50,000 mph – ten times faster than a speeding bullet. They pack a considerable punch ... The tiny space bullets can plow directly into Moon rocks, forming miniature and unmistakable craters."

According to NASA, every square inch of every exposed surface of every rock allegedly gathered from the surface of the Moon shows this pattern. By extension then, we know that every square inch of the lunar surface is peppered with meteoroid craters. There really is no safe place to hang out. There you are minding your own business lining up your golf shot, and the next thing you know a meteoroid is ripping through your spacesuit at 50,000 mph. That has to sting a little bit.

Actually, what it would do is kill you. Almost instantaneously. Not the projectile itself, which probably wouldn't be lethal after passing through the spacesuit, but ripping or puncturing your magic suit while on the Moon is certainly something that you would want to avoid. You know that old saw about how "nature abhors a vacuum"? How that applies here is that any penetration in your suit would result in all the air being immediately sucked out. And then your blood would begin to boil. And that can be rather unpleasant.

I guess the Apollo crews really, uhmm, dodged a bullet on that one. Not one of the astronauts was hit, nor any of the lunar modules, nor any of the lunar rovers, nor any of the equipment that was used. I have to say here, by the way, that those Apollo guys were studs of the highest magnitude. Did they know what they were signing up for? What did NASA's ads say?

"Astronauts wanted. No experience necessary. Duties will include taking a trip to the Moon. Return trip cannot be guaranteed. Applicant must be able to withstand levels of radiation higher than anything that can be generated here on Earth. Applicant must also be able to work comfortably in heat in excess of +250° F, as well as in cooler conditions approaching -300° F. A continuous supply of breathable air may or may not be provided by employer. Snacks and water will necessarily be limited to what fits in employee-provided lunchbox. Rest room facilities will not be available. The ability to dodge 50,000 MPH space bullets is not required, but would be helpful. This is a great money-making opportunity! Paychecks can be picked up upon return to Earth."



The Apollo guys didn't have to worry about any of that, of course, because they were wearing the magic suits. Apparently those suits were yet another example of NASA digging deep into the well of lost 1960s technology.

A huge shout-out, by the way, is in order here for the guys at NASA for posting that article about the Moon rocks being bombarded with radiation and meteorites. It makes it so much easier for me when NASA has already done so much of the work of debunking the Moon landings.

When President George W. Bush announced on January 14, 2004 that America was going to be returning to the Moon, we were quickly advised by NASA types and various television talking heads that such a goal would require about fifteen years to achieve. No one in the media thought to ask why it would take fifteen years to do with twenty-first century technology what it took only eight years to accomplish with 1960s technology. Not one voice was raised to ask how with the twin advantages of improved technology and prior experience it would still take twice as long this time around.

It's not, after all, as if we have to reinvent the wheel here. Not only have we done this before, but we have done it safely and reliably. How could NASA possibly improve upon the record of the Apollo missions? What could they come up with that could outperform those vintage Saturn V rockets that made it to the Moon damn near every time, and made it home safe *every time*? And how do you improve upon a lunar module that not only performed flawlessly every time, but that was also the very model of lightweight, compact efficiency?

When you have a system that performs flawlessly on six incredibly technologically complex missions, and that delivers your astronauts home safely even on the one occasion that the system runs amok, why in the world would you toss it in the trash and start from scratch the next time around?

According to a *Fox News* report published the day after Bush's announcement, "The effort to return to the Moon will require building new spacecraft and sending out robotic craft to provide materials to be used later by human explorers, say experts." I wonder why they would need to do that? We didn't have to do shit like that last time. Why does NASA keep insisting on reinventing the wheel here? Why do they seem to have forgotten that we are old hands at this sort of thing?

Other people have forgotten as well. Following Bush's attempt to wag the Moondoggie, Republican Senator Sam Brownback sternly warned, "You've got the Chinese saying they're interested – we don't want them to beat us to the moon!" This may seem like a rather bizarre concern, until you realize that not only is China working on developing a Moon rocket, they are also rumored to be close to completing work on a time machine, which will allow them to transport their Moon rocket back to the mid-1960s and thus beat America to the Moon.

On a more serious note, I'm guessing that since China has managed, in the 50+ years of the space race, to put three whole spaceships into low-Earth orbit, there won't likely be any Chinese flags waving on the Moon anytime soon.

Anyway, doesn't it seem just a little strange that experts would now suggest that if we get to work right away, we might be able to land men on the Moon by the year 2020? Isn't that like saying that with a lot of hard work and a little luck, we might be able to develop a video game as technologically advanced as Pong by the year 2025? Or that by 2030, the scientific community might produce a battery-operated calculator small enough to fit into your pocket?

And do you think that, if we do 'go back,' the voice actors will be given a better script? Will we be given something to replace Armstrong's cheesy "One small step" line and Aldrin's poetic "magnificent desolation" line? Have I mentioned, by the way, that Donald Bowman, who worked at the Houston Space Center, has said that Armstrong was indeed handed a script before embarking on the alleged mission? That obviously does not prove that the Moon landings were faked, merely that Washington was very concerned with how the alleged missions were presented.

A NASA statement released in July of this year contained a rather curious assertion: "Conspiracy theories are always difficult to refute because of the impossibility of proving a negative." It is not, of course, NASA that is being asked to prove a negative, but rather those pesky 'conspiracy theorists.' NASA is merely being asked to prove a positive, which should be a relatively easy task. All they have to do is produce some actual evidence, beginning with all those reels of tape containing the telemetry data, the biomedical data, all voice communications, and all the original videotape. They could also release the plans and specifications for all that fancy space hardware. And maybe offer some kind of reasonable explanation for why so many of the official photographs are demonstrably fraudulent.

Alternatively, they could just send some guys back there, to prove that it can be done. It's been thirty-seven years and counting since the last guests on the Moon checked out. NASA allegedly filmed that final lift-off from the Moon, by the way. In case you haven't seen the historic film footage, you can view it [here](#). It's a very short clip and it's actually quite funny, so be sure to check it out.

I can't be 100% certain of this, of course, but I have a very strong hunch that NASA picked up the footage off the cutting-room floor after Ed Wood had finished editing *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Actually, I probably shouldn't joke about the clip because I do feel kind of bad for the guy that they had to leave behind to operate the camera. I wonder how he's doing these days?

Actually, NASA claims that the camera was mounted on the abandoned lunar rover (even in space, Americans are arrogant litterbugs), and that the pan and zoom functions were operated remotely by the ground crew back on Earth. You couldn't control your television from across the living room in those

days, but NASA could pan and zoom a camera from 234,000 miles away. Awesome! And there apparently either wasn't any delay in the signal or NASA had the foresight to hire a remote camera operator who was able to see a few seconds into the future.

You really have to hand it to the NASA boys – those guys think of everything.

George W. Jetson's visionary proposal envisioned the Moon as a steppingstone for manned travel to Mars. How that works though is a bit of a mystery to me. The distance between the Earth and Mars varies depending upon where the planets are in their respective orbits, but the minimum distance astronauts would have to travel to reach Mars from Earth is 36,000,000 miles. And the minimum distance astronauts would have to travel to reach Mars from the Moon is, uhmm, also 36,000,000 miles. So I guess what I'm wondering is: what exactly would be gained by making a pit stop on the Moon?

Are there gas stations there to fill up the tank? Some nice hotels maybe where the astronauts could get some R&R? A couple of hot space hookers? How would making a technologically complex landing on the Moon, followed by a lift-off that would require an excessive amount of additional fuel, help get our boys to Mars?

Let's take a big bite out of the reality sandwich here, shall we? The human animal is quite simply not equipped for space travel beyond low-Earth orbit. There is virtually no chance that we are going to send men to the Moon anytime soon. Despite what NASA would like you to believe, the combination of lethal space radiation, lethal temperatures, a complete lack of breathable air, and a lower gravitational attraction that produces serious health problems, including rapid tissue and bone degeneration, is simply not compatible with human existence. Neither is getting pelted with "space bullets." Neither is a lack of food and water.

And as for Mars? A roundtrip ticket there would earn you about 75,000,000 frequent flyer miles. I wouldn't count on that happening anytime soon.

Astronaut Steve Lindsey, after being chosen to command the final planned mission of the space shuttle, had this to say: "Everybody at NASA feels the same way. We're in favor of taking the next step and getting out of low-Earth orbit." So while technology in every other realm of human existence continues to take giant strides forward, everyone at NASA appears to want to take a big step *backwards*. To 1969.

Before bidding adieu, I have one final note to add: a certain Dr. Thomas Gold was an early skeptic of the feasibility of landing on the Moon. He made headlines prior to the alleged flight of Apollo 11 when he predicted that any attempt at a Moon landing would be disastrous. NASA, of course, purportedly proved the good doctor wrong.

Longtime readers will remember that Dr. Gold was America's most prominent proponent of the abiotic theory of oil and gas production, and that he went and dropped dead just before the 'Peak Oil' propaganda started to heat up. Dr. Gold was recently [proven to be correct](#) on the origins of so-called 'fossil fuels.' The article, curiously enough, refers to the research as "revolutionary" – which it is, I suppose, if you ignore the fact that the Soviets and Ukrainians did the same research and drew the same conclusions some fifty years ago.

We all know that that can't be true, however, because it would be impossible to keep a secret of that magnitude from the entire Western world ... right?

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part VI***

***October 13, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

*“It took pilots 50 years to progress from scarf-and-goggles barnstorming to setting down footprints on the Sea of Tranquility; it will have taken another half-century for us to return to the moon.”*

David Nolan writing in *Popular Mechanics*, March 2007 (according to the latest from NASA, we won't be returning *even after* another half-century has passed)

It was to be such a big event that NASA decided to throw an all-night party at its Ames Research Center to celebrate. There were guest speakers, Moon-themed movies, and a big screen set up for the main event – what NASA billed as the “Spectacular LCROSS Lunar Impacts.”

According to a [media advisory](#), “NASA’s Lunar CRater Observation and Sensing Satellite (LCROSS) mission will come to a dramatic conclusion at approximately 4:30 a.m. PDT (7:30 a.m. EDT) on Friday, October 9, 2009, with the impact of the LCROSS Centaur upper stage rocket and four minutes later, the impact of the LCROSS Shepherd Spacecraft into Cabeus crater near the moon’s south pole. To mark the event, NASA Ames Research Center is hosting ‘LCROSS Impact Night.’ News media are invited to cover the three-part event that is open to the public and free of charge.”

The news media, the scientific community and amateur astronomers were all suitably excited. Clear back in June, when the mission was launched, [Scientific American](#) explained to readers how “Scientists expect the blast to be so powerful that a huge plume of debris will be ejected.” The second impact, the magazine further explained, would produce “a spectacular explosion that should be visible in amateur astronomer’s telescopes.”

The plan was that the first impact would send up a huge cloud of lunar dust and debris, and the larger spacecraft would then follow the same course, directly through the cloud, before necessarily crashing into the surface of the Moon. It would only have four minutes to gather data and transmit it back to Earth. As the [LA Times](#) explained the day before the big event, “if all goes according to plan, the

spacecraft will fly through the cloud of debris that will rise above the lunar surface and linger there briefly. As it passes through the cloud, the satellite's nine instruments will analyze the dust and debris for evidence of water, before crashing itself."

So in addition to providing a spectacular show, the mission was also going to feed the American public's need for instant gratification by providing relatively quick results. In that short four-minute span of time, we would gather all the data needed to determine within days if there is water frozen in deep craters on the Moon. The *Times* noted that, "Scientists preparing for the collision could hardly contain their excitement over what might turn up in that short time." The crowd at Ames was expected to number in the thousands, possibly even as many as 10,000, all there to see "a dust cloud rising as much as six miles above the lunar surface, providing a rare show for amateur astronomers with telescopes 10 inches or longer."

I would have guessed that very few, if any, amateur astronomers have telescopes 10 inches or longer, but I could be wrong. Or maybe I'm thinking of something else.

In addition to the gathering at the Ames complex, countless [other viewing parties](#) were organized around the country and around the world to view NASA's live footage. Amateurs were dutifully lined up at their telescopes awaiting the show. And, as the *Times* noted, "observatories around the world will be watching, along with the Hubble Space Telescope and the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter." Steve Hixson, vice-president of Advanced Concepts at Northrop Grumman, the manufacturer of the spacecraft, assured reporters that the craft was "looking great. I don't think we could miss the Moon now if we tried."

I would hope not. How hard, after all, could it possibly be? A full forty years ago we were able to set a manned spacecraft gently down on the Moon – and then fire the engine back up and fly home! Now, with four decades of additional experience and vastly improved technology, all we had to do was send an unmanned spacecraft on a one-way mission to crash into the Moon. How could NASA possibly screw that up?

The media kept referring to the LCROSS mission as the "bombing" of the Moon. Given that NASA is essentially an arm of the US Department of Defense, this should have been a cakewalk. The last time I checked, no one knew more about dropping bombs and firing missiles than the U.S. military. No other country on Earth has come anywhere close to dropping as many bombs on as many parts of the world as Uncle Sam has. The Moon may well be the only landmass within reach of the United States that we haven't bombed before.

With the United States having long led the world in both lunar exploration and blowing shit up, this mission couldn't have really been any easier, so it came as no surprise that everyone seemed to be brimming with confidence. President BlackBush, Nobel Peace Prize in hand, was reportedly heard to say: "How do you like me *now*, motherfuckers?! I'm going to bomb



the motherfucking Moon! You all thought that punk-ass bitch that preceded me was arrogant? Watch how I roll!”

As it turned out, the front-page space that all the major media outlets had undoubtedly set aside for the dazzling images wasn’t needed after all. With all eyes on the Moon, what all those viewing parties and all those amateur astronomers and all those giant telescopes saw was ... absolutely nothing. The first impact, which was supposed to be captured on live video beamed back from the second spacecraft, never materialized. As the *LA Times* politely put it, “the plume failed to show on screen.” There is an explanation, of course: “Some scientists suspect the camera settings on the second spacecraft were incorrect, preventing it from spotting the plume.”

Yes, that must be it. You would think though that, what with the importance of the second craft being able to see the plume so that it could then fly through it, they would have gotten that detail right. But apparently they just don’t have the quality control over at NASA that they had back in 1969. As for why none of the amateur or professional telescopes aimed at the Moon captured the first plume, or the allegedly even larger second plume, NASA is going to have to get back to you on that. But probably not right away.

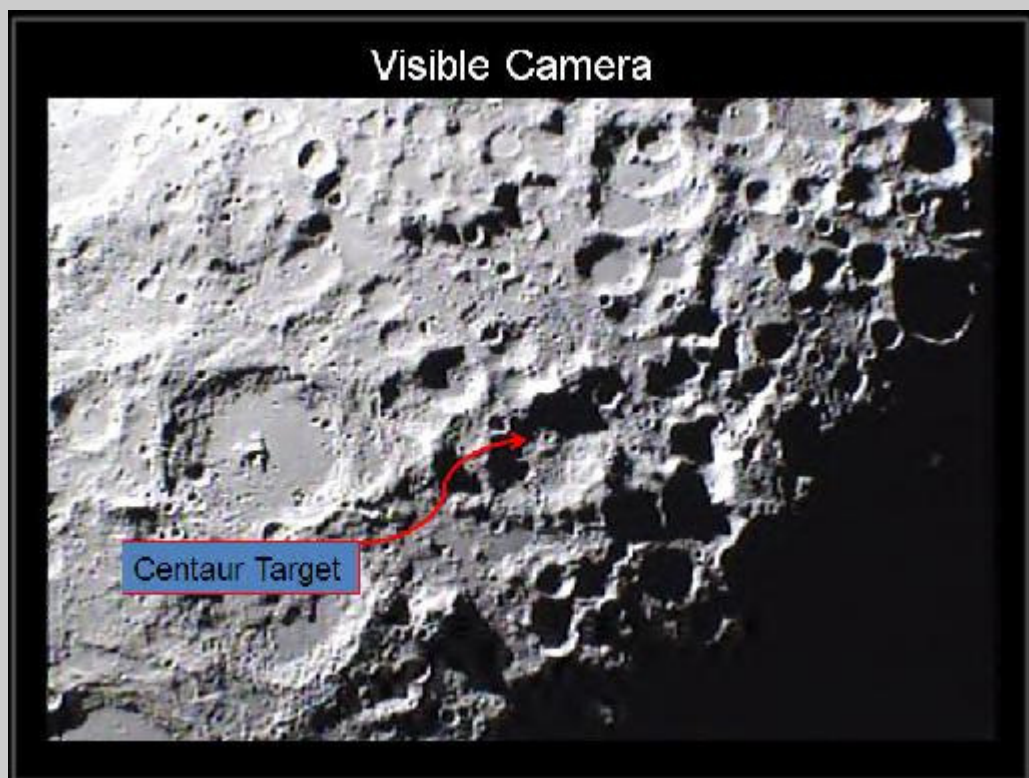
The [\*Times\*](#) was quick to reassure readers that “scientists might still pluck success from the mission’s anticlimactic ending ... At a news conference more than two hours after the crash, mission scientists confirmed that the Centaur rocket made a crater when it hit, and that crater was about the expected size of more than 60 feet across.” There is no way to confirm that claim, of course, since the ship allegedly impacted inside a two-mile deep, pitch-black crater that hasn’t seen daylight for millions of years – which is exactly why it was targeted.

And how pointless, by the way, was this mission? The goal was supposedly to discover if there are large deposits of frozen water on the Moon that could be mined to provide water, breathable oxygen and rocket fuel for future lunar exploration and colonization. The water, if it exists, is at the bottom of deep, permanently dark craters where the temperature is said to hover at around -400° F. At those temperatures, the scientific community tells us, the water would be frozen as hard as rock.

Even if we assume that NASA could overcome all the problems with getting astronauts to the Moon and guaranteeing their survival while there, how exactly would they recover that water? Toss bombs in the craters and then try to run around and gather all the chunks of ice before they melt in the +280° F heat of the sun? Drive down into the craters in one of those folding dune buggies with floodlights, a couple of battery-powered jackhammers, some warm clothes and a shitload of batteries? Or are we going to build a giant, mechanized water-extraction facility of some kind with parts brought up one-at-a-time from Earth? How long do you suppose that will take?

It's anyone's guess what the real purpose of this mission was, but whatever goals were being pursued, it doesn't seem to have gone so well. All that can be said for sure is that NASA appears to be but a shadow of its former self. Once upon a time, we were able to blast men off into space and then turn on our televisions and watch them, just four days later, stroll around on the Moon! Nowadays we send off an empty spaceship, wait patiently for nearly four months, and then watch as NASA fails to successfully crash that empty ship into the Moon.

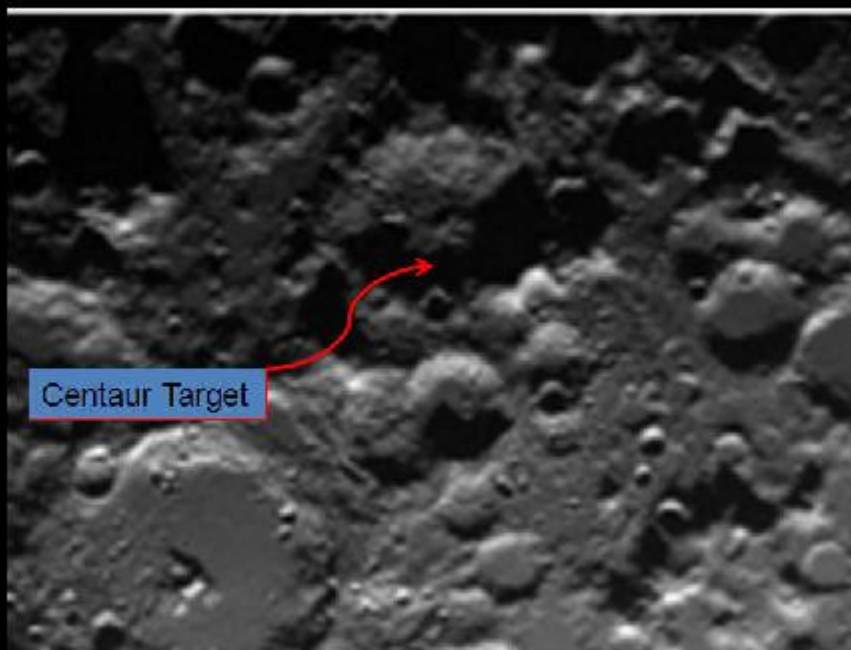
Since the news media fell asleep at the wheel and failed to bring you the spectacular images that had been promised, I dropped by [NASA's website](#) to pick up a few and bring them to you. The following three photos were labeled as "LCROSS Impact Images." Following that is a link to NASA's thrilling live video footage. Enjoy the show. It's quite dazzling.



NIR Camera

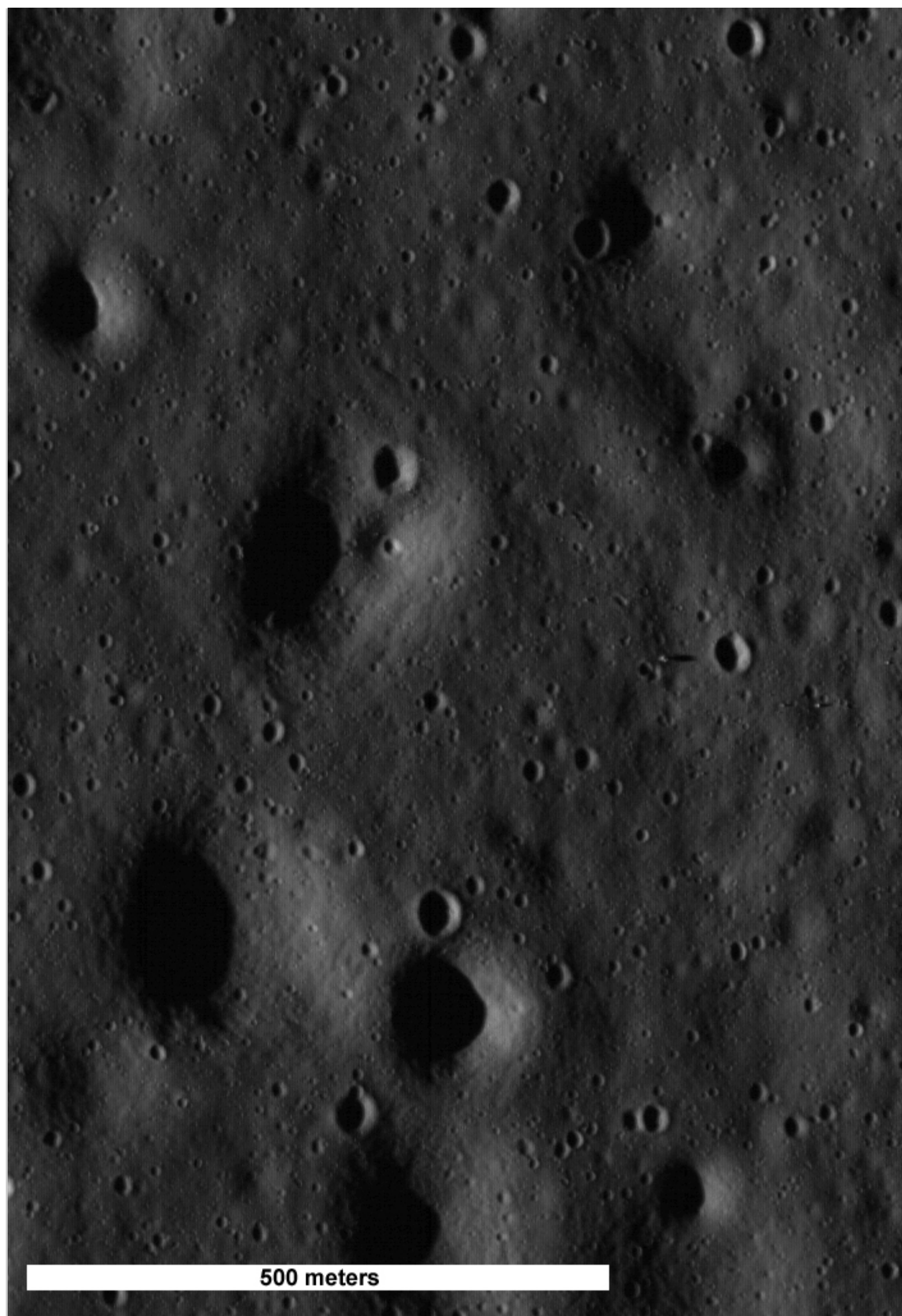


MIR Camera



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndZ483ztduE>

Did anyone notice, by the way, all the other 'lunar modules' that are recognizable in the larger image captured by NASA's LRO? As will be recalled, they are recognizable by the long shadows they cast. There are, most notably, probably nearly a dozen of them clustered around the crater to the right of the image. I wonder how the boys at NASA figured out which one was the 'real' lunar module?



500 meters

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part VII***

***November 21, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

*“The LEM (Lunar Excursion Module) was coated in Mylar. To many engineers, the final vehicle was an insult to every notion of what a spacecraft should look like ... It was one of the weirdest and most improbable flying machines ever conceived.”*

Moon Machines: The Lunar Module, *Science Channel*, 2008

While idly flipping through the channels the other day, I noticed that the *Science Channel* was planning to air a couple of Moon landing documentaries. Luckily, I was a bit bored that day so I decided to tune in, though I was not really expecting much beyond the standard claims that have been made in numerous other documentary films focusing on the alleged Apollo missions.

I was pleasantly surprised, however, to find that the two hours that I spent watching the *Science Channel* spin the Moon landings was time well spent, seeing as how I picked up quite a few facts that I had not previously come across in other source material. The most important thing that I learned was a lesson, of sorts: never attempt to mock the Apollo missions – for the simple reason that all such efforts will be in vain, since no claim made in jest, no matter how absurd, can ever top the lunacy of actual claims made by NASA and its subsidiaries.

The better of the two televised documentaries was *Moon Machines: The Lunar Module*, which turned out to be part of a series which, as luck would have it, is readily available on Netflix (with all six hours conveniently packaged on a single DVD). Netflix seemed to think that I might also enjoy *Nova*’s two-hour *To the Moon* and the *Discovery Channel*’s multi-part *When We Left Earth*, so I added those to my queue as well. Having now absorbed everything that *Moon Machines*, *To the Moon*, *When We Left Earth* and *First on the Moon: The Untold Story* have to offer, I realize that my debunking of the alleged Moon landings wasn’t really as thorough as it could have been, so another chapter is on order. Or maybe two. Or possibly three. Perhaps even four.

*Moon Machines: The Lunar Module* began by having a talking-head named Josh Stoff explain to viewers that when JFK delivered his historic speech on May 25 of 1961 – the one in which he boldly proclaimed that Americans would walk on the Moon by the close of the decade – “The United States had a total of fifteen minutes of space flight experience ... and now we were committed to go to the Moon ... We knew nothing about the Moon.”

Indeed, if Kennedy had delivered that speech just three weeks earlier, Stoff’s statement would have to be modified to: “The United States *had no space flight experience at all*, and now we were committed to going to the Moon!” On May 5, 1961, Alan Shepard had become the first American in space when he took a 15-minute ride in a Mercury capsule that basically went up and then came right back down. That mission was a hastily assembled “Hey, look! We can do it too!” response to the USSR having put the first man in space on April 12, 1961.

Shepard’s accomplishment didn’t even come close to what the Soviets had achieved. Yuri Gagarin had ridden the Vostok 1 into low-Earth orbit, completing a single orbit in 1 hour and 48 minutes. In comparison, Shepard had essentially taken a short ride aboard an oversized bottle-rocket. It would take another four months, until September 13, 1961, for the United States to get its first *unmanned* spacecraft to complete an Earth orbit. It would not be until near the end of February 1962, nearly a year after Gagarin’s flight, that NASA would claim to have gotten an American (John Glenn) into orbit.



On the day of Gagarin’s historic flight, a clearly uncomfortable President Kennedy fielded questions from a concerned press corps. Asked if we intended to beat the Russians to the Moon, Kennedy testily replied that “we first have to make a judgment, based on the best information we can get, whether *we can be* ahead of the Russians to the Moon.” Asked a follow-up question about the Saturn rockets already under development by the von Braun team, an obviously annoyed Kennedy replied that “*Saturn is still going to put us well behind.*”

Konrad Dannenberg, a rocket propulsion engineer who worked alongside von Braun for some 33 years, first in Nazi Germany and then in Huntsville, Alabama, readily agreed that “They

[the Soviets] were really *in all areas way ahead of us.*” So despite the frequent claims of ‘debunkers’ that it was actually a close race, or that the Soviets weren’t really leading at all, everyone from the President to the scientists who actually designed and built the machines that allegedly took us to the Moon agreed at the time that the Soviets were far ahead of the U.S. in virtually all aspects of the space race.

The ‘debunkers’ are right about one thing though: the list of Soviet firsts that I included in an earlier post in this series is not entirely accurate. Truth be told, I appear to have sold the Soviets short by leaving out a number of the early accomplishments of their space program, including a couple of firsts that the United States was unable to match for decades. Here then is a more complete list of Russian firsts in the years leading up to and during the alleged Apollo missions:

- May 15, 1957 – The Soviet Union tests the R-7 Semyorka, the world’s first intercontinental ballistic missile.
- October 4, 1957 – The Soviets launch Sputnik 1, Earth’s first manmade satellite.
- November 3, 1957 – A dog named Laika becomes the first animal to enter Earth orbit aboard Sputnik 2. Unfortunately for Laika though, she isn’t booked for a return flight.
- January 2, 1959 – Luna 1 becomes the first manmade object to leave Earth’s orbit.
- September 13, 1959 – After an intentional crash landing, Luna 2 becomes the first manmade object on the Moon.
- October 6, 1959 – Luna 3 provides mankind with its first look at the far side of the Moon.
- August 20, 1960 – Belka and Strelka, aboard Sputnik 5, are the first animals to safely return from Earth orbit.
- October 14, 1960 – Marsnik 1, the first probe sent from Earth to Mars, blasts off.
- February 12, 1961 – Venera 1, the first probe sent from Earth to Venus, blasts off.
- April 12, 1961 – Yuri Gagarin, riding aboard the Vostok 1, becomes the first man in Earth orbit.
- May 19, 1961 – Venera 1 performs the first ever fly-by of another planet (Venus).
- August 6, 1961 – Gherman Titov, aboard the Vostok 2, becomes the first man to spend over a day in space and the first to sleep in Earth orbit.
- August 11 & 12, 1962 – Vostok 3 and Vostok 4 are launched, the first simultaneous manned space flights (though they do not rendezvous).

- October 12, 1964 – Voskhod 1, carrying the world's first multi-man crew, is launched.
- March 18, 1965 – Aleksei Leonov, riding aboard the Voskhod 2, performs the first space-walk.
- February 3, 1966 – Luna 9 becomes the first probe to make a controlled, 'soft' landing on the Moon.
- March 1, 1966 – Venera 3, launched November 16, 1965, becomes the first probe to impact another planet (Venus).
- April 3, 1966 – Luna 10 becomes the first manmade lunar satellite.
- October 30, 1967 – Cosmos 186 and Cosmos 188 become the first unmanned spacecraft to rendezvous and dock in Earth orbit. The United States will not duplicate this maneuver for nearly four decades.
- January 16, 1969 – Soyuz 4 and Soyuz 5 become the first manned spacecraft to dock in Earth orbit and the first to exchange crews.
- November 17, 1970 – Lunokhod 1, the first robotic rover to land on and explore an extraterrestrial body, lands on the Moon. Twenty-seven years later, the United States lands its very first robotic rover on Mars.
- December 15, 1970 – Venera 7 becomes the first probe to make a soft landing on another planet (Venus).
- April 19, 1971 – Salyut 1 becomes the world's first orbiting space station.
- August 22, 1972 – Mars 2 becomes the first probe to reach the surface of Mars.



I feel much better now that we have set the record straight on all of that. And I'm sure that the 'debunkers,' who in the past have described much shorter lists of Soviet firsts as 'padded,' will feel much better as well.

The Soviets achieved the first fly-by of the Moon, launched the first craft to impact the Moon, were the first to make a soft landing on the Moon, put the first object into lunar orbit, and remain, to this day, the only nation to land and operate a robotic vehicle on the Moon. It should now make perfect sense to everyone then why the Soviets, who were ahead of us in virtually all aspects of space exploration, in some cases by decades, never landed a man on the Moon. Or even sent a man to orbit the Moon. Come to think of it, they never even sent a dog to the Moon.

It would be difficult to argue that the Russians didn't have adequate funding for their space program, or that they didn't have some of the finest scientific minds on the planet working for that space program, or that they didn't have the will and desire to succeed. What they were lacking, I'm thinking, is access to Hollywood production facilities. Returning then to our prior topic of discussion ...

On April 14, 1961, two days after Gagarin's historic flight, a panicked Kennedy reportedly inquired of NASA what goal in space we might be able to attain before the Soviets. According to legend, Kennedy was told that America's best hope to beat the Russians was with a manned Moon landing. The reasoning was that the Soviets were so far ahead of us that they would surely trounce us in achieving any milestones attainable in Earth orbit (space-walks, prolonged flight, rendezvous and docking maneuvers, etc.), so our best bet was to shoot for a far-off goal.

The problem, however, was that none of the technology required to attain such a goal existed at that time. We did not have the rocket technology to power such a mission, nor the navigation system to guide such a journey, nor the digital computer technology to control that navigation system, nor the spacesuit technology to protect our astronauts, nor the technology to rendezvous or dock in space, nor the technology to create a dune buggy capable of operating on the Moon, nor the technology to design and create a lunar landing vehicle. NASA had been in existence for less than three years, having been created in 1958 as a direct response to the USSR's launch of Sputnik.

Nevertheless, just eight summers later, we allegedly did indeed land men on the Moon. In just eight short years, starting essentially from scratch, we designed, built, tested, refined and perfected every piece of technology required to put men on the Moon, and we did it so well in that brief period of time that by July of 1969, every cog in the wheel performed nearly flawlessly. And yet now, with a half-century of space exploration now under our belts, and with all the necessary technology long perfected, NASA advises us that it would take twice as long to put a man on the Moon. But I may have already pointed that out.

Following Kennedy's bold declaration, nobody really had any clue how to get astronauts to the Moon and back. One school of thought held that what was needed was a humongous



rocket ship that would fly all the way there, land, and then fly all the way back. The main drawback to this proposal was that it was completely preposterous. The biggest problem was that it would require somehow landing a 300-foot tall cylinder in a perfectly upright position. But that wasn't the only problem. Getting in and out of a capsule mounted atop a tall rocket ship can be a bit of a problem as well. And re-launching that rocket without a launch pad and ground crew can be a real bitch.

Another idea called for the launch of two large rocket ships, one primarily carrying fuel and the other carrying our fearless astronauts. The idea was that the two vehicles would rendezvous and dock in Earth orbit, the manned ship would refuel from the other ship, and our boys would then leave for the Moon. Why this was deemed necessary is anyone's guess, given that the 'debunkers' generally claim that you don't really need much fuel once you leave Earth orbit since you just kind of fall through the vacuum of space until you get to the Moon.

Amidst all the preposterous ideas on how to get our guys to the Moon ahead of the Russkies, one lone voice in the wilderness, an "obscure engineer" by the name of John Houbolt, had been promoting a radically different plan: build a second lightweight spacecraft, to be carried aboard the larger mother ship, that would be capable of shuttling down to the Moon and back while the larger ship remained in lunar orbit!

As *Moon Machine's* narrator solemnly intoned, "There was only one *massive* drawback: to get back to Earth would require the lunar shuttle to rendezvous with the mother ship *in lunar orbit*." As Stoff added, "What scared everybody about it was you had to rendezvous and dock *around the Moon*. You're a quarter of a million miles from Earth! And he's proposing this in 1961, when we had no space flight experience and just rendezvousing in Earth orbit concerned everybody."

Needless to say, everyone scoffed at Houbolt's radical suggestion. The very vocal opposition at NASA was led by Mr. von Braun, who categorically and heatedly dismissed the notion of completing a lunar orbit rendezvous (the idea, by the way, appears to have been cribbed from an early Soviet study). But Houbolt was allegedly a tenacious sort who wasn't about to give up easily, even going so far as to write directly to Bob Seamans at the top of the NASA food chain on November 15, 1961. Houbolt was, of course, immediately taken seriously by the NASA brass, who promptly decreed that his ideas should get a serious hearing.

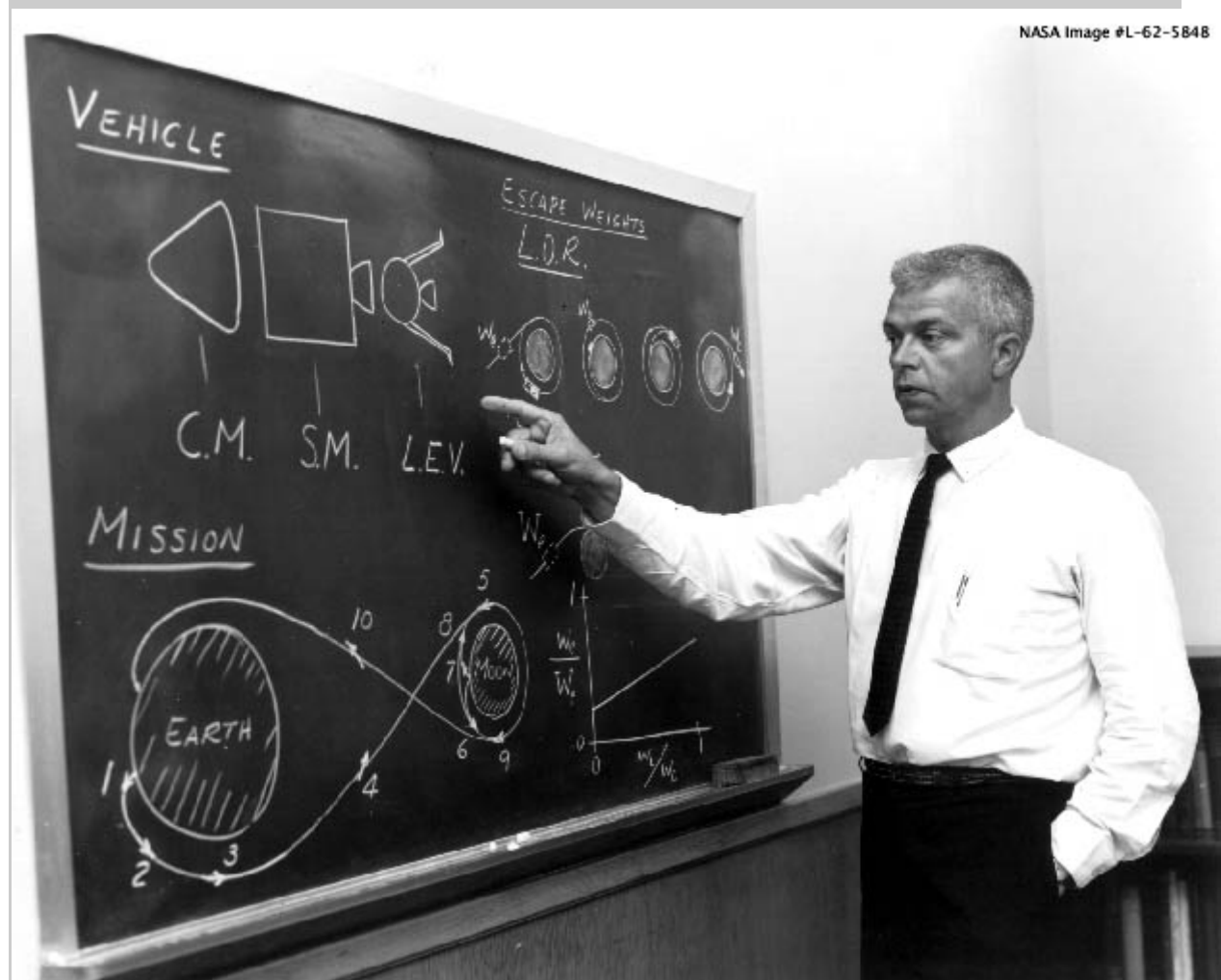
A major turning point was supposedly reached when a meeting was convened in June of 1962. During that historic meeting, we are informed by the narrator of *Moon Machines*, "von Braun took everybody by surprise." Wernher's own team gave a detailed presentation to the assembled scientists, after which von Braun thanked and profusely complimented them – before telling them that he was going to recommend that NASA *not go* with his own team's

concept. Instead, he was going to recommend the so-called LRO, or lunar orbit rendezvous, option!

As yet another authoritative talking-head named Bill Causey explained, “It was such a surprise to everybody that even his own staff people, several days later, had a private meeting with him and they said, ‘*Why in the world did you say that?*’” Why indeed? My guess is that someone finally passed Wernher the memo explaining that he needed to get over the silly notion that the plan was to *actually go to the Moon*. What was needed, instead, was a plan that could be feasibly sold to the American people.

Curiously, Mr. Houbolt, who we are led to believe was single-handedly responsible for selling NASA on the lunar module concept, and without whom we would have probably never allegedly sent men to the Moon at all, has been all but forgotten. That seems a rather strange way for history to treat the man whose brilliant mind allegedly opened the door for man to walk on the Moon.

NASA Image #L-62-5848



The man whose name is most commonly referenced when discussing the lunar module, by the way, is a gent by the name of Thomas Kelly, who served as the project manager for the design, construction and testing of the LEM. Kelly happened to be a member of the Quill and Dagger Society, Cornell University's answer to Yale University's notorious Skull and Bones. I just thought maybe I should mention that.

In July of 1962, NASA announced that it was fully committed to the lunar shuttle concept and began shopping around for a contractor to build it. As fate would have it, a small aircraft company on Long Island, the Grumman Corporation, had already been working on the design of an independent lunar shuttle vehicle, cleverly anticipating the market demand. Grumman thus was able to submit a much more detailed proposal than other competitors, sealing the deal with NASA.

In November of 1962, Grumman was awarded the contract to build what *Moon Machines* described as "the most complicated and sophisticated spacecraft ever conceived." Soon after, we are also informed that the LEM was "what many regarded as the first true spaceship." In other words, America's "first true spaceship" was also America's "most complicated and sophisticated spacecraft." To this day, no other spacecraft has been built that is capable of landing men on a planetary body. To this day, no other spacecraft has been built that is capable of taking off from and flying home from a planetary body. To this day, no other spacecraft has been built that is capable of performing rendezvous and docking maneuvers in lunar orbit. To this day, no spacecraft has been built that can protect astronauts from the hazards of flying through space outside of the Van Allen belts.

When you think about it, of course, it makes perfect sense that America's first true spacecraft, coming as it did during the infancy of the Space Age, would also stand to this day as the most complicated and sophisticated spacecraft "ever conceived." After all, didn't Henry Ford build the most complicated and sophisticated automobile ever conceived? And didn't Orville and Wilbur build the most complicated and sophisticated aircraft ever conceived? And didn't Alexander Graham Bell invent the iPhone?

From the outset, Grumman envisioned a two-stage vehicle, with as much of the weight as possible carried in the lower half, or descent stage, of the spacecraft. Eliminating excess weight was of paramount importance. Early designs included no ladder, for example, as a ladder was considered unnecessary weight. In 1/6 gravity, it was assumed, the astronauts would be able to climb in and out of the capsule using just a rope. Of course, the modules never came anywhere close to being in a reduced gravity environment, which is probably why a ladder was added to the landing vehicle.

According to the *Science Channel*, the only constant in Grumman's drive to design the modules was change. So much so that, "Finally, in the spring of 1965, NASA, worried design

changes would never stop, imposed a freeze.” NASA had apparently decided that two-and-a-half years, working with the knowledge and technology of the early 1960s, was plenty of time to design the “most complicated and sophisticated spacecraft ever conceived.” Whatever the Grumman team had come up with to that point would have to be good enough to get our flyboys from the mother ship to the Moon and back.

It was now time to go to work actually building what was described as “an entirely independent spacecraft, with its own motors, fuel, life support system and navigation equipment. To some at the time, it seemed excessive.” To many others at the time, it just seemed ridiculous.

I happened to stumble across, by the way, an image depicting a 1963-era LEM prototype parked on the surface of the Moon. As has been the case throughout this series, the image comes directly from NASA’s web pages, where it was proudly presented as the “Image of the Day.” It shouldn’t be too hard to figure out what it is that I love about this image – even if it does prove me to be a liar, given that I previously claimed that none of NASA’s Moon photos depict any stars in the lunar sky.



According to the folks at the *Science Channel*, the lunar module “was built in one of the world’s first clean-rooms. In zero gravity, any floating foreign body would be a hazard.” A hazard, that is, to both the astronauts’ health and to the ship’s delicate on-board electronics. Workers were required to wear gowns, masks, hairnets and booties, technicians meticulously cleaned the interior with camel hair brushes and filter paper, and the modules were robotically lifted, inverted and shaken to rid the cabin of any debris.

Although the narrator forgot to mention it, I'm pretty sure that the astronauts were also instructed not to shed any hair or skin during the missions. On a more serious note, NASA did, in fact, reportedly consider requiring the astronauts to shave from head to toe. That never happened, of course, probably due to the fact that hairless and eyebrow-less astronauts wouldn't have been as warmly embraced by the American public, and the Apollo missions were more about appearances than they were about science.

Left unexplored by the makers of *Moon Machines* was the obvious question of how those clean-room conditions could have been maintained once the lander set down on the Moon. The astronauts couldn't shed their protective suits until they were back in the safety of the pressurized capsule, so how exactly did they keep from tracking copious amounts of that lunar dust back into the allegedly sterile LEM cabin? As is revealed in the *Lunar Rover* episode of the *Moon Machines* series, "The astronauts quickly learned that the dust adhered to everything it touched."

Everything, that is, except the outside of the lunar module, which, as we have already seen, remained as clean as if it were sitting on the showroom floor. And the dust apparently also didn't adhere to the astronauts' boots or spacesuits, even if Apollo astronaut Charlie Duke did say, while describing what it was like to ride in the lunar rover, that "Moon dust was pouring down on us like rain, and so after a half of a Moon walk, our white suits turned gray." None of that dust, of course, was introduced into the sterile interior of the cabin.

We know that with absolute certainty because we have already been told that in order for the lunar module to operate safely and correctly, the cabin had to be kept dust-free. One of the best-kept secrets of the Apollo program, it turns out, is that there was actually a third passenger along for the rides to the Moon and back: Neil Armstrong's mother. Her primary responsibility was to make sure the boys properly wiped their feet before entering the capsule.

Astute readers, by the way, may have noticed that Duke's comments about driving the rover directly contradict another of the fables sold by the 'debunkers.' According to Phil [Plait](#), if you watch the video footage allegedly shot on the Moon, "you will see dust thrown up by the wheels of the rover. The dust goes up in a perfect parabolic arc and falls back down to the surface. Again, the Moon isn't the Earth! If this were filmed on the Earth, which has air, the dust would have billowed up around the wheel and floated over the surface. This clearly does not happen in the video clips; the dust goes up and right back down. It's actually a beautiful demonstration of ballistic flight in a vacuum."

As would be expected, we find Jay [Windley](#) making essentially the same claim: "dust will fall immediately to the lunar surface. The behavior of the dust in the video and film taken on the



lunar surface is one of the most compelling reasons we have for believing it was shot in a vacuum. The dust is clearly dry, but it falls immediately to the surface and does not form clouds.”

Who then are we to believe? The guy who actually operated the rover, allegedly on the surface of the Moon, and said that the dust was raining down on he and his partner from all directions, or a couple of self-proclaimed ‘experts’ who directly contradict NASA’s man-on-the-scene?

There is a reason, I might add here, why NASA defers to these two clowns while not officially endorsing their ‘debunking’ arguments. It’s called plausible deniability. NASA knows that ‘debunking’ the fact that the Moon landings were hoaxed requires a lot of twisting of facts and the promotion of a lot of dubious science, and they choose not to be directly involved in such endeavors. That is also, no doubt, why the agency withdrew its sponsorship of a ‘debunking’ book that is said to be in the works.

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# the Center for an Informed

## *Wagging the Moondoggie, Part VIII*

*November 22, 2009*

*by David McGowan*

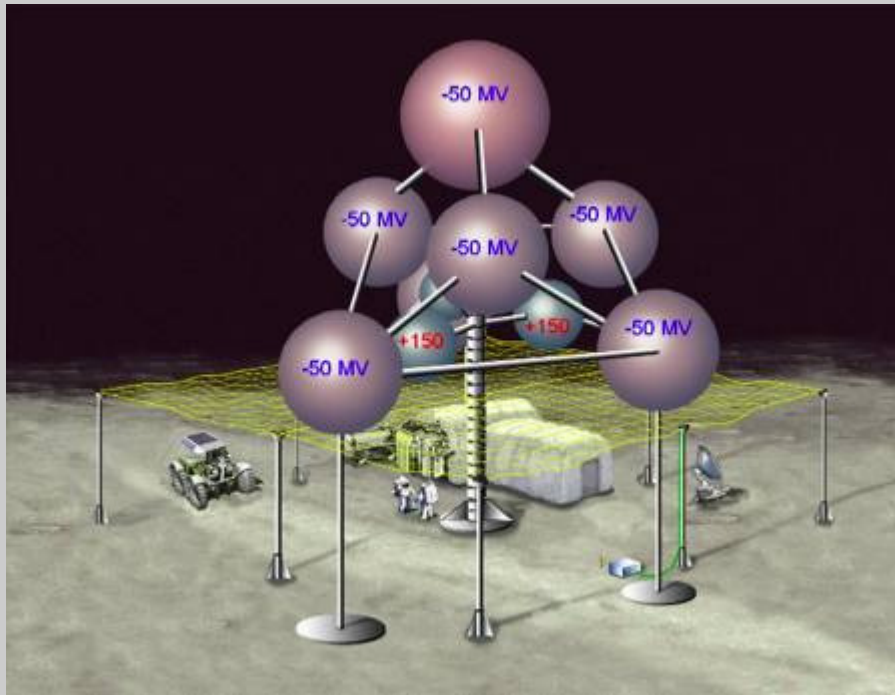
*“Whenever I saw a model of the lunar module, it had these rigid sides and [it] really looked strong. Turns out that external portions of the lunar module are made up of Mylar and cellophane and it’s put together with Scotch tape and staples. We had to have pads on the floor ‘cause if you dropped a screwdriver, it would go right through the floor.”*

Jim Lovell, Astronaut (Gemini 7, Gemini 12, Apollo 8, Apollo 13)

A quick note before moving on: a little research has revealed that NASA now acknowledges that maintaining clean-room conditions on space exploration vehicles while performing EVAs on planetary bodies poses a bit of a problem. The agency’s solution is something known as a ‘suitport.’ The basic idea is to design a rear-entry spacesuit that will remain attached to the exterior of the vehicle when not in use. The astronaut will enter through the rear of the suit and then detach himself from the vehicle. Reentry will require reversing the procedure.



NASA has even generously provided an image of a proposed lunar rover with two integrated suitports, as seen above. The agency feels that such technology will be required for any 'return' trips to the Moon or for landing on and exploring other planets. As with the space radiation shield that will also be required for any 'return' trips to the Moon, NASA offers no explanation for why such technology was not required back in 1969.



Moving on then to the lunar module's propulsion system, we are informed that "the LEM was equipped with two very different rockets. The first, the so-called descent engine, would take the LEM from the command module down toward the lunar surface. *It was an entirely new and untried piece of technology.*" Adds talking-head Stoff, "Up until this point in history, no one had ever built a rocket engine with a throttle. Either they were on or they were off."

Since the LEMs never had to actually perform as advertised, it's doubtful that they actually had a throttle. It's doubtful that they even had engines. We're going to play along though and pretend as though they did.

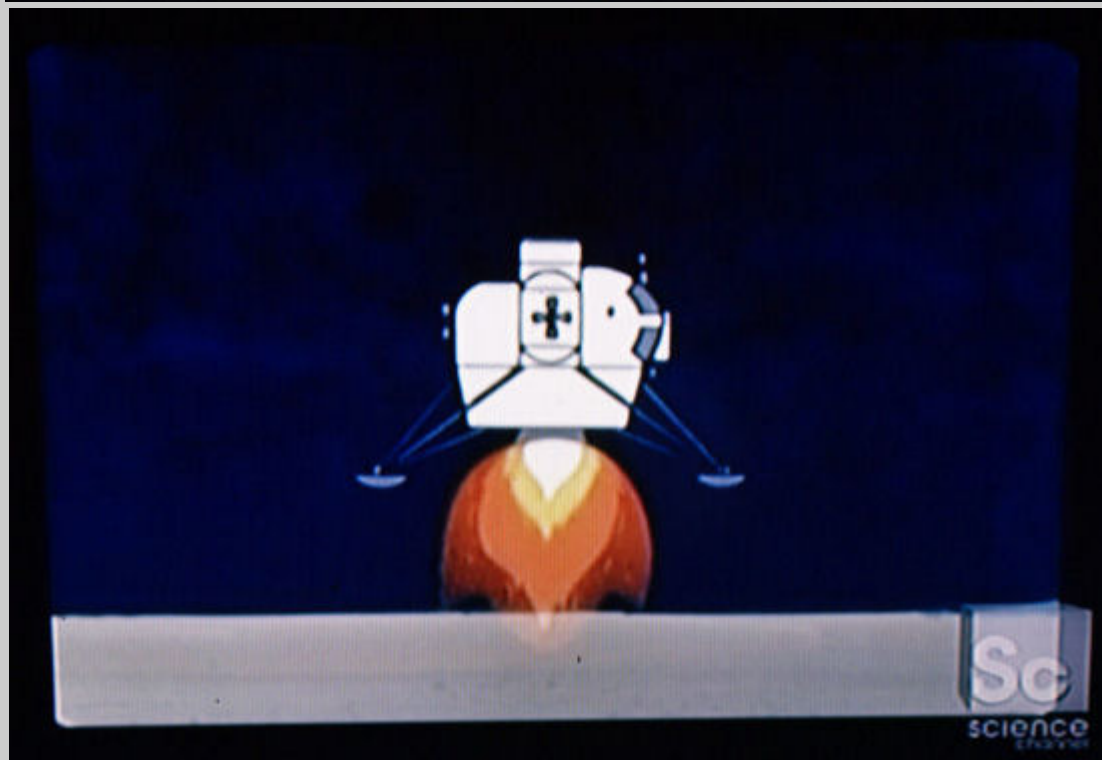
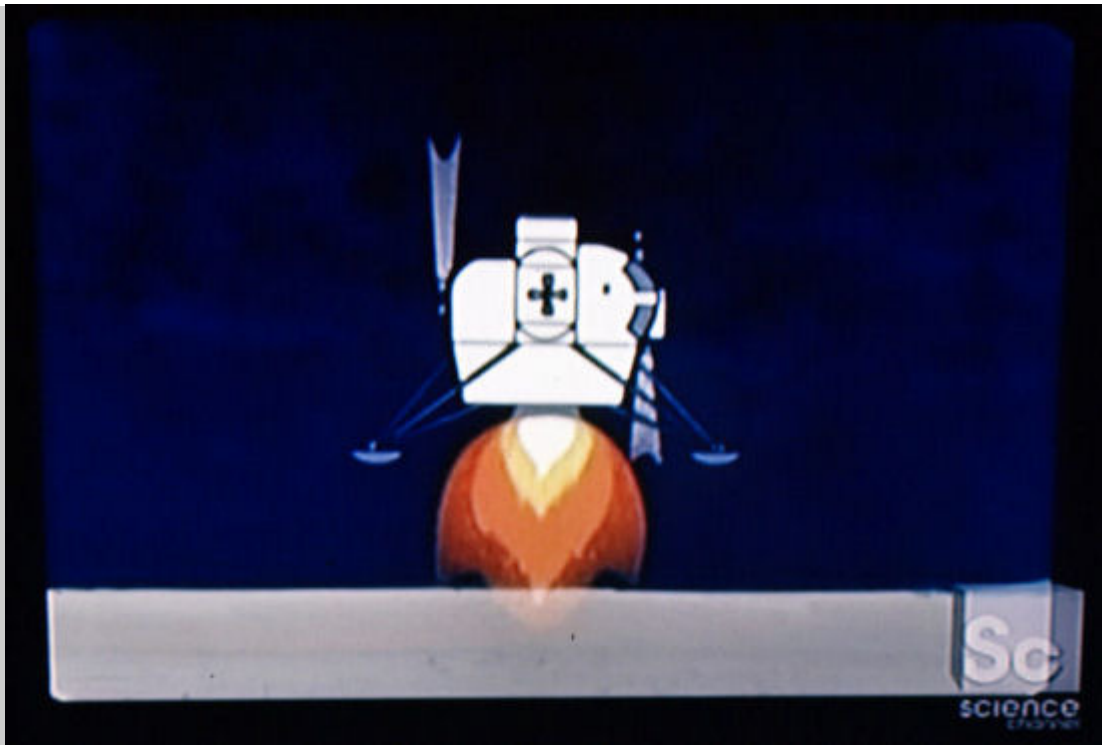
Lynn Radcliffe, who managed the facility at White Sands that was specially constructed to test and develop the LEM's rocket engines, describes the technology required to land the lunar modules: "This was an *unbelievable maneuver* when you stop and think about it. You're sitting on a column of thrust, just hovering there, like a, a helicopter, and then as you let it go,

the throttle, a little bit, you lower it just a few feet per second until you make contact. All of this is an amazing set of requirements to put on anyone trying to design a rocket.”

Radcliffe is absolutely right; I did stop to think about it and it is unbelievable. What’s interesting here though is that when *I* described the technique that would have been used to land the modules as being very similar to the landing of a helicopter, some of the ‘debunkers’ got their panties all in a wad over it. And yet here we have the guy who oversaw the development of the rocket engines describing the alleged landings in *exactly* the same manner, so I guess we can safely conclude that he really doesn’t know what he is talking about either.

And Gene Cowart, who served as Boeing’s chief engineer on the lunar rover project from 1969 through 1971, didn’t know what he was talking about either when he noted that the “LEM, when it comes down over the Moon, does not immediately just set down. It hovers over the Moon.” And Charlie Duke, the alleged pilot of the Apollo 16 lunar module, was no doubt mistaken as well when he recently told James May (*James May on the Moon*) that flying the lander “was like flying a helicopter.”

Amusingly enough, while the landing of the lunar module was being described on *Moon Machines*, vintage animation from the gang at NASA/Grumman was displayed on the screen. Below are a couple of screen-caps of that animation. As with the verbal descriptions, of course, I’m sure that this is just another case of the folks who actually designed and/or operated the technology being clueless about how it was supposed to work. As many readers are surely aware, the only people who *really* know how all that technology was supposed to work are modern-day heroes like Phil Pliet and Jay Windbag.



As it turns out, designing that throttle-equipped descent engine was child's play compared with the task of perfecting the spacecraft's second rocket engine. As our narrator solemnly intoned, "it was the module's second rocket, the so-called ascent engine, that caused Grumman the most lost sleep. It didn't need a throttle, but it did need to work with *absolute reliability*."

As Lynn Radcliffe noted, “You’re totally dependent on the ascent engine to work to put you back in orbit. If for *any* reason the ascent engine failed to work, the astronauts are doomed.” Dick Dunne, Grumman’s Director of Public Relations during the time of the alleged Apollo missions, described the astronauts’ predicament in stark terms: “Two astronauts were going to climb into this thing and essentially they were going to press a button, and if it worked, it worked, and if it didn’t, there weren’t many things that they could do about it.”

To keep the operation of the engine as simple as possible, so-called hypergolic propellants were used – which is to say, a fuel and an oxidizer that explode on contact. That simplicity though came at a price: “the fuels were extremely toxic.” What most concerned Grumman’s engineers was “that the fuel was so corrosive that at the end of a test, each engine had to be rebuilt. It meant the final assembly of an engine *could never be tested!*”

“Unbelievably,” explains Radcliffe, “the first time these engines would *ever* have been fired, *ever* – no check-out at the factory – the first time would be when they were fired on their mission.” As Dunne noted, “I don’t think that anyone could, at that time, tell you 100% that it was gonna work.”

Seeing as how the engines were *completely* untested – both in terms of being able to operate within the environment of the Moon and in terms of the individual engines being factory tested to see *if they worked at all* – Dunne’s evaluation would seem to be a bit of an understatement. Luckily though, none of the landers actually made it to the Moon, so whether the engines worked or not is a bit of a moot point.

Another problem the Grumman team faced was how to adequately insulate the vehicle from the intense heat of the unshielded sun (there was, curiously enough, no mention throughout the hour about the necessity of shielding the craft from space radiation). As Stoff noted, “You have to insulate the spacecraft as well as possible because there’s huge fuel tanks in there and the fuel’s gonna boil [if not adequately protected].” Also, we are informed, the huge temperature variations on the Moon “could also cause the craft to buckle.” Unmentioned was that it could be a wee bit uncomfortable for the astronauts as well.

Since weight was an issue, heavy heat shields could not be used. Luckily though, “Dupont had developed this new material – it was aluminized Mylar. It was a gold color, and they found if you built it up to perhaps twenty-five layers, it’s an excellent insulator.” Dupont’s space-age material, as we all know, can be obtained pretty inexpensively these days. And it’s still a very lightweight material. I wonder why it is then that you rarely see spaceships wrapped in it anymore?



Meanwhile, down in Texas, astronauts had been training on a simulator that was supposed to teach them to land the lunar module. Unfortunately, the simulator was “unstable and dangerous” and never worked properly. No one ever actually landed the contraption – but on the plus side, there is lots of film stock of fiery simulator crashes. Stoff notes that, “At some point in the program, [NASA] eventually stopped using it because it was just, it was a lot safer to land on the Moon than it was to fly this machine down in Texas.”

Of course it was. Why waste time with a simulator when the real thing was going to be so much easier? And NASA, no doubt, knew that that would be the case before we even faked going to the Moon. I’m pretty sure that Armstrong was pulled aside and told: “Don’t worry about almost being killed in that simulator. The real thing is going to be *so* much easier. You’ll see when you get up there. Just trust us on this one. And we’re fairly certain that there is at least a slim possibility that the ascent engine will work when it’s time for you and Buzz to come home. Unless, you know, you guys happen to get a dud. There’s really no way for anyone to know for sure until you get there and try to fire it up. Have a safe trip.”

In the summer of 1967, the first space-ready LEM was delivered to Cape Kennedy to be loaded aboard the Apollo 4 launch vehicle. Incredibly, it had taken less than five years to get “the most complicated and sophisticated spacecraft ever conceived” from the chalkboard to the launch pad! And in the mid-1960s no less! (By the way, I happened to stumble across this image of Apollo 4 sitting on the launch pad. It is, I have to say, a mighty impressive shot. Kudos to the non-astronaut photographer who snapped it.)



The lunar module never made it aboard that impressive looking rocket ship. Upon delivery, the module was found to have “hundreds of problems,” including bad wiring, faulty parts, an abundance of poor workmanship, and, most alarmingly, serious leaks throughout the fuel system. Grumman had neglected, it seemed, to perform any pre-flight checks. Worse yet, as Grumman’s team raced to correct the numerous problems, a pressure test caused a window to blow out, blasting jagged holes in the skin of the craft and sending debris flying throughout the formerly dust-free module.

The cause of the blowout was never determined. NASA and Grumman though decided to take the “Fuck it! What’s the worst that could happen?” approach and merely replaced the window and ignored the failed pressure test, making no design changes to the modules. After all, there was a timetable to adhere to.

In the end, as we all know, the lunar modules performed flawlessly. According to legend, Neil Armstrong, ever the cool one, set the first LEM down with barely fifteen seconds of fuel remaining in the tank. And when he and Buzz fired up that ascent engine for the very first time, it popped them off the surface of the Moon as if they were riding on a champagne cork. As it turned out though, the lunar module had not yet faced its toughest challenge.

In the spring of 1970, fittingly enough on April 13, Apollo 13’s command and service modules were allegedly rendered powerless by an explosion on the ship while cruising through space some 200,000 miles from home (though in official NASA footage, the windows of the module are filled with blue light, not the blackness of space). The oxygen tank explosion was allegedly powerful enough to do serious damage to the exterior of the craft, but apparently not powerful enough to alter the course of the ship. That was a lucky break for the guys.

The three-man crew allegedly retreated to the two-man LEM, which, as we know, had its own oxygen and fuel supplies. Not only did the LEM allegedly keep the brave trio alive, but its descent engine was allegedly used to ‘slingshot’ the crippled spacecraft around the Moon and set in on a course back to Earth!

Their ordeal wasn’t over though. While camped out in the LEM, the Apollo 13 astronauts were allegedly faced with another life-threatening situation: carbon dioxide was rapidly building in the ship’s confined airspace. Lithium hydroxide cartridges were supposed to remove the carbon dioxide, but there was a limited supply of said cartridges in the LEM. Luckily though, there were additional cartridges in the command module. But they were incompatible; the command module’s cartridges were square while those in the LEM were round.

What to do then? According to *Moon Machines*, the brain-trust down at mission control had a brilliant idea: “NASA suggested using duct tape and tubing from the spacesuits to jury-rig a connection ... (dramatic pause) ... It worked!”

I, needless to say, was just being a smart-ass when I said that all we needed back in the 1960s was a roll of duct tape and we could MacGyver those spaceships to the Moon and back. NASA, on the other hand, is dead serious when it says that it was indeed a roll of duct tape

that got the Apollo 13 crew home safe and sound – with, needless to say, a huge assist from that spunky little lunar module, which not only powered the flight home but also kept three astronauts alive for nearly 100 hours when it was only designed to keep two men alive for 50 hours!

There seems to be some controversy, however, on exactly how the cartridges were MacGyvered. According to Lovell, who was on the Apollo 13 flight, “we did it with duct tape, with a piece of plastic, and a piece of cardboard, and an old sock.” The key ingredient here seems to be the duct tape. It would probably be fair to say that with a roll of duct tape and any other two random items, you could fix most problems that might arise on a spaceship.

Moving on then to the other *Science Channel* offering, a 2005 effort entitled *First on the Moon: The Untold Story*, we learn that Mission Control at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas “was not as high-tech as it looked.” On television, it looked pretty damned impressive, for the era at least. As anyone alive at the time recalls, what the world saw was an enormous room filled with computer consoles, each staffed by a key member of the Apollo team diligently monitoring his computer screen for any signs of trouble.

But in reality, as Apollo 11 computer engineer Jack Garman clues us in, “the computer screens that we looked at in Mission Control weren’t computer screens at all. They were televisions. All the letters, or characters, [they] were all hand drawn. I don’t necessarily mean with a brush, but I mean they were painted on a slide.” But they sure looked pretty damned impressive.

Jack Garman, by the way, was not just some random, low-level computer hack recruited by the *Science Channel* to offer commentary. According to the official legend, Garman was the guy on the Apollo 11 crew who cleared the Eagle to land despite the fact that multiple alarms were going off. That would tend to indicate that he was a pretty important player at Mission Control.

Every one of those consoles on the floor of Mission Control was powered by a single mainframe computer – a single mainframe computer that had the computing power of a single laptop computer. Actually, make that a 2005-era laptop computer. And the spaceship itself, that multi-staged engineering marvel, carried a computer roughly equivalent to what powers a modern digital watch. Total memory capacity was about 72 kilobytes, or just about enough to hold one of the smaller images on this page.

As I was typing these very words, I realized that I was doing so on a genuine, vintage 2005 laptop computer. If I were inclined to wear digital watches, which I am not, I would now be

holding in my hands all the computing power needed to get me and a couple friends to the Moon and back. If we utilized the power of my desktop computer as well, and went down to the Party Store to get a few rolls of Mylar, we could probably make it all the way to Mars and back. How cool is that?

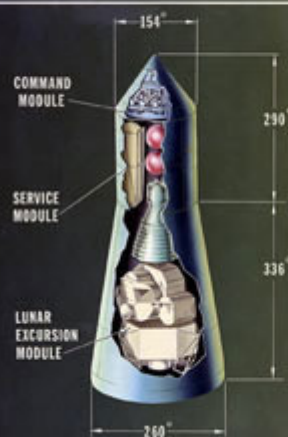
Another curious fact that *First on the Moon* made note of was that, according to Harold Loden, Apollo 11 mission controller, “The skin on the crew cabin [of the lunar module] was very thin, and that was all done because of weight savings.” Another talking-head added that, “If you really took your finger and poked hard at it, you could poke right through the outer skin of the spacecraft. It was about the thickness of two layers of aluminum foil.” Project Manager Thomas Kelly concurred, noting that “the skin, the aluminum alloy skin of the crew compartment was about 12/1000s of an inch thick. That’s equivalent to about three layers of Reynold’s Wrap that you would use in the kitchen.”

It’s difficult to see then why that window would have blown out during the LEM pressure test. You would think that the guys at Grumman would have securely duct-taped it to the, uhmm, fuselage. And I’m also sure that, had the window not blown out and released the pressure, the rest of the ship would have passed the pressure test with flying colors.

It would appear that what was deployed by the mother ship to shuttle our guys down to the Moon was essentially an oversized Jiffy-Pop container (with the brainpower of a digital watch). The show’s narrator was quick to point out that the astronauts had to be very careful while moving about in their bulky suits lest they puncture or otherwise damage the delicate skin of the craft. What wasn’t pointed out was that the vacuum of space had to be very careful as well – careful not to rip the pressurized craft to shreds the instant it was deployed!

One would logically assume, by the way, that the LEMs would have been kept safely tucked away within the mother ship until lunar orbit was achieved. But according to NASA, that’s not the case. The official legend holds that the lunar modules were deployed shortly after leaving Earth orbit, about three hours after blasting off, and that they then docked in a nose-to-nose configuration with the command and service modules while both spacecraft were flying through the vacuum of space at either 17,000 or 25,000 miles per hour, depending on the source.

## APOLLO DATA SUMMARY



### DATA SUMMARY

#### COMMAND MODULE:

WEIGHT: 11,000 LBS.

#### PROPULSION:

- 12 REACTION CONTROL MOTORS WITH 100 LBS. THRUST EACH

#### SERVICE MODULE:

WEIGHT: 50,000 LBS.

#### PROPULSION:

- 1 RESTARTABLE ENGINE WITH 22,000 LBS. THRUST
- 12 REACTION CONTROL MOTORS WITH 100 LBS. THRUST EACH

#### LUNAR MODULE

WEIGHT: 30,000 LBS.

#### PROPULSION:

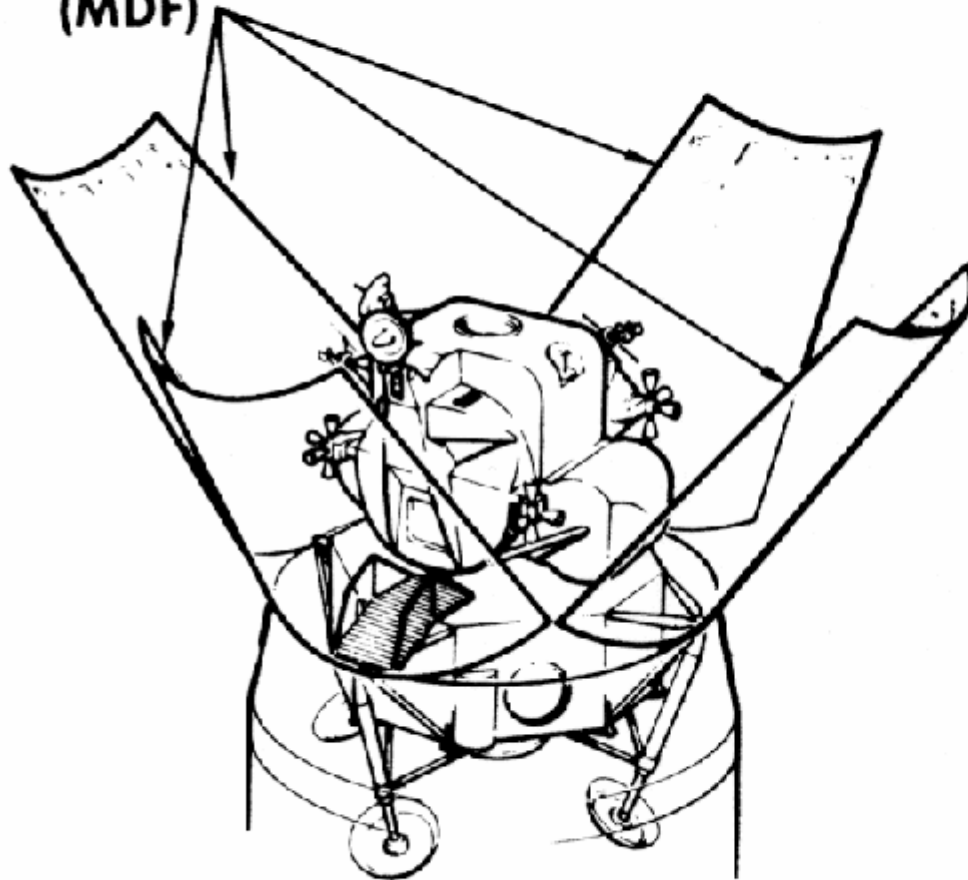
- 1 DESCENT ENGINE WITH THROTTLEABLE THRUST FROM 1,000 TO 16,000 LBS.
- 1 ASCENT ENGINE WITH 3,500 LBS. THRUST
- 12 REACTION CONTROL MOTORS WITH 100 LBS. THRUST EACH

ADAPTER WEIGHT: 4,000 LBS

WETA-67-WS-6-1100W

## APOLLO SPACECRAFT/LM ADAPTER

### PANEL SEPARATION BY EXPLOSIVE CHARGES (MDF)



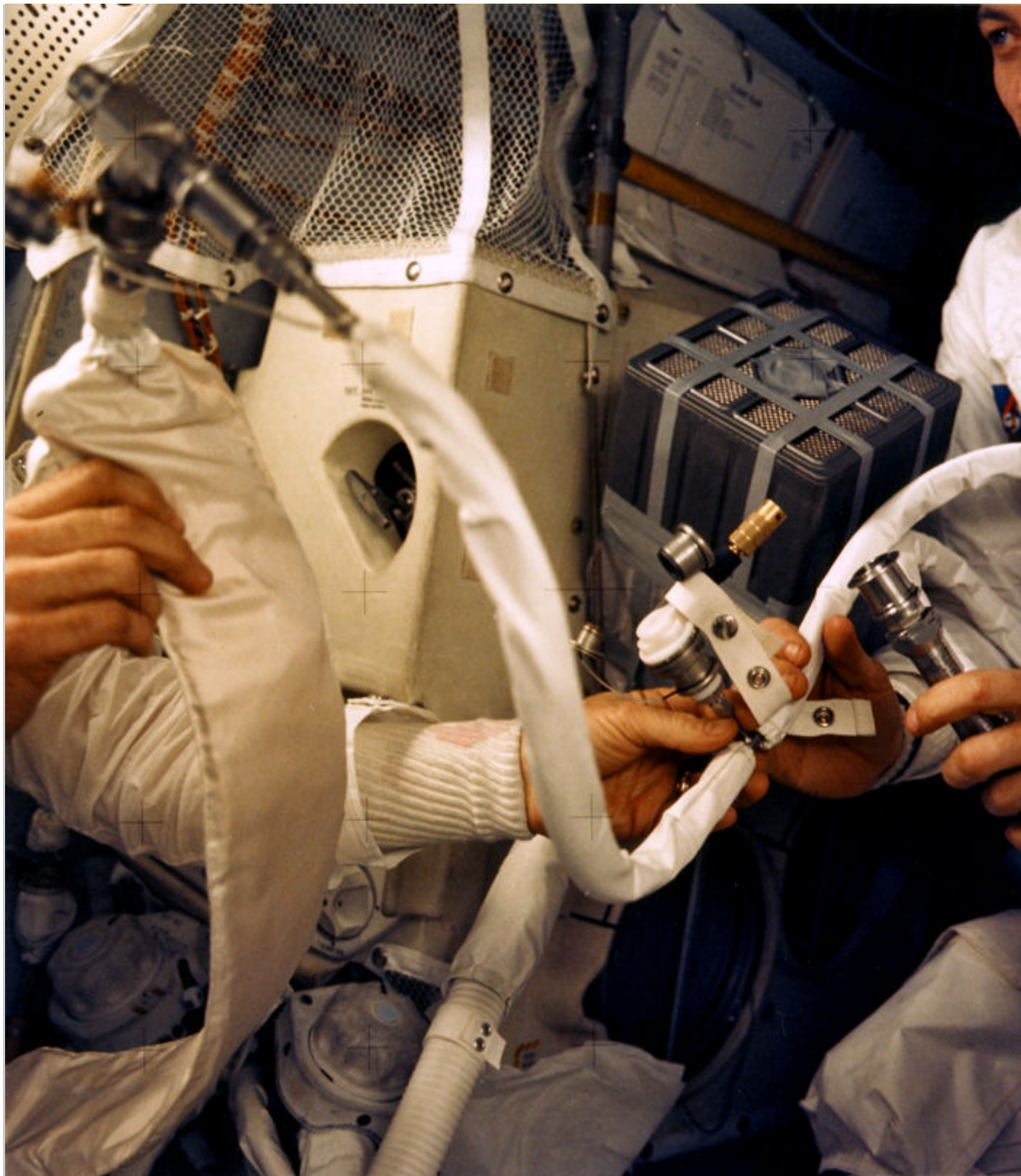


In other words, for virtually the entire 234,000-mile journey from the Earth to the Moon, that flimsily constructed lunar module essentially served as the front bumper of the mother ship. Other than to allow for the creation of the “little engine that could” fable surrounding Apollo 13, which holds that the conjoined spaceships flipped over and the front bumper became the engine, it makes little sense why that would have been done. Not only would it have exposed the fragile lunar modules to the hazards of a lengthy space flight, it would also have required a docking maneuver in outer space (one that seems to go unmentioned in the majority of the Apollo literature).

Amazingly enough, not only were the lunar modules capable of making soft manned landings on the Moon, *and* of blasting off from the surface of the Moon, *and* of rendezvousing and docking with the mother ship while in lunar orbit, but they were also capable of docking with the mother ship while cruising from the Earth to the Moon! By my count, those spunky little modules had to dock no fewer than seventeen times during the various Apollo missions, and they performed perfectly every time (twice in Earth orbit on the Apollo 9 mission, and twice on each of the Apollo 10-17 missions, except for Apollo 13, which did not complete the second docking maneuver).

Let’s pause here for a brief moment to reflect on the alleged plight of the unlucky Apollo 13 crew. There were no seats in the LEM as it had been decided that they would just add unnecessary weight. And there is just barely room for two guys in the space allegedly being occupied by three. All three, had this have been a real life-and-death situation, would have been wearing bulky spacesuits, boots, gloves and helmets. Somehow, they had to coexist for four days. During that time, all that would have separated them from the extreme hazards of outer space was a double layer of aluminum foil. One micrometeorite or one misplaced elbow would result in immediate death for the trio.

As the narrator informs us during *When We Left Earth*, “If the flight suit fails or even tears a little, the difference in pressure will cause the astronaut’s blood to boil, killing him instantly.” The same would be true, of course, about the skin of the spacecraft: the smallest tear would mean instant death for all three. Of course, their suits would have allegedly provide a second line of defense, except that, as can be seen in one of the handful of Apollo 13 mission photos released by NASA, the astronauts weren’t bothering to wear their suits as they cheerfully went about the business of MacGyvering their spaceship.



As we already know, their cockiness was entirely justified since that aluminum foil capsule provided all the protection the astronauts needed to get home safely. No fewer than eight lunar modules allegedly made the hazardous voyage to the Moon, and all of them arrived in immaculate condition. The Apollo 13 lunar module was exposed throughout virtually the entire mission – all the way to the Moon and all the way back. In all, the eight LEMS allegedly logged some 2,000,000 miles of

unprotected space flight and not one of them suffered so much as a scratch. That, my friends, is 1960s technology at its finest.

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part IX***

***November 29, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

*“During the flight of Gemini 7, the crew will remove their lightweight spacesuits and fly in their underwear.”*

James V. Correale, Jr., the head of the Gemini Support Office

*“There’s no question in our minds; the only way to fire these things is without pressure suits ... I’m convinced we could run the whole works without suits. All we need is a suit for reentry and emergency stored on board somewhere.”*

Astronaut Frank Borman, in voice transmissions from the Gemini 7 capsule

Before moving on to some of the other amazing technology allegedly developed for the Apollo missions, I must digress here to discuss a screamingly funny episode of a ridiculous little show known as *Mythbusters* that my DVR obligingly recorded for me the other day (it knows that I like that kind of thing). In this particular episode, the hosts took a look at the Apollo Moon landings – with some help behind the scenes from none other than Phil Plait and Jay Windley, who were thanked in the closing credits.

Have I mentioned, by the way, that Plait currently serves as president of the James Randi Educational Foundation, helmed by the very same James Randi who sat on the board of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (alongside a truly vile collection of CIA-funded psychiatrists and people accused by their own children of being pedophiles), and who was once caught on tape soliciting sexual favors from young boys? Randi is, in other words, just the kind of guy who should be running an educational foundation, and just the kind of guy you would expect someone like Phil Plait to cozy up to.

Anyway, the two jokers who co-host the *Mythbusters* show took on five of what were purported to be the most common claims of ‘conspiracy theorists’: non-parallel shadows appearing in NASA’s Moon photos; objects in the shadows of those photos appearing to be lit with a secondary light source; the astronauts’ boot prints being too well defined to have been left in dry soil; the video footage appearing to have been faked by altering the playback speed; and, of course, the flag appearing to wave.

Though the ‘debunkers,’ as I’ve mentioned before, just can’t get enough of the waving flag, I am pretty sure that I have already stated that I don’t really care so much about it, so I am going to skip it once again. As for the boot prints, the *Mythbusters* gang ‘debunked’ the claims of skeptics by producing a distinct print in ‘simulated’ lunar soil that was provided to the show specifically for this little demonstration by the helpful folks at – where else? – NASA. Unfortunately, this demonstration taught us nothing about the Apollo missions, but it did conclusively prove that NASA has a synthetic material that will produce a boot print in a vacuum chamber.

In attempting to ‘debunk’ the claim that, in the alleged Moon photos, there are objects lying in the shadows that are far too well lit, the hosts cynically proclaimed their experiment to be a success despite the fact that the results clearly indicated that their demonstration had actually failed. And they had failed in spite of the fact that they had given themselves two huge, and entirely unmentioned, advantages: the reenactment was photographed here on Earth, where air causes light to scatter, and the image was deliberately overexposed.

This seems like a good time to note that HJP Arnold, who provided the Kodak film for the mission cameras and later created a photo library devoted to space photography, said that on the Moon, “where you have no atmosphere, shadow is very black and highlight is really violent highlight, so you have an enormous contrast problem.” I have to keep throwing those quotes in, you see, because if *I* say stuff like that, then for some unexplained reason a cabal of ‘debunkers’ will quickly form a circle and begin furiously [jerking each other off](#) (if you need a laugh, by the way, their stuff is funnier than mine, and they’re not even trying to be funny).

Anyway, the point here is that the *Mythbusters* gang had the advantage of scattered light. And as is clearly visible in the screen-cap below, they also deliberately overexposed the photo in an obvious attempt to further lighten the shadows. Even so, the astronaut in the *Mythbusters*’ image is significantly less illuminated than is NASA’s astronaut. NASA’s astronaut, though standing completely within the shadow of the lander, is nearly as bright as the sunlit background of the image. In the *Mythbusters*’ image, on the other hand, the astronaut is nowhere near as bright as the overexposed background.

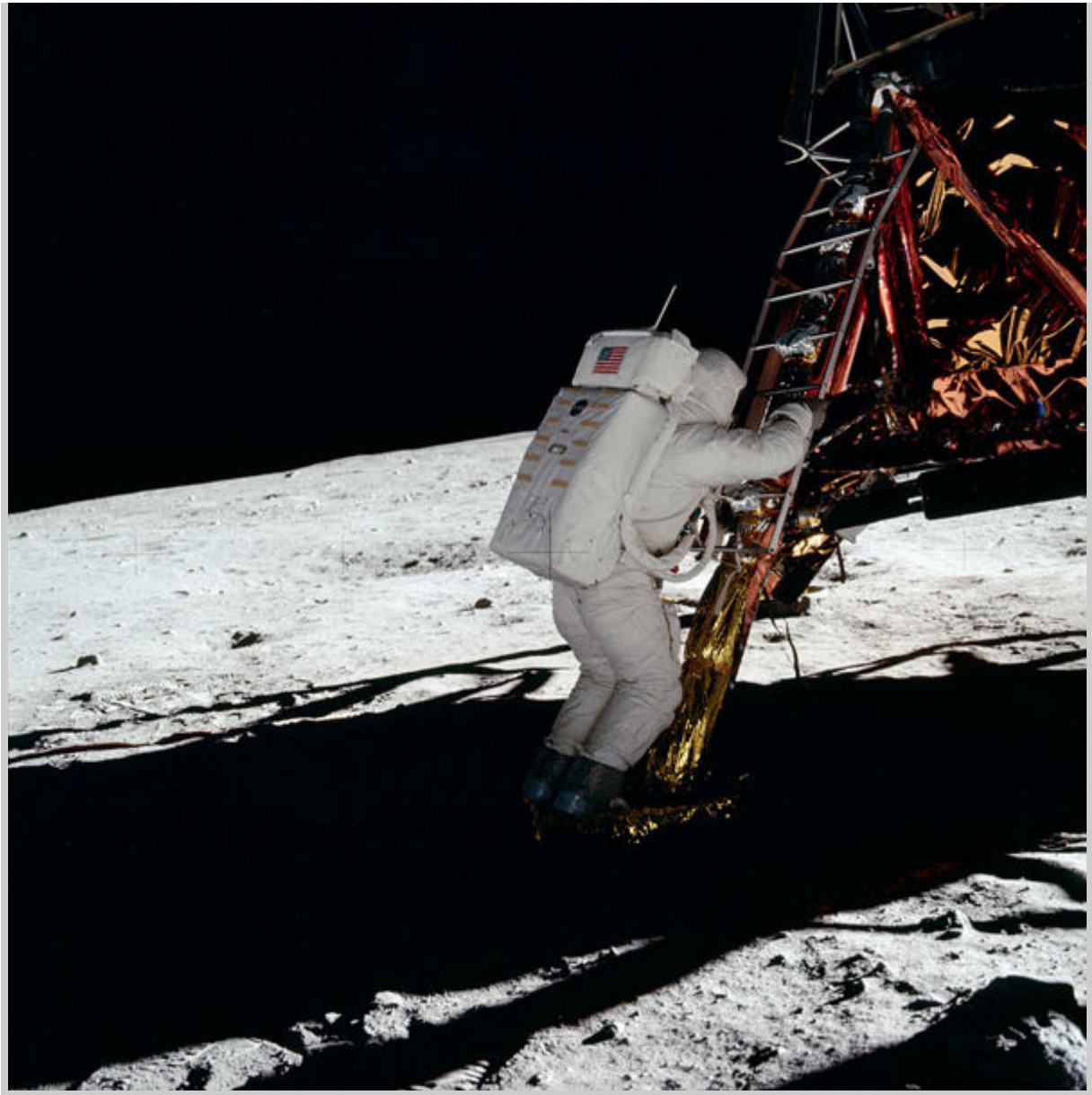


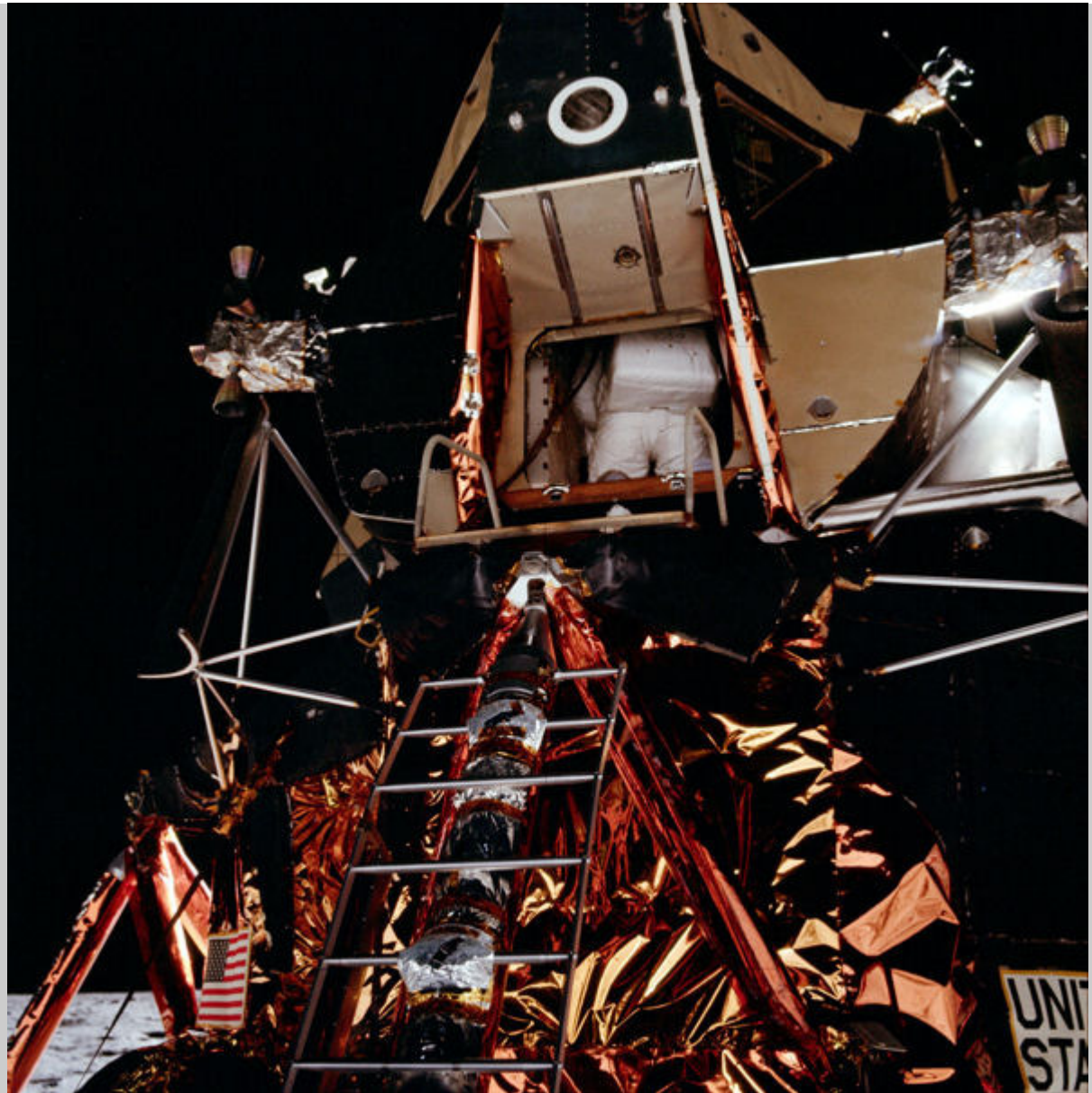


Had the guys taken the shot in NASA's vacuum chamber, which they had access to but chose not to use in their demonstration, their astronaut would have been even darker. To claim then that a 'myth' has been 'busted' when the results of their own biased demonstration clearly suggested otherwise says much about the integrity of this show and the 'consultants' behind the scenes. And since we're on the subject of curiously illuminated shadows, take a look at



the shot below and to the right, which was allegedly taken moments before the shot used by *Mythbusters*.





As can be seen in the shot to the left, the egress side of the LEM was supposed to be the shaded side. And yet, in the photo to the right, that entire side of the module is gloriously lit, and we are apparently supposed to believe that that is entirely the result of reflected light. Aldrin is even very well lit and he hasn't even climbed out of the hatch yet!

Moving on, the guys also tried to 'debunk' the claim that NASA's Moon photos shouldn't depict non-parallel shadows. The hosts took a rather novel approach though: they used a single studio light source in close proximity to the subjects to reproduce an image that had been created by using a single studio light source in close proximity to the subjects. They then, of course, proclaimed that yet another 'myth' had been 'busted.' Nice work, guys.

The most revealing segment of the show concerned the way that the astronauts moved in NASA's video footage. The hosts picked out three brief clips showing the astronauts running, skipping and jumping. One of the two hosts then donned a spacesuit and was filmed recreating the movements. That tape was then played back at half-speed and compared to the original. The same would-be actor then performed the same movements while suspended from cables. In both cases, the new footage did not match the original.

It was perfectly obvious, however, that the awkward movements by *Mythbusters'* fake astronaut were very different than the movements by NASA's fake astronauts. A much easier, and far more relevant demonstration would have been to simply speed up the original footage. When this was done, albeit very briefly, it was perfectly obvious that the astronauts were moving in normal, earthly ways. But because the hosts couldn't reproduce the footage using a hack who appeared to be doing a deliberately piss-poor job of reproducing the motions, the demonstration was deemed to be inconclusive.

The only way to resolve the issue, according to the hosts, was to do a demonstration in a 1/6 gravity environment. Luckily for the guys, they had access to a 'vomit comet.' While normally used to provide a zero-gravity environment for training purposes, by slightly adjusting its flight path the plane can also simulate the Moon's gravity. But by filming this demonstration, the show unwittingly showed viewers how the Apollo crews would have really moved if they had been on the Moon.

As the spacesuited host informed viewers, "at 1/6 my weight, I felt pretty weightless. I felt like I could jump ten feet in the air." And indeed it was perfectly obvious that, had he not been in a plane with very limited headroom, he could have *effortlessly* jumped ten feet in the air. hilariously, the uninhibited support crew can be seen in the background easily performing dazzling acrobatic feats, such as the guy to the left of the frame effortlessly balancing on one hand, and the other guy in the background floating through the air in a ninja pose.





These are the types of movements that the Apollo boys would have been able to perform with ease had they actually been on the Moon. And yet we saw nothing of the sort in any of the alleged transmissions from the lunar surface. Nevertheless, the *Mythbusters* gang haughtily declared that they had successfully ‘busted’ yet another ‘myth.’ What they had actually done, thus far, was to perform three completely meaningless demonstrations (the flag, the boot print, and the non-parallel shadows simulation) and two more demonstrations that, despite the hosts’ contentions to the contrary, clearly confirmed claims made by ‘conspiracy theorists.’

In the show's final segment, they presented what was billed as the "ultimate proof of man's Moon missions" – which turned out to be nothing more significant than laser ranging targets.

*Really, guys?! That's the best you can do?* After failing throughout the hour to 'debunk' a single 'conspiracy' claim, you're now going to brazenly claim that the existence of man-made artifacts on the Moon is the "ultimate proof" that Apollo astronauts walked on the lunar surface? Are you fucking kidding me? There are manmade artifacts on Mars and Venus as well, so I guess we have "ultimate proof" that NASA has secretly sent men to other planets. And my kid's ball is over in the neighbor's yard right now, so I guess we have "ultimate proof" that she's been there.

I'd have to say that, while I obviously would have done things a little differently, overall the guys did a pretty good job of busting that ridiculous myth about man walking on the Moon.

Let's now turn our attention to some of the other technology that had to be developed for the Apollo program, beginning with those magic suits. "In the early 1960s, as NASA began training astronauts to meet President Kennedy's challenge, it realized there was one key area of expertise it knew nothing about. Nobody knew how to build a spacesuit that would enable a human being to survive in the lethal lunar environment."

So begins *Moon Machines: The Space Suit*. As previously noted, Alan Shepard had ridden the first manned Mercury capsule into sub-orbit just before Kennedy's announcement. The Mercury program, launched in 1959, just after the formation of NASA, was America's first space program. The suits used for that program were, according to both NASA and the talking-heads on the *Science Channel*, redundant. The capsules provided the astronauts with their first line of defense; the suits were only an emergency back-up that no one was sure would even work.

But now, with Kennedy's commitment to the Apollo program, our astronauts were going to need suits that provided their first and only line of defense. NASA did not yet have suits that could operate off the ship's life support systems through umbilical cords (such as would be needed to perform space-walks) and now it needed suits capable of providing fully independent life support. In other words, starting essentially from scratch, NASA was going to have to come up with one of the most technologically advanced spacesuits ever conceived. And it was going to have to do it very quickly.

Eight companies reportedly submitted proposals to NASA for consideration. Almost all were companies that were known within the aerospace industry. One, however, was known for its work in a somewhat different field of endeavor; the International Latex Corporation was best



known as the manufacturer of Playtex bras and girdles. Improbably enough though, it would soon be adding Apollo spacesuits to its product line.

([Wikipedia](#), it should be noted, contains a much different version of events than what was provided by *Moon Machines*, including a claim that ILC began designing spacesuits “as early as 1955.” The version provided by the *Science Channel*, however, came directly from the people who were involved in the project. And the company’s own promotional materials hold that “ILC started designing suits on 1961; started making test and prototype suits in 1964; and started delivering suits for use by Apollo astronauts in 1966.”)

In April 1962, NASA awarded the Apollo spacesuit contract to ILC. Hamilton Standard, a company known for manufacturing aircraft propellers, was assigned to oversee the project. ILC quickly put its bra and girdle seamstresses to work cutting and sewing Apollo spacesuits. Meanwhile, Hamilton Standard went to work designing and building the life-support packs, known as PLSS units.

Amazingly enough, the first spacesuits to roll off the line were delivered to NASA for testing in 1963. ILC had designed and built the suits in just over a year. Unfortunately though, they had a major flaw: astronauts testing them quickly overheated in the Florida sun, which is roughly 160° F cooler than the surface of the Moon. NASA issued an ultimatum to Hamilton Standard: solve the cooling problem and do it immediately or the contract would be cancelled.

The solution was to design a water-cooled undergarment. By early 1964, just two years after the awarding of the contract, the redesigned suits were being shipped to NASA for testing. NASA, however, was still not impressed with what Hamilton and ILC had come up with. The suits were deemed to be too heavy, extremely difficult to move around in, and intensely uncomfortable to wear even for short durations.

In the fall of 1964, NASA canceled the contracts with both ILC and Hamilton Standard. With just five years left to fulfill Kennedy’s dream, NASA had no working spacesuits and no contract with anyone to design and build working spacesuits. After briefly experimenting with so-called ‘hard suits,’ NASA decided in the spring of 1965 to reopen the bidding on the spacesuit contract. Both Hamilton and ILC again submitted proposals, and again the contract was awarded to the makers of Playtex bras. Hamilton was awarded a separate contract to design and build the life support packs.

Just weeks after NASA awarded those contracts, Gemini astronaut Ed White allegedly became the first American to perform a space-walk, despite the fact that NASA did not yet appear to have a suit that would allow for such a maneuver. Nevertheless, on June 3, 1965,

White allegedly performed a successful 22-minute EVA (extra-vehicular activity, in NASA jargon) which was yet another “We can do it too!” response to the Soviet Union’s first space-walk.

As astronaut Gene Cernan recalled, Leonov’s space-walk on March 18, 1965 “shocked a lot of people. It caught us totally unexpected, and, you know, we were just barely flying in space in our own little capsules. They weren’t even big enough to be called spaceships.” Indeed, the United States hadn’t yet gotten its first two-man capsule into space. The Mercury program, which had ended nearly two years earlier, had only gotten four single-occupancy capsules into orbit. NASA’s plan had been to attempt a space-walk on the fourth manned Gemini flight, and it had not yet gotten the first Gemini capsule off the ground.

NASA’s plan apparently changed rather abruptly and a few days before the launch of Gemini 4, which was only the second manned Gemini mission (the first having completed just three orbits), it was announced that White would be performing an EVA while Jim McDivitt piloted the capsule. According to astronaut Frank Borman, “NASA scrambled around kind of hurriedly and, in my estimation, without a great deal of safety factor, had Ed go EVA on Gemini 4.”

As McDivitt recalled, “Our EVA was very confidential at the time. We had not announced we were gonna do this, and we were doing all of our training at night, and only a group of maybe 30 or 40 people even knew we were gonna try it.” Translated from NASA-speak, what that very likely means is that a select group worked covertly with the astronauts to fake the space-walk footage prior to the launch of Gemini 4.

Notably, NASA did not attempt the maneuver again for an entire year, until June 3, 1966, despite the fact that four Gemini capsules were launched during the intervening year and those four spent a combined total of twenty-three days in low-Earth orbit. Yet none of those four crews, it would appear, had time to practice space-walking, even though practicing and perfecting EVAs was one of the primary goals of the Gemini program. Not even Frank Borman and Jim Lovell, who spent nearly two weeks orbiting Earth in a tiny capsule with virtually nothing to do for the majority of their mission, had time to perform a space-walk.

It was not until Gemini 9 that NASA attempted to duplicate White’s alleged performance. But that ‘second’ space-walk, by Gene Cernan, was by all accounts a complete failure that almost cost Cernan his life. Problems began almost immediately, with Cernan’s heart rate at times soaring as high as 170. His visor became fogged, leaving him blinded and disoriented. His breathing was labored and he was sweating profusely. Doctors on the ground monitoring the situation feared he would not make it back in alive and would have to be cut loose.

The next two EVA attempts, by Michael Collins aboard Gemini 10 and Richard Gordon aboard Gemini 11, were failures as well. As 1966 was drawing to a close, three astronauts in a row had failed to replicate what Ed White had supposedly easily accomplished over a year earlier. But then, in November 1966, a year-and-a-half after White's alleged space-walk, none other than Buzz Aldrin performed a wildly successful EVA during the Gemini 12 mission. Aldrin had come through just in time – Gemini 12 was the last Gemini mission.

In sum, the Gemini program resulted in one faked EVA, three failed EVAs, and one presumably successful EVA. Even if we give the agency every benefit of the doubt, the record would be three failures and only two successes. And with that impressive record, we were ready to send our guys off on a series of EVAs of a complexity that remains unmatched to this day. Have I mentioned lately, by the way, that America totally kicked ass in the 1960s?

Curiously, the footage of White's alleged space walk is characterized by the very same slow-motion photographic technique later employed on the alleged Moon missions. The footage released by the Soviets of Leonov's EVA, on the other hand, does not appear to be slowed down. The logical conclusion to draw, of course, is that moving in slow-motion in space is more a matter of culture than science.

The final spacesuits sent by ILC to NASA were supposedly composed of three layers: the water-cooled undergarment, a pressurized inner suit that featured flexible, bellows joints, and a white outer covering made of an experimental fabric known as Beta cloth. The bra and girdle manufacturer, which I'm guessing must have had a large engineering division, designed and built the entire integrated suit, including the helmet and visor and the specially designed boots and gloves.

The Apollo spacesuits supposedly weighed in at 180 pounds each, including the PLSS backpacks. You would think that with the advanced technology now available, NASA would have been able to streamline the package. To the contrary, the suits now worn aboard the space shuttle weigh in at 310 pounds each. And ILC claims that it takes three months and 5,000 man-hours to produce each one. Back in the '60s, they claimed to be cranking out a minimum of nine of them for each Apollo flight.

One final note on the magic suits: they also were allegedly designed for what was euphemistically dubbed "sanitation management." According to the designers, the suits contained urine bags attached to the astronauts via what were described as condoms. How that would have possibly worked is anyone's guess. The existence of fecal bags was also alluded to, but no details were given.

For what it's worth, NASA says that its astronauts now wear what are euphemistically dubbed 'MAGs,' or Maximum Absorbency Garments, under their spacesuits. The same product is more commonly referred to as an adult diaper. And that is likely what the Apollo crews would have worn as well had they actually gone on their alleged missions. That would though, I suppose, have taken a bit of the glamour away from the romanticized notion of being a space traveler.

Another piece of advanced technology that had to be developed for the Apollo program was the command module – the cone-shaped tip of the Saturn V rocket that was to be the only piece of the original launch vehicle that returned to Earth. To this day, the Apollo command modules remain the only capsules ever designed that were allegedly capable of keeping astronauts alive while reentering the Earth's atmosphere from outside of low-Earth orbit.

According to those who claim to know about such things, reentering from beyond low-Earth orbit is an exponentially more risky maneuver than reentering from Earth orbit. First of all, the Apollo capsules were allegedly traveling at 25,000 mph at the time of reentry as opposed to the 17,000 mph that spacecraft travel in Earth orbit. That additional speed results in a doubling of the already intensely high temperatures experienced during reentry.

In addition, the returning Apollo command modules had to enter Earth's atmosphere at precisely the right angle. If they hit at too wide an angle, the spacecraft would essentially bounce off and veer off into space. And if they hit at too sharp an angle, the spaceship and its crew would not survive the impact. The capsule also had to be in the proper orientation, with the bottom, and thus the heat shield, pointing down. Luckily though, all nine of the Apollo modules that allegedly returned from the Moon hit that narrow window in the proper orientation, despite the fact that the command modules, having jettisoned the attached service modules, had no propulsion or steering capability.

The contract to design and build the command modules was assigned to North American Aviation, whose engineers, it's safe to say, had quite a formidable task before them. As noted on *Moon Machines*, the combined command and service modules would require a propulsion system, a navigation system, an environmental control system, plentiful supplies of oxygen, water and food, heat shields capable of handling reentry temperatures beyond anything before experienced, parachutes capable of performing near-miraculous feats, a human waste disposal system, shaving supplies, hygiene supplies, life preservers, protection from micrometeorites, and, for reasons left unexplained, machetes.

What also wasn't explained was why the lunar modules, which would be exposed throughout the flight to the Moon, didn't need that very same "protection from micrometeorites."

By the end of 1966, naturally enough, North American already had a prototype command module ready for NASA to put through the pre-flight test regimen. As designed, the command module featured living space measuring roughly 6'x6'x6'. On January 27, 1967, Gus Grissom, Roger Chaffee and Ed White squeezed into that confined space for what was dubbed a 'plugs out' test, to verify that the ship was capable of running under its own power. There was another test scheduled that day as well – a pressurization test of the cabin.

Allegedly to "save time," NASA opted to conduct both tests simultaneously. So once the astronauts were in place, the cabin was filled with 16 PSI of pure oxygen. With the inward-opening hatch sealed by the interior cabin pressure, the astronauts never had a chance to survive the 'test.' All it took was a spark, allegedly from some faulty wiring, to turn the capsule into a crematorium. In a pressurized oxygen environment, even aluminum will ignite. The crew reportedly were dead within 30 seconds of the onset of the fire. It took rescuers five minutes to pry the hatch open.

Weighing in with perhaps the most appalling quote to make it into these articles, George Jeffs, the chief engineer of the command and service modules, had this to say: "From a technical point of view, I think the fire had a, a very beneficial final effect on the program. It enabled the program to stop and re-review exactly where we stood on every element of the system and to fix every problem that we saw in the system." Of course, roughly the same effect would have been achieved by burning up the module while the astronauts weren't in it, but there is no need to quibble over minor details, I suppose.

It took eighteen months to redesign the command modules. Over 100 design changes were made to correct various shortcomings. This redesign process was undoubtedly made more difficult by the fact that no paper records had been kept of what had been installed in the module. As we have already seen, the Apollo program didn't place a high priority on record keeping.

One bit of technology that had to be developed for the command modules (presumably for the lunar modules as well) was what *Moon Machines* described as "an environmental control system designed to cope with the most extreme environment ever encountered by humans." Cliff Hess was an environmental systems test engineer with NASA during the Apollo days, and he described the challenge they faced as follows: "You can go from +250° F down to -250° F, and it can happen just as you cross the line of a shadow ... so you can instantaneously go from one extreme to the other and have like a 500° F change." Apollo 8 astronaut Frank Borman described his alleged flight to and from the Moon in precisely the same terms: "You'd be 250° plus on the sunny side, and once the spaceship rotated and you were in the shade, [then] you're minus 250°!"

This is yet another example of a claim that I previously made that was ridiculed by the 'debunker' brigade as being ill-informed. And yet here we see once again that the very same claim has been made by one of the guys who actually worked on that aspect of the project, as well as by one of the guys who allegedly flew the missions. It's rather shocking to find that so many of the people who developed and/or utilized the Apollo technology actually know significantly less about it than the 'debunkers.' Before running their mouths off to documentary film crews, these old-timers really should visit a couple of 'debunking' websites.

I wonder why it is, by the way, that the Apollo 13 astronauts were said to have been very cold throughout their return flight in their allegedly crippled spaceship? As recalled by Jim Lovell, "The trip was marked by discomfort beyond the lack of food and water. Sleep was almost impossible because of the cold. When we turned off the electrical systems, we lost our source of heat, and the sun streaming in the windows didn't much help ... It wasn't simply that the temperature dropped to 38° F: the sight of perspiring walls and wet windows made it seem even colder. We considered putting on our spacesuits, but they would have been bulky and too sweaty ... We found the CM a cold, clammy tin can when we started to power up. The walls, ceiling, floor, wire harnesses, and panels were all covered with droplets of water."

There is so much wrong with that brief description of the flight that it is difficult to know where to begin critiquing it, but let's start by pondering why they would have been short on food and water. The mission ended up returning a few days early, so unless they overindulged the first few days, there should have been more than enough food and water for the trio in the conjoined command and lunar modules. And as for the cold, how could that 250° F "sun streaming in the windows" not help much? What does Lovell use to warm himself at home – a blowtorch?

As for the water droplets covering the interior of the command and lunar modules, wouldn't many of those droplets have been airborne if they were in a zero-gravity environment? Wouldn't the inside of the module have looked something like a snow-globe? And as for opting not to don the spacesuits, that is just laughably absurd. As already noted, without the suits the only thing that would have been protecting the astronauts from the hazards of space was a double layer of aluminum foil. For that reason alone it is inconceivable that they wouldn't have been wearing them. And now we find that they were also facing near-freezing conditions and yet they still chose not to utilize the suits – because the suits were, you know, a little bulky, and it is much better to nearly freeze to death than it is to break a little sweat.

Anyway, returning more or less to where we left off, Apollo 7, equipped with the redesigned command module, became the first manned Apollo flight to triumphantly lift off from Cape Kennedy on October 11, 1968. Three previous flights had gone up unmanned. This one wasn't quite a real Apollo launch, however, since it was powered by the smaller Saturn 1-B rocket. No one had yet ridden a Saturn V rocket off the launch pad, and there was just one year to go to meet Kennedy's goal of landing men on the Moon.



Apollo 7 was the first of a series of Apollo launches that came in incredibly rapid succession. Just 71 days after Apollo 7 took flight, Apollo 8 lifted off. Apollo 9 followed just 72 days later, followed by Apollo 10 only 76 days after that. A mere 59 days later, Apollo 11 took flight. In just nine months, NASA assembled and launched five incredibly complex, multi-staged rockets (and ILC provided at least forty-five spacesuits). Three of those ships allegedly flew all the way to the Moon.

Apollo 8 would be the first to allegedly do so.

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part X***

***December 7, 2009***

***by David McGowan***

*“The mission of Apollo 8, quite apart from its significant scientific meaning, stimulated an immense rejuvenation of the spirit of mankind, and that spirit needed rejuvenation. A year featured by two grim assassinations [MLK and RFK], by riots, by racial and social strife, and a baffling attempt to end the war left men with a dull sense of frustration. Then at the end of such a year came the Apollo 8, an incredible adventure.”*

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, 33° Scottish Rite Freemason

Apollo 8 was the last Apollo flight to leave the ground during the Johnson administration. A decade before the launch, LBJ had laid out America’s goals in the space race, and none of them had much to do with sending men to the Moon: “Control of space means control of the world. From space, the masters of infinity would have the power to control Earth’s weather, to cause drought and flood, to change the tides and raise the levels of the sea, to divert the gulf stream and change the climates ...”

I thought it was global warming that was supposed to be causing most of that, but I guess that is a bit off-topic.

To anyone paying close attention in the 1960s, the ridiculously improbable flight of Apollo 8 should have sent a clear signal that the Apollo Moon missions were going to be seriously lacking in credibility. Launched on the winter solstice of 1968, Apollo 8 was only the third launch of a Saturn V rocket, and the first to carry a crew. The first two Saturn V launches, Apollo 4 and Apollo 6, were what NASA referred to as “all-up” tests of the three-stage launch vehicle. Those tests didn’t go so well.

The team of rocket scientists who had developed the F-1 and J-2 rocket engines that powered the flights – most of whom were former Nazis recruited through Project Paperclip and relocated first to White Sands and then to the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama (one of the best

sources of information on this is Linda Hunt's *Secret Agenda*, St. Martin's Press, 1991; see also Tom Bower's *The Paperclip Conspiracy*, Little, Brown, 1987) – had assumed that each stage of the craft would be tested separately. They were reportedly horrified to find that NASA was bypassing such tests and proceeding directly to an 'all-up' test of Apollo 4 – but probably not nearly as horrified as the American people would have been had they known the truth about the past lives of NASA's rocket scientists.



Members of the German rocket team who worked on rockets for Army Ordnance under Paperclip are shown at White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico, in 1946. (Smithsonian Institute)



Nevertheless, the launch of Apollo 4, the very first Saturn V launch, was allegedly a smashing success. That claim seems rather dubious, however, given that the next all-up test, of Apollo 6, was marked by

multiple malfunctions. The first-stage burn had serious vibration problems, and two of the second-stage's five engines cut out, throwing the ship seriously off course.

According to *Moon Machines*, NASA was undeterred by the serious problems encountered during the flight of Apollo 6: "Despite the near loss of Apollo 6, NASA was pushing ahead with Apollo 8, the third flight of the Saturn V and the first to carry a crew." NASA was so confident, in fact, that they decided to throw caution to the wind and swing for the fence with Apollo 8: "The third flight of the Saturn V would carry astronauts not to orbit the Earth, as everyone had expected, but to *orbit the Moon*."

Had the Apollo program been a real space exploration endeavor, the first manned flight of the Saturn V would obviously have gone no further than low-Earth orbit, as had been planned. This would likely have been followed by an unmanned flight to the Moon, and then possibly a flight 'piloted' by a dog or some other such mammalian life form. But taking logical, methodical steps toward achieving goals in space was for those pussies over in Russia. America was going to take the John Wayne approach.

Without taking any of the preliminary steps, and with a launch vehicle that had failed on its last outing, and without knowing if the ship itself could make the journey there and back, America was going to send men all the way to the Moon!

Not to worry though: NASA was confident that all the problems with Apollo 6 had been diagnosed and fixed, and in record time. Despite the fact that the failed stages of the aircraft weren't available for inspection, NASA's crack team was able to expertly pinpoint and correct all the deficiencies so thoroughly that the new and improved Saturn V rocket didn't even need a test flight to be sure it was working correctly. Indeed, it was ready to go all the way to the Moon!

Given America's track record in the space race, which from the very beginning was marked by disappointments and desperate attempts to keep up with the Joneses, it was a seriously ballsy move. Following the October 4, 1957 launch of Sputnik I, a 184-pound Soviet satellite, the U.S. attempted to respond by launching Vanguard, a 3-pound sphere roughly the size of a large grapefruit, on December 6, 1957. With the nation nervously looking on, Vanguard rose approximately five feet from the launch pad before blowing up in a blaze of glory.

The U.S. had better luck on January 31, 1958, when it officially entered the space race with the successful launch of Explorer 1, a 31-pound satellite. The Soviets, meanwhile, had already successfully launched Sputnik III, a nearly 3,000-pound satellite described in Time-Life's *To the Moon* as an "orbiting space laboratory." America clearly had some catching up to do.

Once NASA's engineers turned their attention to the Moon as a target of unmanned space flights, 'disappointment' continued to be the operative word. Beginning in August of 1961, the United States

began attempting to crash-land an unmanned craft onto the Moon through the Ranger program. The first six such attempts failed. Ranger 1 and Ranger 2 both failed on the launch pad, Ranger 3 launched successfully but missed the Moon, Ranger 4 became disabled and drifted about aimlessly, Ranger 5 also shut down and missed the Moon, and the cameras aboard Ranger 6 failed, rendering it useless.

Finally, on July 31, 1964, nearly three full years after the first launch, Ranger 7 successfully impacted and photographed the Moon. Rangers 8 and 9 followed in February and March of 1965. The three successful probes gathered a combined total of roughly 17,000 images, which didn't change the fact that the Ranger program overall had a 67% failure rate.

The next year, NASA launched two new lunar reconnaissance programs: Surveyor and the Lunar Orbiter Program. The first Surveyor blasted off on May 30, 1966, with six more to follow, the last on January 7, 1968. The goal of the program was to attempt 'soft landings' on the lunar surface. Two of the missions, Surveyor 2 and Surveyor 4, crashed, leaving the program with roughly a 29% failure rate. The Surveyor and Ranger programs had a combined failure rate of 50%.

NASA had much better luck with the Lunar Orbiter Program, which involved putting five satellites into lunar orbit between August of 1966 and August of 1967. Each of the five orbited the Moon, capturing high-resolution images, for an average of ten days each. In addition to mapping the lunar surface, the Orbiters also sent back the first images of Earth from space and the first photos of the Earth rising over the lunar horizon. In all, some 3,000 images were beamed back – officially at least.

The problem here, of course, is that NASA's numbers don't seem to add up. Does it make any sense at all that the three successful Ranger missions, which flew directly to the Moon and immediately crashed, sent back 17,000 images, and yet the five Orbiters, which spent a combined total of fifty-three days *orbiting the Moon*, sent back just 3,000 images? That's a capture rate of just over two images per hour. And the Orbiters had multiple cameras on board.

There is little doubt that the Orbiters returned far more images than claimed, of which only a select few (relatively speaking) were released. What then happened to the rest of them? I'm going to go way out on a limb here and guess that NASA needed those images for another, more important project: faking the Apollo Moon landings. All of those glorious shots of Earth from space, and of Earth-rises, and of superimposed spacecraft in lunar orbit were undoubtedly created from unreleased imagery captured by the Orbiters. As were, no doubt, the fake lunar sets and the fake lunar backdrops.

One final note on the Lunar Orbiters: during their flights to and around the Moon, the five satellites recorded twenty-two "micrometeoroid events." The eight lunar modules that made the trip to the Moon apparently recorded no such events. Or maybe the guys just put some duct tape over the holes.



Meanwhile, NASA's manned space programs were having trouble as well. In the beginning, of course, there were the Mercury 7, the nation's first space-age celebrities. Immortalized in *The Right Stuff*, the first seven astronauts were hand-picked from among hundreds of the nation's finest fighter pilots. Six of those seven – Alan Shepard, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Scott Carpenter, Wally Schirra, and Gordo Cooper – would become the first Americans in space, but for most of them it would not be an entirely smooth ride.



Shepard was the first to take flight aboard the Freedom 7, launched on May 5, 1961. His was an uneventful, 15-minute sub-orbital flight. Grissom followed on July 21, 1961 in the Liberty Bell 7, and things didn't go so well for him. As with Shepard, his was just a sub-orbital flight, but it nearly cost him his life. Immediately after splashing down, the hatch blew on his capsule and it began taking on water. Grissom got free, but his suit, which was supposed to serve as a floatation device, also began taking on water, pulling him under.



Grissom's plight did not improve with the arrival of a rescue helicopter, which concentrated exclusively on trying to save the capsule, ignoring the struggling Grissom who now also had to contend with the helicopter's rotor wash. Grissom was pulled to safety only when a second rescue helicopter arrived. The capsule sunk to the bottom of the sea, three miles below.

Glenn was up next, and he was slated to be the first American in orbit. Riding aboard the Friendship 7, launched on February 20, 1962, Glenn did indeed make it into orbit, but NASA was not at all sure that they were going to be able to get him back. The launch had been delayed for a month as NASA worked out various problems, but there was still a serious glitch: during Glenn's second orbit, technicians on the ground determined that the heat shield, essential for reentry, had come loose.

Glenn's capsule was seriously damaged during reentry, but he survived unharmed and became an instant national hero.

Next up was Carpenter, who orbited the Earth three times aboard the Aurora 7 on May 24, 1962. Running low on fuel, Carpenter barely made reentry, and the wrong angle of reentry caused him to splash down some 250 miles off course and out of radio contact. It took rescue crews three hours to find him floating in the Atlantic. Some on the ground blamed Carpenter for the mishap, claiming that he had wasted fuel by acting like a tourist trying to see all the sights (you can't really fault the guy for that – he was probably wishing that he had rolled a fatty to bring along).

Schirra was up to bat next, and he blasted off on October 3, 1962 aboard the Sigma 7, completing six orbits in just over nine hours. His was the first flight since Shepard's, and the first orbital flight, to be free of any significant malfunctions.

The final Mercury flight was helmed by Cooper, who lifted off on May 15, 1963 inside the Faith 7 capsule. Cooper completed 22 orbits and was the first American to sleep in space. Problems arose in the final hours, however, when the capsule's automatic controls failed and Cooper had to execute the first fully manual reentry. It would be nearly two years before the next Americans followed Cooper into space.

Overall, the Mercury program was largely a success in the sense that everyone made it back alive and well, but America had a very long way to go to get men to the Moon.

Next up was the Gemini program, featuring a larger, two-man capsule. Gemini, which ran from March of 1965 until November of 1966, had very specific goals: testing man's ability to survive in space for up to two weeks; testing rendezvous and docking procedures; performing EVAs (space-walks); and making orbital adjustments. All of these were to be practiced until they became almost second nature.

The Gemini capsules were launched into orbit with Titan rockets, which proved to be a bit unstable at first. The first launch attempts blew up on the pad. Eventually NASA successfully launched two that didn't blow up, and those were christened Gemini 1 and Gemini 2. Those were followed by ten manned Gemini flights, beginning with Gemini 3 launched on March 23, 1965, and concluding with Gemini 12, which took flight on November 11, 1966.

The flight of Gemini 3 was a short one – completing three orbits in just under five hours. Due to an equipment malfunction, pilots Gus Grissom and John Young had to manually control their reentry and splashed down some sixty miles off target. Other than that, the first manned Gemini mission was successful. Gemini 4, launched on June 3, 1965, remained in orbit for just over four days and featured the alleged space-walk by Ed White (NASA's photos of which are, needless to say, spectacular).



After a successful lift-off on August 21, 1965, Gemini 5 remained in low-Earth orbit for nearly eight days, completing 120 orbits. The flight was largely successful, though a malfunctioning fuel cell and faulty thrusters did cause some problems for the crew.

Upon their return, it should be noted, the Gemini 5's pilots, Gordo Cooper and Pete Conrad, looked tired, haggard and unshaven, with their hair greasy and matted. In other words, they looked exactly as you would expect guys who had just spent a week in a cramped spaceship with no means of attending to basic matters of hygiene to look. Below, left to right, are photos of Conrad after returning from his eight-day mission, Lovell after returning from a four-day mission aboard Gemini 12, and Lovell again toward the end of his fourteen-day flight on Gemini 7.





The Apollo astronauts, on the other hand, all arrived home looking rested, shaved and fresh faced, as though they had just returned from a day at the spa. Apparently they found room to include a shower and various other amenities on those Apollo spacecraft.



The next scheduled launch was Gemini 6, set to take flight in late October of 1965. The flight was postponed, however, due to the failure of an unmanned Agena craft launched as a docking target. On December 4, Gemini 7, with Frank Borman and Jim Lovell on board, began a grueling fourteen-day stay in low-Earth orbit. About a week later, Gemini 6 was once again ready for launch, but that launch was aborted when an engine shut down, narrowly averting a fatal explosion on the pad.

Gemini 6 finally got into low-Earth orbit on December 11 and remained there for just over one day. During that time, Gemini 6 allegedly performed a rendezvous maneuver with Gemini 7, the two spacecraft remaining side-by-side for some 5.5 hours while traveling at 17,000 miles per hour. Curiously, there was a launch of a military rocket in between the launches of Gemini 6 and Gemini 7, and Lovell has said that that launch was connected in some unspecified manner to the mission of Gemini 7.

Gemini 8, helmed by Neil Armstrong and David Scott, blasted off on March 16, 1966. The goal of the mission was to test rendezvous and docking procedures and to achieve the first successful docking between a Gemini capsule and an unmanned Agena craft. Curiously, the two pilots chosen for this complex mission were both rookies. The crew that had originally been slated to fly the mission, Elliot See and Charles Bassett, were killed on February 28, 1966, just days before the launch, when See, one of the nation's top pilots, slammed a T-38 Talon into the side of a building in St. Louis.

Gemini 8 reportedly succeeded in docking with the Agena target, but trouble began almost immediately. The conjoined spacecraft began to tumble violently end-over-end, forcing Armstrong to jettison the Agena. That, however, only caused the Gemini capsule to tumble even more violently. Armstrong finally had to resort to firing the rockets used for reentry positioning to stabilize the craft, which necessitated immediately aborting the mission. The capsule splashed down in the Pacific, a half-a-world away from its target in the Atlantic.

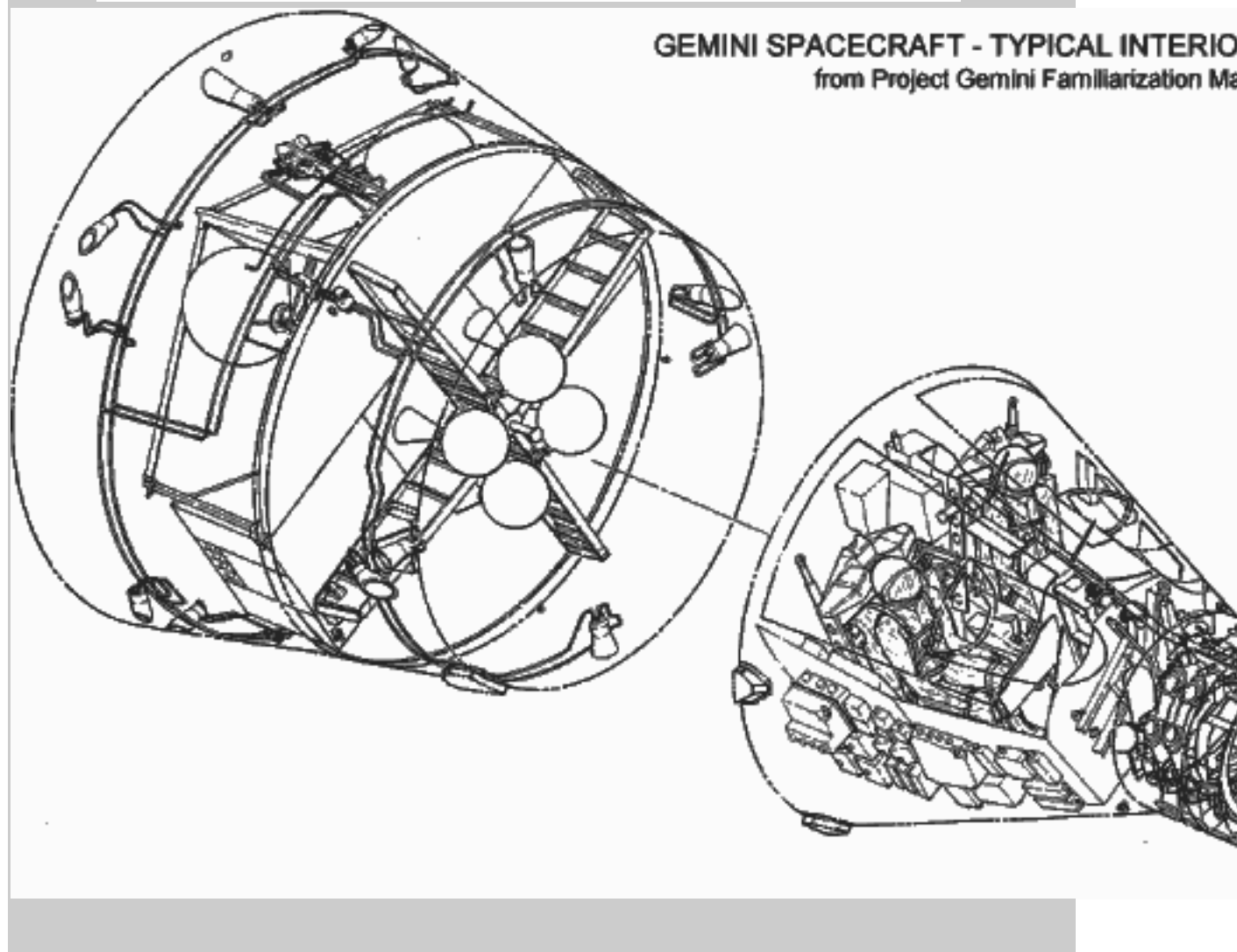
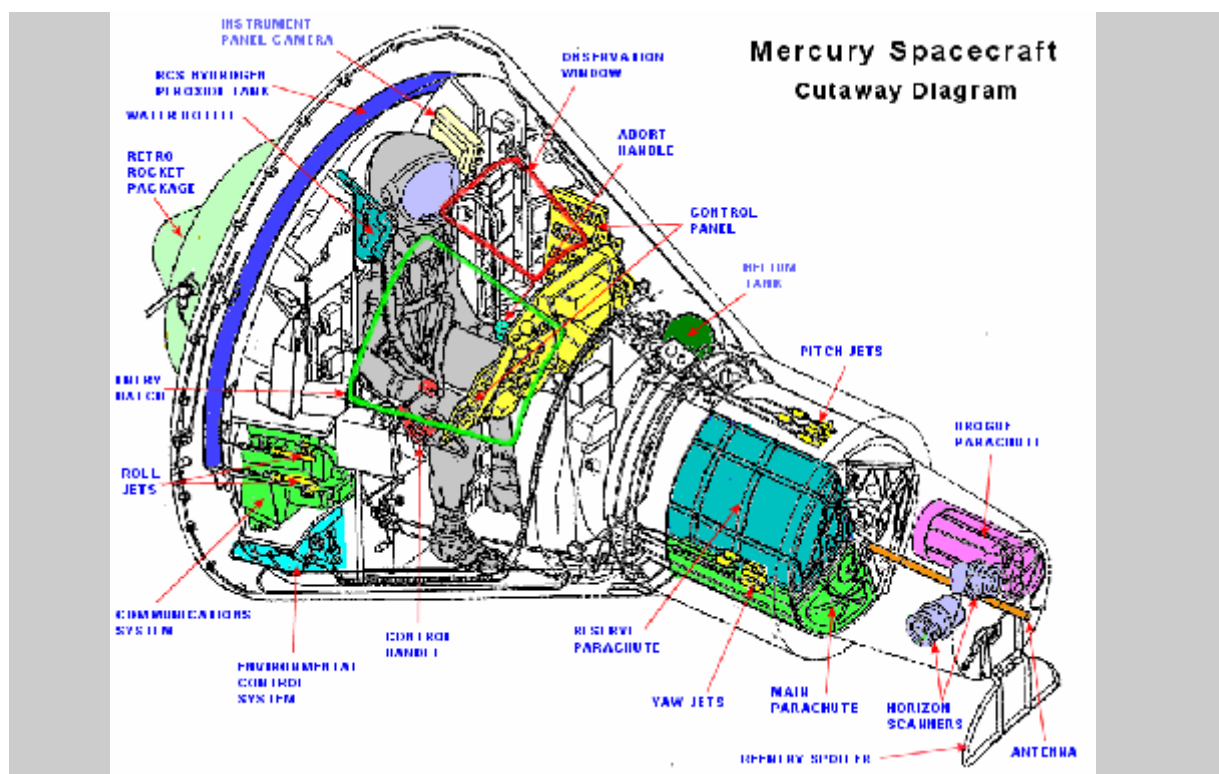
On June 3, 1966, Gemini 9, piloted by Tom Stafford and Gene Cernan, took flight. The launch had been postponed due to the failure of another Agena target. The goal was, once again, to dock with an unmanned Agena craft. That docking failed to materialize, however, when yet another Agena target malfunctioned. This was also the flight on which Cernan took his nearly fatal space-walk (there was debate on the ground over whether he should be cut loose to drift in space or left tethered to burn up upon reentry if he couldn't make it back in).

Following Gemini 9, there were only three manned Gemini missions left and the United States had thus far failed to come anywhere close to mastering either docking procedures or EVAs, both of which would be absolutely essential for the success of the proposed Apollo missions.

Gemini 10, with John Young and Michael Collins at the wheel, lifted off on July 18, 1966 and remained in orbit for just under three days. Young and Collins reportedly achieved the first successful, stable docking of a Gemini capsule with an Agena target. Collins also performed a largely unsuccessful EVA, though not as disastrous as Cernan's on the previous flight.

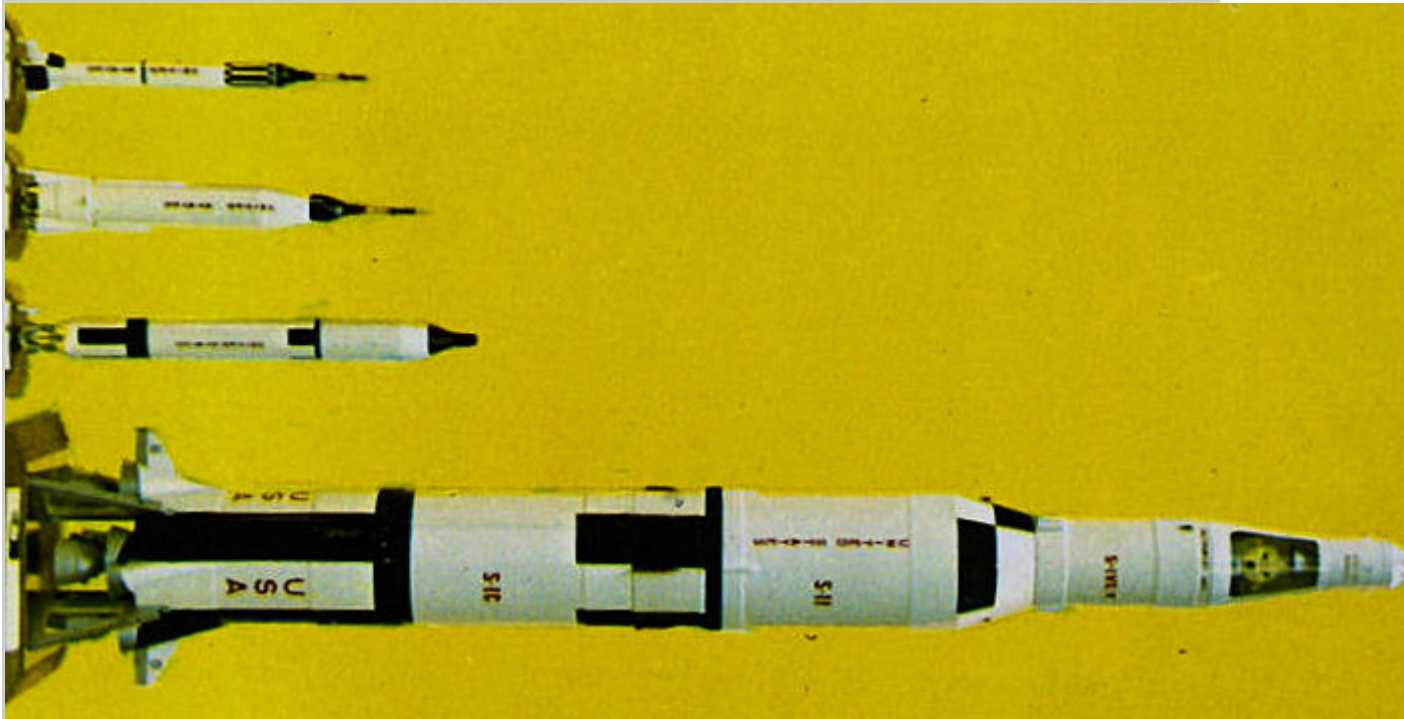
Gemini 11, piloted by Charles Conrad and Richard Gordon, took to the skies on September 12, 1966 and, like Gemini 10, remained in orbit for just under three days. And like Gemini 10, the mission included a docking maneuver with an Agena target and a less than fully successful space-walk (by Gordon).

The final Gemini mission, Gemini 12, put Jim Lovell and Buzz Aldrin into low-Earth orbit for just under four days. Aldrin completed the first fully successful space-walk and the two pilots once again practiced docking with an Agena target. NASA had come a long way since shooting Alan Shepard out of a cannon in May of 1961, but the Moon still seemed like a far-off goal. The progression from Mercury to Gemini – from a single-occupancy capsule to a somewhat more sophisticated, double-occupancy capsule, requiring a somewhat larger launch vehicle – was a natural one. NASA's next step, however, was going to be more of a quantum leap.





The Saturn V rocket bore little resemblance to any previous launch vehicles. As Apollo flight director Gene Kranz observed, “It was a new spacecraft. It was something that we had to learn from the ground up – that we had to learn from scratch.” It was a massive, and massively complex, spacecraft. The Saturn V was so much larger than its predecessors that all previous manned launch vehicles – the six Mercury and ten Gemini vehicles – could fit inside a single Saturn V casing.



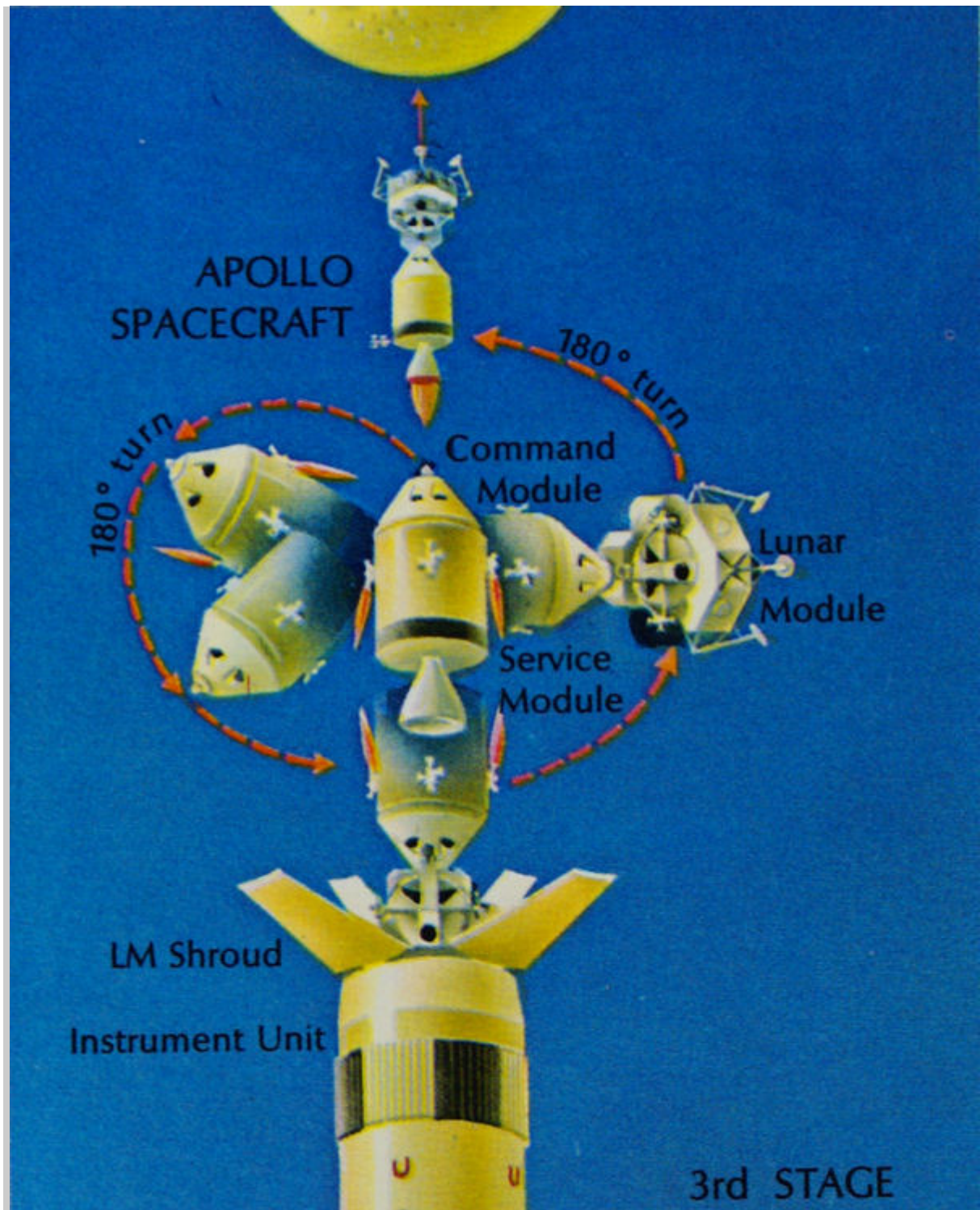
A fully assembled, launch-ready Saturn V stood 363 feet tall and weighed in at roughly 6,000,000 pounds, 90% of which was fuel weight. Depending upon who is telling the story, it contained either 6,000,000 or 9,000,000 parts. There were three disposable launch stages, atop which sat the lunar, service and command modules, which was then capped with a launch escape system that was jettisoned shortly after lift-off.

The 138-foot tall first stage featured five massive F-1 rocket engines, each of which consumed three tons of fuel per second. They were fed by a 331,000-gallon tank of liquid oxygen and a 203,000-gallon tank of refined kerosene, all of which was consumed in just two-and-a-half minutes, generating some 7,500,000 pounds of thrust (160,000,000 horsepower).

After that first stage fell away, at an altitude of approximately thirty-five miles, the 82-foot long second stage, powered by five J-2 rocket engines, took over. The J-2s burned a combination of liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen, propelling the ship to an altitude of 115 miles. After the second stage

dropped away, the 61-foot long third stage, powered by a single J-2 engine, took over, putting the spacecraft into low-Earth orbit.

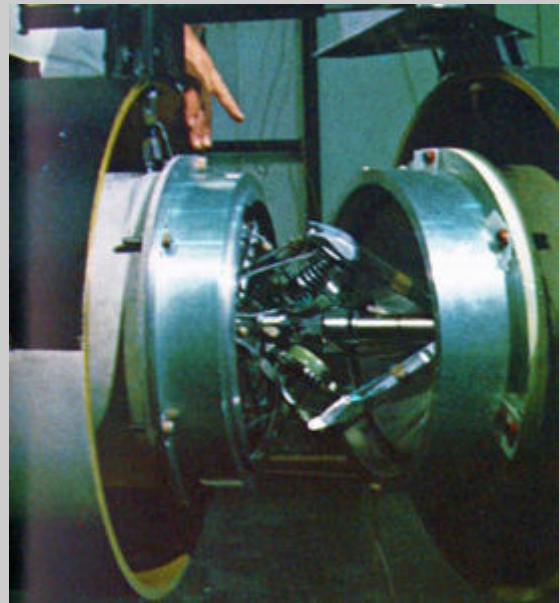
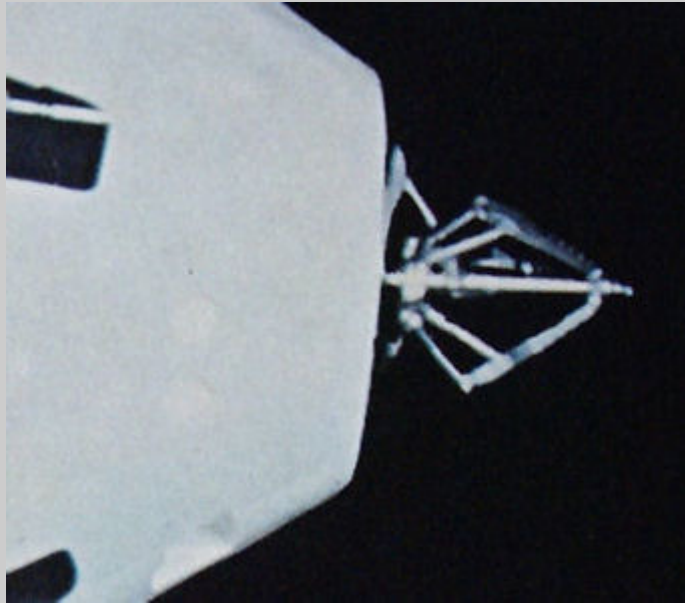
As *Time-Life* noted, the third stage “will not be jettisoned at this time; instead, three hours later it will be restarted to fire the Apollo toward the moon. At 10,350 miles from Earth, the command module, powered by its service module, will separate from the third stage, make a half-circle turn back toward the third stage, as the lunar module shroud of the third stage opens. The command module will dock with the lunar module, which is to ferry the astronauts between the command module and the moon, then back it free of the third stage. After completing another half-circle turn, the two modules, nose to nose, will head toward the moon.”



Sounds easy enough. I can see why they were able to nail it every single time, unlike the problems they had with those troublesome Agena craft. *Time-Life* also fills us in on the details of the “probe and drogue” docking mechanism: “The probe, a 10-inch cylinder extending from the nose of the command module, must be inserted into a cone-shaped receptacle, the drogue of the LM ... As the probe finds its mark, automatic spring latches lock the two together. The whole probe-and-drogue assembly will be removed, clearing the tunnel through which [the astronauts] will enter the LM. Inside the command module, [the command module pilot] flips a switch that frees the LM.”



Pictured below are the command module's docking probe, the LEM's drogue (with the LEM allegedly in Earth orbit on the alleged Apollo 9 mission, in yet another spectacular shot from NASA's collection), and a close up of how the mechanism was supposed to work. Curiously left unexplained was how, with the probe-and-drogue assembly having been removed, the LEM was able to dock with the command module *the second time*, upon its return from the lunar surface.



I am sure though that the pud-pullers over at the [BAUT forum](#) will be able to explain it. Maybe they can also explain why it is that the space shuttle never went to the Moon. I was thinking about that the other day as I was reading another heaping pile of 'debunker' blather about how, once you're into low-Earth orbit, 90% of the work of getting to the Moon is already done.

The ‘debunkers,’ you see, claim that comparing the distance astronauts travel into space today (200 miles) with the distance they traveled back in the magical 1960s (234,000 miles) is entirely unfair because it is, as any fool knows, during that first 200 miles that all the heavy lifting is done. Once you’re in low-Earth orbit, it is a fairly easy matter to briefly fire the engines and ‘slingshot’ out of orbit and set a course for the Moon. And getting back is just as easy – just ‘slingshot’ around the Moon and cruise on back to Earth. It hardly even requires any fuel. It’s just a matter of, you know, falling through the void of space.

If that is the case, however, then how come none of the space shuttles, during the more than a quarter-century that the program has been in operation, has ever done a fly-by of the Moon? The Apollo 13 crew allegedly made the flight in a lunar module composed of Popsicle sticks and Scotch tape, and yet the obviously vastly more sophisticated space shuttle can’t make it there and back? Really?!

Why couldn’t it, on any one of its missions, have just used the old ‘slingshot’ approach to go to the Moon and back? And please, let’s not trot out the old “there was no reason to do that as there was nothing to gain” excuse, because that is clearly a complete load of horseshit. The space shuttle is far better shielded than the Apollo craft were, it carries plenty of fuel and plenty of provisions to last for the duration of the trip. Indeed, today’s astronauts should be able to travel to the Moon and back in relative comfort.

So why has it never been done? Apollo 8 did it all the back in 1968, which I started to talk about at the top of this post, before getting hopelessly sidetracked. More on that next time.

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# the Center for an Informed

## *Wagging the Moondoggie, Part XI*

*December 30, 2009*

*by David McGowan*

“To see the Earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the Earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold – brothers who know now they are truly brothers.”  
Archibald MacLeish, Skull & Bonesman (and uncle of Bruce Dern, for you LC fans), reflecting on the alleged flight of Apollo 8

In the first of this series of posts, I mentioned that the Apollo story was connected to the Laurel Canyon story by way of a facility known as Lookout Mountain Laboratory, the intelligence community’s top-secret, state-of-the-art film studio nestled high in the Hollywood Hills. As it turns out, there is another interesting connection as well: during the span of precisely one month, during the infamous summer of 1969, the Laurel Canyon and Apollo stories reached a simultaneous climax, of sorts.

On July 16, 1969, Apollo 11, the flight that would allegedly land men on the Moon for the first time, took flight. Five days later, on July 21, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin allegedly first set foot on lunar soil. Three days later, the trio of Apollo astronauts triumphantly returned home to a hero’s welcome. Exactly one week later, the first letter from the so-called Zodiac killer was received by authorities. Eight days after that, on the night of August 8, 1969, Sharon Tate and four others were slaughtered in Roman Polanski’s Benedict Canyon home. The next night, Rosemary and Leno LaBianca were carved up in their Los Feliz home. All of these killings would later be attributed to canyon regular Charlie Manson and his Family. Less than a week after the killings, some of Laurel Canyon’s premier bands took the stage at Woodstock to celebrate the other side of the canyon scene.

It was a time of supreme weirdness, with extreme and very high-profile violence weaving its way through the flower-power scenes in both Los Angeles and San Francisco, while 234,000 miles away, squeaky-clean astronauts who bore little resemblance to members of the Woodstock generation allegedly beamed back live footage from the Moon.



Anyway, I think when we left off we were discussing the highly improbable flight of Apollo 8, the very first manned launch of a Saturn V, which took flight, as I previously mentioned, on the winter solstice of 1968. The mighty Apollo spacecraft, which had failed on its last unmanned outing, purportedly flew all the way to the Moon, did ten quick laps around Earth's nearest neighbor, and then flew back home, with every one of its 9,000,000 parts performing flawlessly.

Thanks for that was due in part, according to the official Apollo legend, to a band of surfers in Seal Beach. North American Aviation, you see, had a bit of a problem with keeping the liquefied hydrogen and oxygen in the Saturn V's second-stage from boiling in the Florida sun. The proposed solution was to insulate the fuel tanks with honeycomb insulation, but NASA's engineers had trouble keeping the insulation from popping back off. The solution to that problem was to hire local surfers, who, according to *Moon Machines*, brought with them a "special skill set."

NASA claimed, by the way, to shoot for 99.9% accuracy in the manufacture of its Apollo spacecraft, which shouldn't have been a problem for a workforce composed of Nazi rocket scientists, bra seamstresses and surfers. Even if that lofty goal had been attained, however, that would still have left 9,000 defective parts per launch vehicle (6,000 if the figure of 6,000,000 parts is correct).

The first alleged live broadcast from the Moon came during prime time hours on Christmas Eve, though I'm sure that was just a chance occurrence. The three astronauts allegedly riding aboard Apollo 8 (Frank Borman, William Anders, and the ever-popular Jim Lovell), in what was billed as a purely spontaneous gesture, took turns reading aloud ten verses from the book of Genesis, which they followed up with: "Good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas and God bless all of you – all of you on the good Earth." Obviously the Gideon people had thoughtfully left one of their bibles in the capsule sometime before launch.

The impeccable timing of the 'historic' Apollo 8 broadcast, reportedly heard by one of every four people on the planet, would set a standard that would be adhered to by all subsequent Apollo flights. The very first Moonwalk by Neil and Buzz was broadcast ('live' of course) at 9:00 PM Eastern time, as though it were a Monday Night Football game. Prime time Moonwalks became a staple of the Apollo program, to such an extent that it was not at all uncommon for the networks to be deluged with complaints when a popular weekly sitcom was preempted for yet another fake 'live' Moonwalk.

After the second fake Moon landing, NASA began adding exciting new elements to the Apollo missions to combat public apathy. Apollo 13, of course, added the element of danger.

Apollo 14 brought us the Moon in Technicolor, with the first color video broadcasts. Apollo 15 kept us entertained with the addition of a Moon buggy. And Apollo 17 featured the first, and only, spectacular night launch of a Saturn V rocket.



Apollo 8 was quickly followed by Apollo 9, which was originally scheduled to lift-off on February 28, 1969, just two short months after the crew of Apollo 8 had splashed down. Luckily, the water in Southern California is a little cold during the winter months and the waves aren't so good, so the surfers down in Seal Beach were probably able to put in lots of overtime to meet the demanding production schedule.

Apollo 9 was the first Saturn V flight to allegedly have a lunar module stowed away onboard. The mission allegedly featured the first docking maneuvers with, and the very first flight of, a lunar module, albeit in low-Earth orbit rather than in lunar orbit. Apollo 9 was also allegedly the first flight whose crew donned the newly-designed Apollo/Playtex spacesuits.

All things considered, Apollo 9's ten-day flight in low-Earth orbit was largely a letdown after the previous crew had allegedly flown all the way to the Moon and back (and done so, like true cowboys, without the new magic suits). There was one very odd thing though, never mentioned in the official histories of the space program, that happened during the flight of Apollo 9.

While lounging in the command module, unencumbered by spacesuits, gloves and helmets, and with the luxury of being able to hold their NASA-issue cameras in their hands, the crew (James McDivitt, David Scott, and Rusty Schweickart) took photos of each other that are unfocused, poorly composed, and not particularly well exposed – which is, of course, exactly the results that one would expect from amateur photographers using cameras that lacked viewfinders.

However, after those very same astronauts donned their suits, gloves and helmets, and then ventured out for a spacewalk, making it rather difficult for them to stabilize themselves (and therefore their cameras), something truly wondrous and magical happened: the crew of Apollo 9 suddenly gained the ability to shoot absolutely stunning compositions that look like they

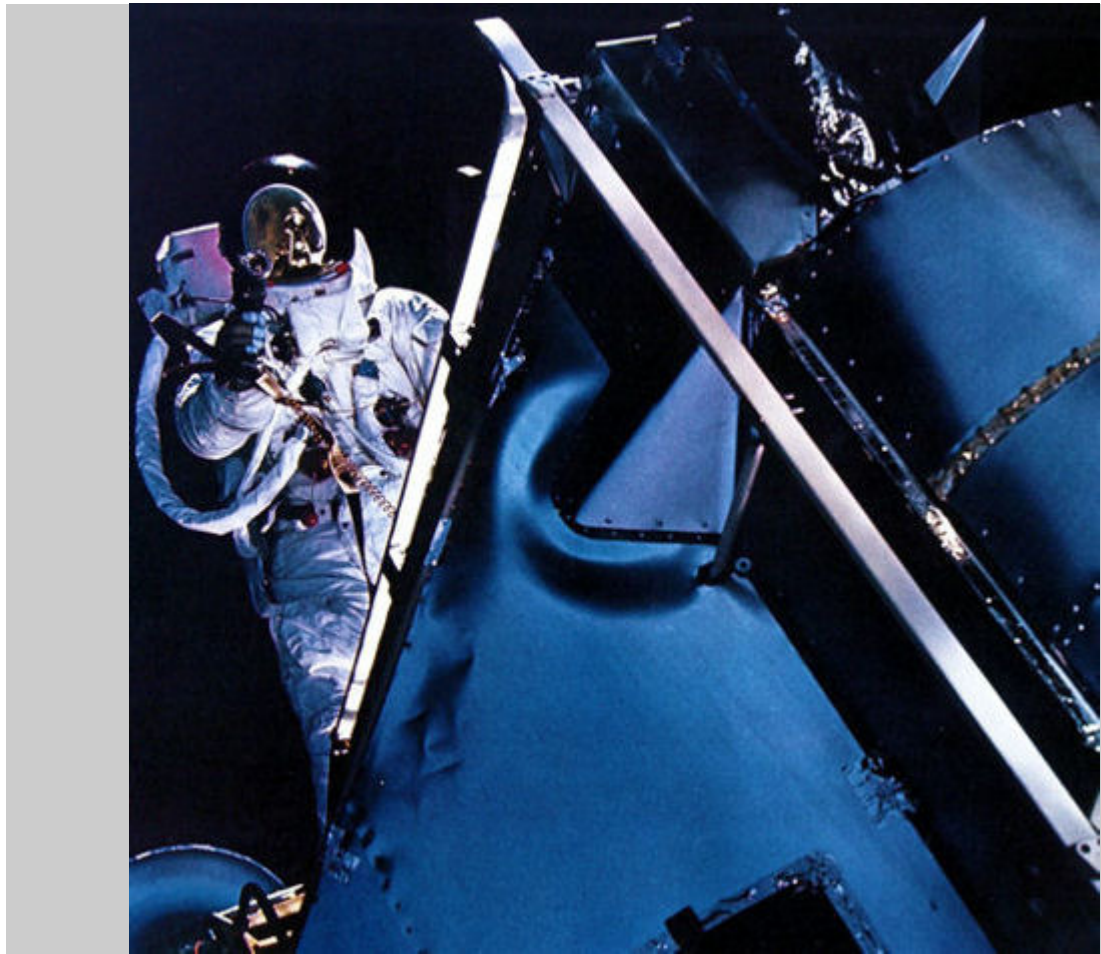
were professionally produced in a studio. Though it's hard to pick a favorite, the one featuring the Earth's reflection perfectly framed in one of the actor's helmet visors is pretty impressive.

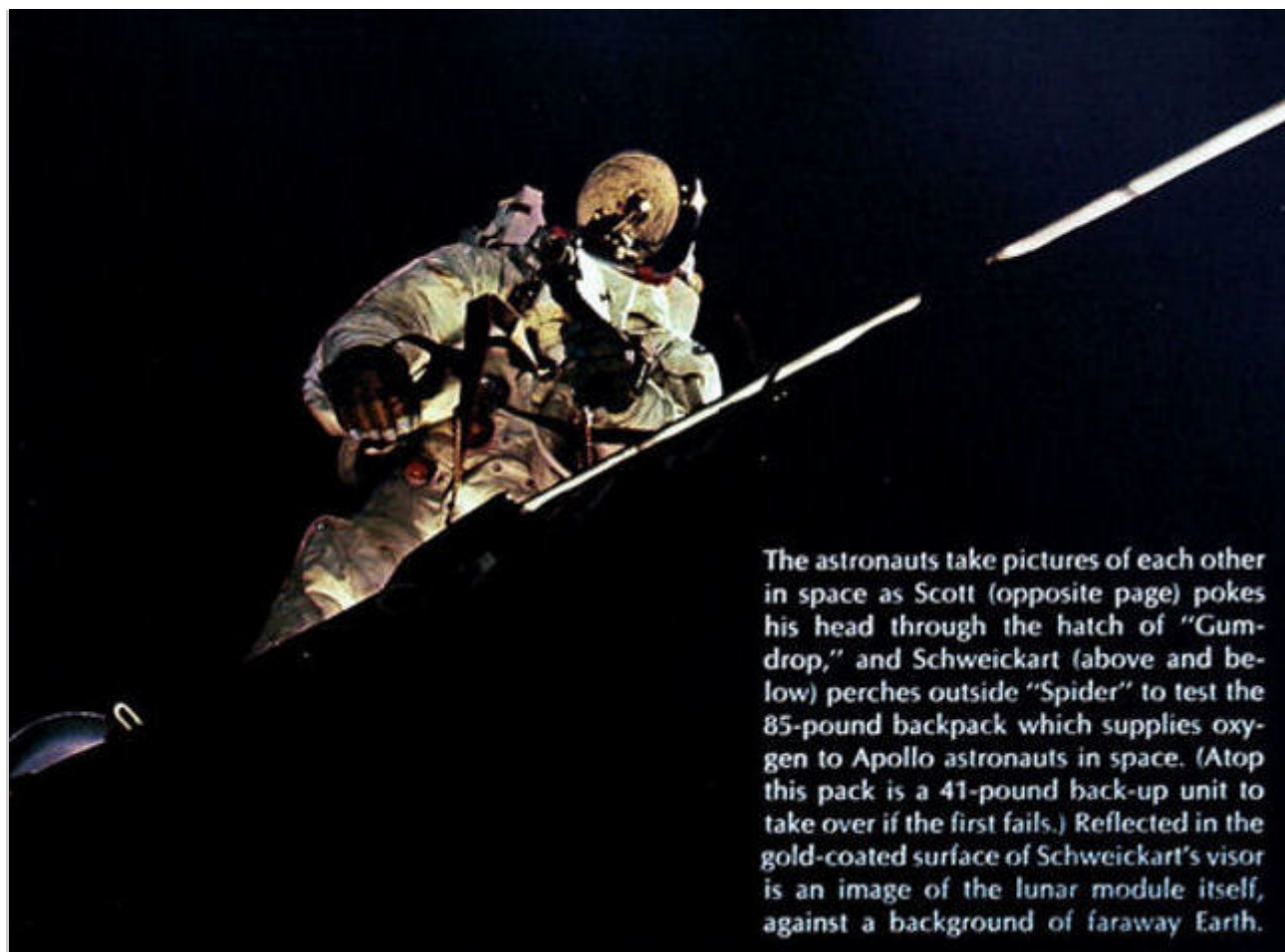












The astronauts take pictures of each other in space as Scott (opposite page) pokes his head through the hatch of "Gumdrop," and Schweickart (above and below) perches outside "Spider" to test the 85-pound backpack which supplies oxygen to Apollo astronauts in space. (Atop this pack is a 41-pound back-up unit to take over if the first fails.) Reflected in the gold-coated surface of Schweickart's visor is an image of the lunar module itself, against a background of faraway Earth.



All of the astronauts on future Apollo missions, of course, proved themselves to be exceptional photographers as well, but only when operating under the most difficult of conditions. Neil Armstrong, the very first photojournalist to allegedly work on the Moon, that most foreign of environments, set the bar exceedingly high for all who were to follow. HJP Arnold, considered to be one of the world's foremost authorities on space photography before his death in June 2006, once said of the film magazine allegedly shot by Armstrong:

“That sequence of images on the lunar surface, taken mainly by Armstrong of course with that one camera ... That film probably I would say has never, ever been bettered, whether on the Moon or subsequently. Almost every one of those relatively small number of images taken by Armstrong appear to be splendidly composed. You remember the classic face-on picture of Aldrin with his visor reflecting the entire landing scene – the lunar module, the flag, the TV camera, and Armstrong taking the picture, uh, reflected in the visor? It's a marvelous picture!”

Despite all the acclaim he has received for his exploits as an astronaut, Neil Armstrong clearly has been unjustly denied recognition of his astounding abilities as a photographer. Some may argue that he clearly was not playing in the same league as, say, an Ansel Adams, but I beg to

differ. Adams created some awe-inspiring work, to be sure, but could he have done so while wearing a spacesuit, gloves and helmet, and with his camera mounted to his chest, and while acclimating himself to an environment that featured no air, greatly reduced gravity, and extreme heat and cold?

I think not.

Speaking of staged photos, by the way, take a look at the photo below, allegedly shot on the Moon by the last men to set foot there, the crew of Apollo 17 (Gene Cernan, Ronald Evans, and Jack Schmitt). It reminds me of something I've seen before, possibly some type of a symbol, but I can't quite place it. (For more fun with Apollo images, drop by Jack White's site at [http://www.aulis.com/jackstudies\\_index1.html](http://www.aulis.com/jackstudies_index1.html), where you will find a more thorough analysis of photo irregularities than I have seen anywhere else.)





Just two months after the return of Apollo 9, NASA sent Apollo 10 off to the Moon, with Tom Stafford, John Young and Gene Cernan onboard. The space agency obviously wanted to get the fake preliminary flights out of the way as quickly as possible so as to get on to the main event. The launch pace would slow considerably once the fake landings began with the next flight, Apollo 11, which blasted off just seven weeks after the return of Apollo 10.

Apollo 10, the third manned launch of a Saturn V, once again allegedly went to the Moon, this time with a lunar module mounted to the nose of the command module. The Apollo 10

mission allegedly included everything that later missions would experience short of actually landing on the lunar surface. Once allegedly in lunar orbit, the lunar module was deployed and flown down fairly close to the surface, before returning to and successfully docking with the command and service modules.

Having endured the perilous initial launch, and then the quarter-million-mile flight to the Moon, followed by the successful deployment and flight of the LEM, and having gotten to within pissing distance of being the first men to create those historic first footprints on the Moon, it would naturally have been tempting to ignore mission control and set down for a quick stroll into history. To prevent this, according to the official mythology, NASA diabolically short-fueled the LEM for the Apollo 10 mission.

There was, of course, no possibility that some unforeseen circumstances might have necessitated the use of that additional fuel, or necessitated a landing on the Moon, which would have been a bit of a PR nightmare for the agency. Walter Cronkite would have had to break the news to the American people: “The crew of Apollo 10 unexpectedly became the first men to set foot on the Moon just moments ago, and we have been promised live footage momentarily. Unfortunately, their spacecraft was deliberately short-fueled so they will not be able to make the return flight to dock with the mothership and both astronauts will soon die. This should make for some riveting TV though, so stay tuned.”

The last of the major Apollo contracts to be awarded was for the ever-popular lunar rovers, *aka* Moon buggies. The initial idea for a lunar vehicle is generally credited to Walt Disney’s favorite Nazi, Wernher von Braun, who envisioned a mobile, pressurized lab weighing some four tons, capable of carrying enough provisions to keep two astronauts alive for up to two weeks. The concept, dubbed MoLab, would have required the launch of a separate Saturn V rocket, so the idea was dropped as being too expensive (although NASA seems to have had a virtually inexhaustible supply of Saturn Vs; when the Apollo program was scrubbed, NASA already had all the hardware built for flights 18, 19 and 20 – and had the crews trained as well.)

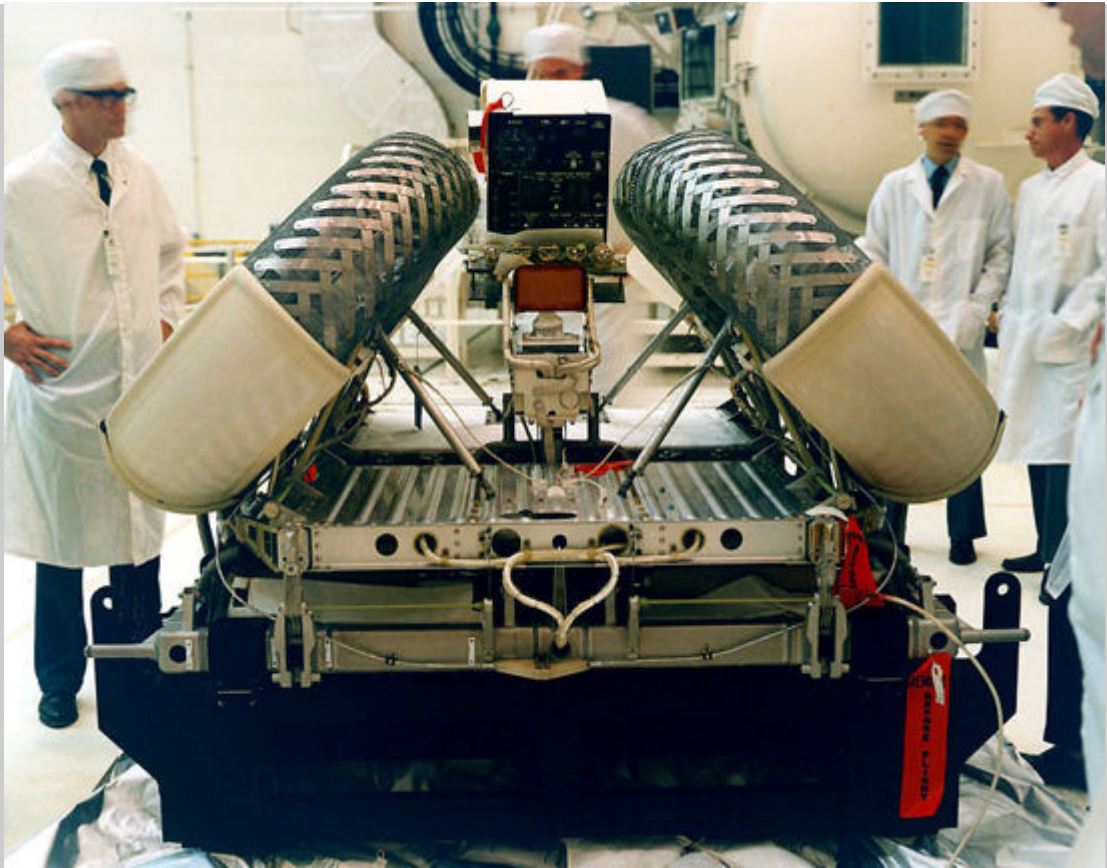
NASA supposedly gave up entirely on the idea of placing a vehicle on the Moon, but General Motors’ Defense Research Laboratories purportedly soldiered on, putting the company’s own money into research and development of the vehicle. As the story goes, NASA told the team at GM that if they could somehow come up with a way of fitting an operational vehicle into an impossibly small lunar module equipment bay, the agency might consider incorporating the vehicle into future Apollo missions.



Speaking of the lunar modules, by the way, I happened to stumble across the photo below of the LEM's mighty descent engine, which, as can be clearly seen, would have hardly taken up any room at all in the spacious spacecraft's descent stage. Its fuel tanks wouldn't have required much space either, so there should have been plenty of room left to stow a folding dune buggy in a curiously empty equipment bay.



Below is a NASA-approved image of the rover folded up and ready to pack into its assigned equipment bay, along with a photo of the folded rover allegedly stowed away on a LEM that has clearly seen better days. And here is a brief [video clip](#) of the deployment of the folded rover being demonstrated, presumably at the manufacturing plant.



As can be clearly seen, particularly in the video clip, the rover, as initially deployed, was far from complete. It seems to be missing such things as a floor pan, and seats, and cameras, and antennae, and battery packs, and various other components – which raises a few questions, such as where were all the other rover parts stowed? How many empty equipment bays were available to accommodate all the various rover components? And how long exactly did it take the astronauts, given the limitations imposed by their suits and gloves, to deploy and fully assemble a Moon buggy?

GM's crafty R&D team, led by project manager Sam Romano and chief engineer Ferenc Pavlics, supposedly came up with the innovative folding rover concept in less than a month, and, in July of 1969, as Armstrong and Aldrin were allegedly taking man's first steps on the Moon, GM was awarded the contract to design and build the rovers. GM quickly teamed with Boeing and got to work, with two significant challenges to overcome – the rover must fit into the assigned bay, and the total weight was to be kept to a maximum of 400 pounds. Also, the team had to move from concept drawings to mission-ready rover in just 17 months.

As with all other aspects of the Apollo program, those lofty goals proved surprisingly easy to achieve. By early 1971, GM and Boeing had already delivered their first mission-ready rover to NASA for final testing and approval. On July 31, 1971, just two years after the contract had been awarded, what remains to this day the only manned vehicle to allegedly land on an extraterrestrial body began kicking up Moon dust.

The finished product looked not unlike an Earth-based dune buggy, albeit with the unique ability to neatly fold away. The vehicle featured simultaneous front and rear steering and steel-mesh tires mounted on wheels that were each driven by their own separate motors. Power was supposedly provided by an array of batteries mounted on the front end of the rover.

Since no one really knew what kind of a vehicle would be required to drive on the Moon, early conceptual rovers ran the gamut from vehicles with massively oversized wheels to those propelled by tank-like tracks to Archimedean screws that would be able to burrow through the lunar dust like mechanical moles. Luckily, through extensive research and development, the Apollo team was able to deduce exactly which design components would allow the rovers to operate with maximum efficiency on the lunar terrain.

Or so the story goes. In reality, the rover team obviously had no time to do much at all in the way of research, development and testing. The Soviets, on the other hand, took the development of their Moon vehicle very seriously – seriously enough to spend an entire decade researching, developing and relentlessly fine-tuning every aspect of their robotic rover.

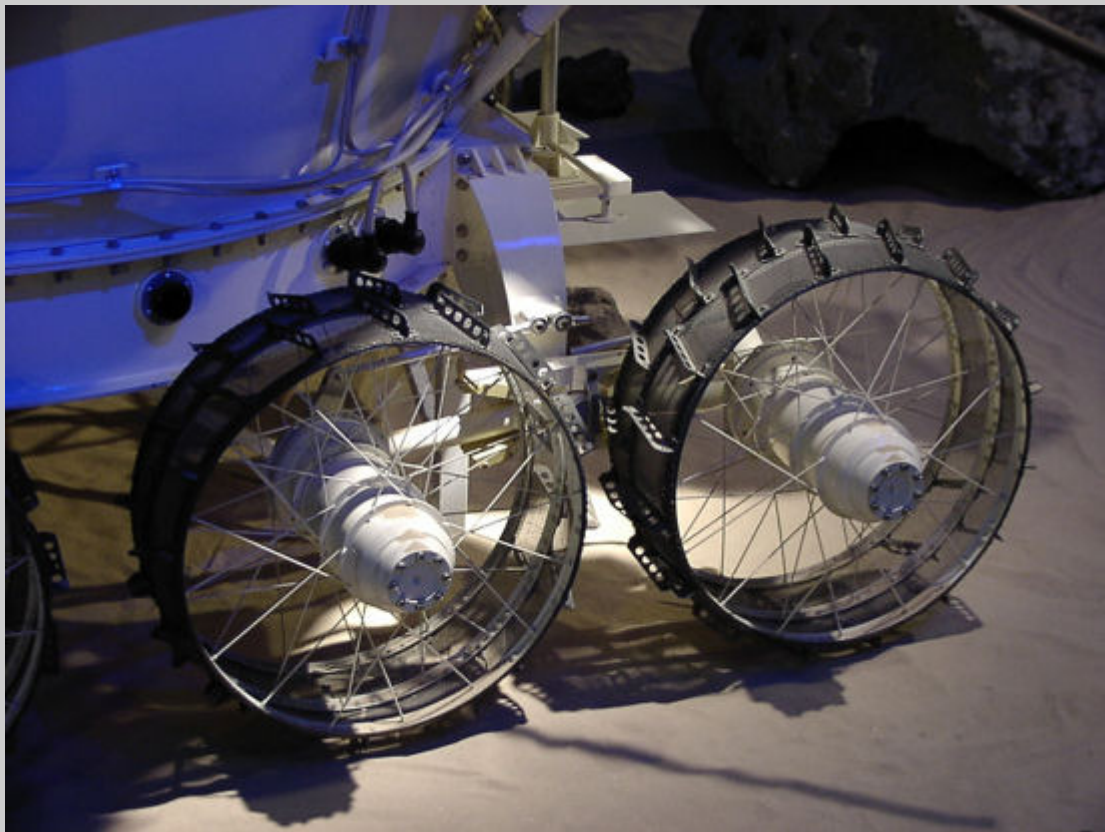
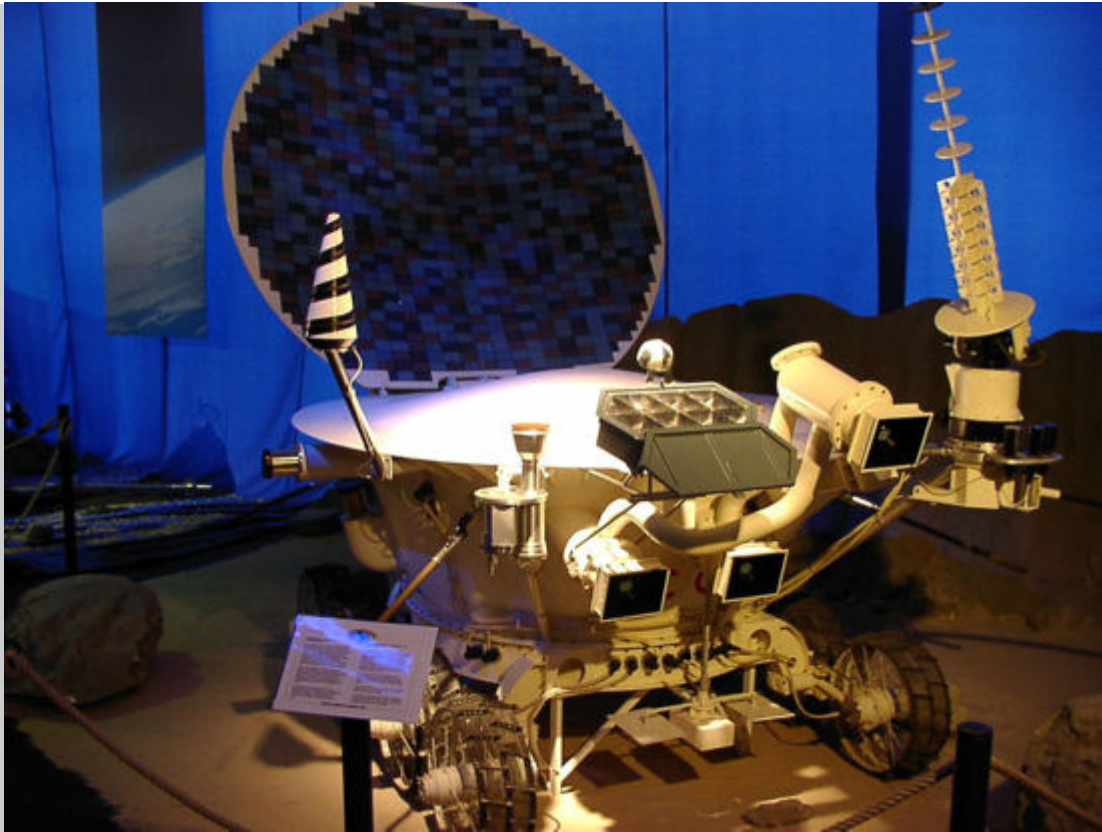
Dubbed the Lunokhod (the English translation of which is “Michael Jackson” ... err, wait a minute, make that “Moonwalker”), the Soviet rover was an engineering marvel that was outfitted with an array of both still and television cameras as well as a wide assortment of testing equipment, including an X-ray spectrometer, an X-ray telescope, soil testing instruments, an astrophotometer, a laser retroreflector, a fluorescence spectrometer, and a magnetometer.

Lunokhod II, deployed in January of 1973, some thirty-seven years ago, to this day holds the record for having traversed further on an extraterrestrial body (about 23 miles) than any other robotic rover – considerably further than America’s two Mars Pathfinder vehicles combined.

So serious were the Soviets about testing their rover that, in the summer of 1968, they built a secret Lunodrom (Moondrome) in the remote village of Shkolnoye. Spanning some two acres, the Moondrome featured craters up to 50 feet in diameter and fake lunar rocks of all shapes and sizes. It would have been, needless to say, an excellent place to create fake Moon photos and television footage – though conventional wisdom, of course, holds that Soviet scientists and American scientists didn’t play well together in those days.

It’s hard though not to conclude that NASA basically appropriated the lunar rover research done by the Soviets as their own. According to a French documentary (*Tank on the Moon*), the Soviets did indeed spend many long years researching all the various means of locomotion that NASA claimed to study as well. And after doing so, Russian engineers (led by Alexander Kemurdjian, who NASA later consulted with on its Pathfinder project) came up with many of the same key design elements that would be utilized on NASA’s lunar rovers, such as the mesh tires and the independently powered wheels.





The Lunokhod vehicles had eight wheels, each with its own independent motor, suspension and brake. The rovers were 'driven' by a five-man team here on planet Earth, using panoramic images beamed back in real-time to guide the robotic vehicles. The design team

had developed a special lubricant that would perform in a vacuum and they had enclosed each wheel motor in a pressurized housing. The vehicle's batteries recharged via a collection of solar cells on the inside of the craft's lid, which was kept open during the lunar day. During the frigid lunar night, the rover hibernated, kept warm by an internal radioactive heat source.

Lunokhod I set down on the Moon on November 17, 1970, just a few months before NASA took possession of the first mission-ready lunar rover. When that first rover allegedly arrived on the Moon eight months later, in July of 1971, Lunokhod I was still traversing the lunar landscape.

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# the Center for an Informed

## ***Wagging the Moondoggie, Part XII***

***February 23, 2010***

***by David McGowan***

*“As launch windows open and close, the next missions move forward. Two test flights of the lunar landing vehicle, and then the proposed landing on the Moon. And plans are in the making now which include fly-bys of other planets; visits to what Dr. Bunche calls neighbors.”*

From *Debrief: Apollo 8*, a NASA promotional film circa 1968

Just a few weeks ago, NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden boldly unveiled the agency’s new vision: “Imagine trips to Mars that take weeks instead of nearly a year, people fanning out across the inner solar system, exploring the moon, asteroids and Mars nearly simultaneously in a steady stream of firsts.” (“Launching a Broader Vision for NASA,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 2010)

Yeah, and then imagine visiting a distant moon populated by ten-foot-tall blue people, which is slightly more plausible than NASA’s grandiose dreams.

Bolden’s ambitious proclamation was intended to put a positive spin on NASA’s acknowledgment that the Constellation Program, which President George W. Jetson had promised was going to put us back on the Moon by 2020, was being canceled. I’m sure we would have made it though were it not for the fact that President Blackbush doesn’t seem to want to fund the effort. Sure, he increased the agency’s budget for 2011, but he didn’t, you know, increase it *enough*. So the Constellation Program, which taxpayers have already reportedly shelled out at least \$9,000,000,000 for, and which will reportedly cost another \$2,500,000,000 to cancel, has been tossed on the scrap heap.

According to Bolden, things weren’t really going all that well anyway: “Currently, [Bolden] said, the 5-year-old Constellation program is burning through billions of dollars and falling further behind schedule. The program couldn’t get American astronauts back to the moon until at least 2028 ... ‘So as much as we would not like it to be the case ... the truth is that we were not on a path to get back to the moon’s surface,’ Bolden said.”

Well, were we at least on a path to put together a better simulation of landing on the Moon?

Taking into account that the Constellation Program was begun in 2005, and that the Apollo program allegedly landed men on the Moon in a mere eight years, it would appear that it wouldn't actually take twice as long to get back to the Moon with today's technology, as previously advertised, but would actually take *at least three times as long*! If, that is, we were able to man-up and follow through with the plan, which obviously isn't going to happen.

But be assured that that's only because we don't have the money. Otherwise, we totally would have made it back to the Moon. Possibly in less than twenty years. By which time all the technology that we know and love today will be as obsolete as pagers and Betamax video recorders, and trips to the Moon will still be something that we only talk about – sometimes nostalgically, as we fondly recall the fabled glory days from a decade few will remember, and sometimes with an eye to the future, a oft-promised future that never seems to arrive.

In May of 1966, after spending five years working on the Apollo project, we were just a-year-and-a-half away from the launch of the first Saturn V. In 2010, after spending five years working on the Constellation project, NASA has nothing to present to us but a hefty bill – which just goes to show that lack of technological sophistication and space-flight experience can apparently be easily overcome with a little determination ... and a couple rolls of duct tape.

I was thinking, by the way, that if the idea of an Apollo reenactment were properly pitched to the right 'reality television' producers, we could probably make it back to the Moon in just a year or so. There was quite a bit of Apollo hardware that was left over after the sudden demise of the program, much of which is now in various aerospace museums – and aerospace museums tend to be run by aerospace geeks who would like nothing more than to see the U.S. triumphantly return to the Moon. It shouldn't be that hard then to convince them to donate that hardware for it to be put to use for the purpose it was originally intended to serve.

We're going to need to assemble all our donated hardware, of course, and for that we can turn to the guys at *Monster Garage*, who should be able to slap it together for us in a couple of afternoons. There will undoubtedly be some missing and/or non-operational parts, but that shouldn't slow things down much; we can just give the guys over at *American Pickers* a call and they'll scour America's backroads to find the parts we need, or reasonable facsimiles. Once our reconstituted Saturn V rocketship is launch-ready, we'll need to select a crew, and the most obvious choice, needless to say, would be Bear Grylls and his cameramen, with the Moonwalk footage broadcast as a special edition of *Man vs Moon*.

Unlike girlie-men like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, Bear would undoubtedly show us a few tricks that the Apollo gang never thought of – like fashioning a shelter out of Moon rocks, foraging for the food and water that others failed to find, building a roaring fire despite the lack of both air and

combustible materials, and finding several new and creative uses for the urine bags that his predecessors tossed aside as space trash. He could also probably design and build his own lunar rover from parts salvaged from artifacts of the Soviet Luna program. And he could probably do it all without the need for a spacesuit.

Speaking of spacesuits, just a week before NASA shit-canned the Constellation Program, the agency announced that it had awarded a contract to Oceaneering International and the David Clark Company to design and build a brand-new, state-of-the-art spacesuit for use on future manned missions to the Moon and beyond (“NASA’s Next Space Suit,” *Technology Review*, January 25, 2010).

“If NASA returns to the moon in 2020 as planned, astronauts will step out in a brand-new space suit. It will give them new mobility and flexibility on the lunar surface while still protecting them from its harsh environment ... The space agency has awarded a \$500 million, 6.5-year contract for the design and development of the Constellation space suit.” Astronauts performing EVAs these days currently use something known as the Extravehicular Mobility Unit: “It has a hard upper torso, layers of material to protect astronauts from micrometeoroids and radiation, a temperature-regulation system, and its own life support and communication system. The EMU weighs over 300 pounds and has limited leg mobility – astronauts feet are normally locked in place on foot restraints while performing extravehicular tasks, and during Apollo missions, which used a different EMU suit, astronauts were forced to develop a bunny hop to traverse the lunar surface.”

I could, of course, point out once again the absurdity of it taking about four times as long to develop a spacesuit now than it did back in the hi-tech 1960s, but I’m pretty sure I’ve already beat that particular horse damn near to death and then rubbed salt in the wounds. I could also point out that the Apollo suits somehow managed to perform all the duties of the current EMUs while weighing about 40% less, but that’s also already taken a pretty severe beating.

So instead, I’ll focus on the contention that the Apollo astronauts were “forced to develop a bunny hop to traverse the lunar surface,” which, as an alert reader pointed out, flies in the face of numerous past claims in which it was maintained that the ‘bunny hop’ was found to be the most effective means of locomoting in a reduced gravity environment, not that it was something forced upon the astronauts by the limitations of the spacesuits. If I remember correctly, one of the *Mythbusters* propagandists claimed that he had verified that it was the most efficient means of moving in reduced gravity, and he was, by his own admission, wearing a costume and not a pressurized spacesuit when he conducted his experiment.

Someone, it would appear, is doing a little lying here. I am, needless to say, as shocked as all of you.

“‘When we went to the moon the first time, we were just trying to get there. Now astronauts need to be able to explore the surface, harvest resources, and do science,’ says Daniel Barry,

vice president and director of research and development at David Clark Company, and head of the Constellation space suits project.”

So the Apollo missions, it turns out, were just about *getting there*. And the reason, I guess, why we allegedly flew men to the Moon *eight times* (including the alleged fly-bys by Apollo 8 and Apollo 13) was to, uhmm, prove that *getting there* the first time was no fluke. Sure, we were told that the boys were sent there to “do science” and that they took along a bunch of scientific testing equipment – and even, on the last flight, an actual scientist – but that apparently wasn’t really the case. And the lunar rovers allegedly flown to the Moon were not brought along to enable the astronauts to “explore the surface” and conduct additional science projects.

This time, however, we’re going to do it right ... in another 20+ years, that is ... if we fast-track it.

What “resources,” by the way, are we planning to “harvest”? We’ve already allegedly brought back numerous samples of Moon rocks, which appears to be about the only resource readily available, other than the water NASA now claims can be found there. How much does it suck, by the way, for NASA to have to cancel the Constellation Program right after the agency had reported allegedly discovering loads of water on the Moon?

One ‘debunker’ claim that has been made fairly frequently over the years, it should be noted, is that NASA’s alleged Moon rocks contain no traces of water, proving that they are not of Earthly origin and could only have come from the surface of a waterless sphere like the Moon ... which isn’t, NASA now claims, waterless. I have no doubt though that those same ‘debunkers’ will be able to come up with some convoluted, hackneyed explanation for the apparent discrepancy.

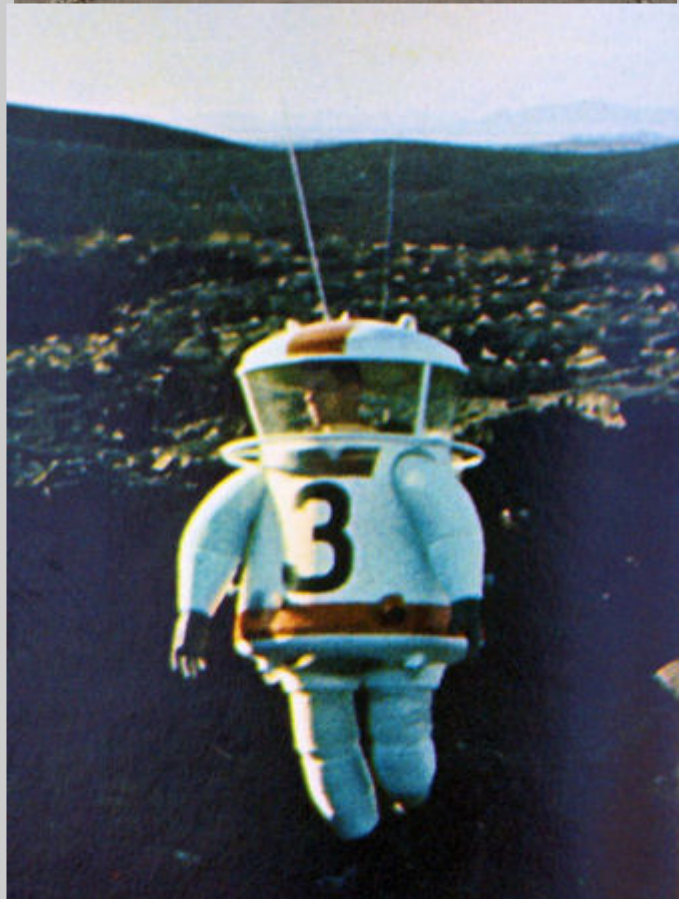
Pictured below is the evolution of the American spacesuit. From left to right in the top row are the Mercury suit (1961), the Gemini suit (1965), and the pre-Playtex Apollo suit (1968); in the lower row are the famous Apollo magic suit (1969), the first space shuttle suit (1981), and the new suit being produced for the now-defunct Constellation Program. Below that, believe it or not, is an early prototype Apollo suit. While it may appear to be a still from some 1950s sci-fi flick, or a computer generated artist’s conception, it is, in fact, an actual suit being tested in the Mojave Desert in the mid-1960s. It is probably safe to assume that it didn’t pass the test.











Another thing Bear Grylls would undoubtedly do is bring us back some of those dazzling lunar starscapes that the Apollo guys neglected to capture. Presented below, by the way, is one of NASA's former [astronomy pics of the day](#). It carried with it the following explanation: "If you could turn off the atmosphere's ability to scatter overwhelming sunlight, today's daytime sky might look something like this." Below that is a shot from deep space, illustrating that stars in outer space maybe aren't really as camera-shy as some would like us to believe.







According to Bolden, NASA had “focused so much of our effort and funding on just getting to the moon, we were neglecting investments ... required to go beyond.” So while we don’t have the money required to get back to the Moon, you see, we do have the money to bypass the Moon and fly our guys to more distant locales, like Mars. No target date has been set, but I’m guessing that if we focus our attention on these bolder objectives, we’ll probably succeed by, like, 2050. Or maybe 2060. Or 2069, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first alleged Moon landing.

As will be recalled, we set our sights a little higher in the 1960s. When Kennedy delivered his famous declaration back in May of 1961 that we were going to the Moon, he gave the aerospace community less than a decade to make it happen. Engineers across the country, who were well aware of the fact that the nation hadn’t even taken its first baby-steps yet, were understandably dismayed.

The first Apollo contract was awarded just two months later, in July of 1961, for the sophisticated navigation system that would allegedly guide the spacecraft to the Moon. In an unusual move, NASA opted not to solicit bids for the guidance system; instead, the contract was handed directly to MIT, generating “immediate controversy,” as noted by *Moon Machines*. As one of the show’s talking-heads noted, “There was actually a budding industry out there that had developed guidance systems and

people from industry were quite upset. They felt that they should have been given the chance to bid on the contract – and a university is not ordinarily what the government contracts out to build hardware for operational systems.”

There was, alas, nothing ordinary about the Apollo project.

The man NASA turned to first, long before awarding any of the other Apollo contracts, was one Charles Draper, who ran MIT’s instrumentation lab, which would later carry Draper’s name. Draper was generally described as an eccentric, charismatic, colorful gent whose background was in physics and, curiously, psychology. He is widely considered to be the father of the inertial guidance system.

Perhaps significantly, Bill Kaysing, the first Apollo skeptic to gain prominence, has claimed that it was MIT (in conjunction with DARPA) that provided NASA with the blueprint for how to plausibly simulate manned trips to the Moon. If true, then it of course makes perfect sense that NASA would have turned directly and immediately to MIT, and would have done so without taking any outside bids. Until MIT completed their work and provided the space agency with an outline of the project, it would seem, NASA wouldn’t have known what other contracts to award.

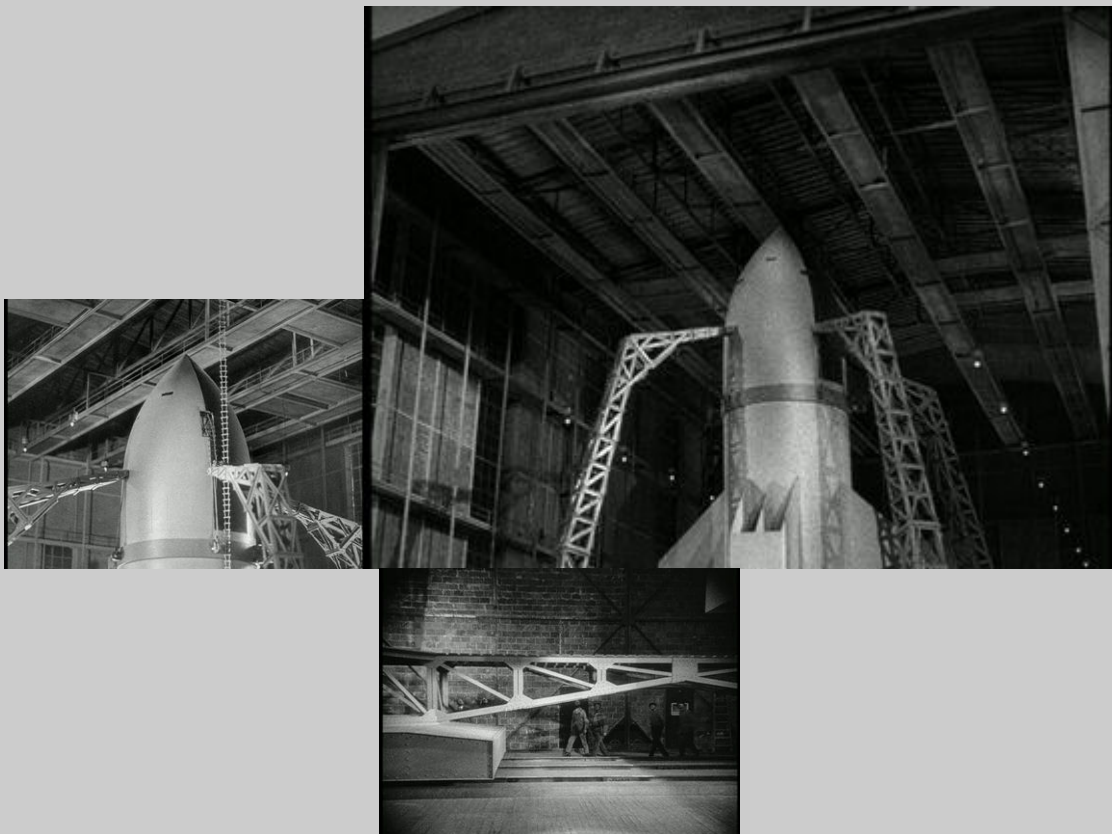
The fact that the project landed on the desk of Charles Draper is perhaps significant, given that the name ‘Draper’ is a rather notorious one in twentieth century American history – and one that is closely tied to the name ‘Bush.’ It is a name that appears more than once on the membership list of everyone’s favorite secret society, Skull & Bones (Herbert Draper Gallaudet [1898], Arthur Draper [1937], William Draper III [1950]). It is a name that was prominently featured in the American eugenics movement, with General William Draper, Jr. serving as founder and chairman of the Population Crisis Committee and vice-chairman of the Birth Control League (as Planned Parenthood was originally known). General Draper, a close friend of the Bush family, also helped finance the 1932 International Eugenics Conference. Many years later, during the Apollo era, Draper advised LBJ on population reduction strategies.

The Draper family was also, not too shockingly, involved in the financing and maintenance of the Nazi regime. General Draper joined Dillon Read in 1927 and for many years was tasked with personally handling the account of Nazi industrialist/financier Fritz Thyssen. At the close of WWII, Draper was appointed Chief of the Economic Division of the Joint Allied Control Council for Germany – he was, in other words, the man who was supposed to oversee the economic de-Nazification of Germany. Just months later, in October 1945, Draper reported that the German economy had magically been de-Nazified. Needless to say, nothing could have been further from the truth.

One final note about General Draper (whose son, Bonesman William Draper III, served as the chief of fundraising for George Bush’s 1980 presidential campaign): he was a member of the Society of American Magicians. In other words, William Draper, Jr. considered himself to be something of an expert in the art of illusion. Perhaps the same could be said of Charles Draper of MIT.

According to *Moon Machines*, Draper and his team got to work on the Apollo guidance system in the spring of 1962. Given that *Moon Machines* also contends that the contract was awarded to MIT in early summer of 1961, the question that is naturally begged is: why, with the clock ticking and with an absurdly short timeframe to pull the Apollo project together, would the MIT team have waited almost a year to get started? Or did they, in fact, spend that first year working on their real assignment – mapping out the key elements of the simulation?

If so, then they apparently spent a fair amount of time viewing an obscure German silent film by the name of *Die Frau im Mond* (*The Woman in the Moon*), as noted in the painfully long documentary, *What Happened on the Moon?* The German feature film, released by filmmaker Fritz Lang in 1929, provided the blueprint for the heavily ritualized launch procedures that were adopted for the Apollo program. As can be seen in the screen caps below, all of the elements were there: the unnecessary vertical construction of the spaceship in a specially built hangar; the grand opening of the massive hangar doors; the excruciatingly slow roll-out of the upright rocketship from the hangar to the launch pad; the raucous crowds watching the spectacle live; the now ubiquitous countdown; even the shedding of two stages of the ship. In other words, the only elements of the performance that the public ever actually witnessed were all lifted directly from a forty-year-old silent film.







Fritz Lang's technical adviser on the film was Herman Oberth, considered to be one of the three founding fathers of rocketry. Assisting Oberth on the film project, according to the previously quoted *Time-Life* book *To the Moon*, was one of his brightest students, nineteen-year-old Wernher von Braun. A decade-and-a-half later, both Oberth and von Braun would be scooped up through the Paperclip project and brought to America to work on, among other things, the Apollo program, whose choreography just happened to very closely match that of the fake Moon launch Oberth and von Braun had crafted forty years earlier.

*Die Frau im Mond*, by the way, was not the only Fritz Lang film that proved to be rather prophetic. He followed it up in 1931 with *M*, the tale of a sadistic, pedophilic serial killer guided by voices in his head. I wonder how he came up with that plotline?

Before moving on, I should probably point out here yet another brazen lie the 'debunkers' like to tell – the one that holds that von Braun was only a Nazi because he had little choice in the matter, what with

living and working in Germany during the days of the Third Reich and all. That's a nice little fable, to be sure, but it is contradicted in a big way by at least one known photograph in which von Braun can be seen adorned in the elite Nazi regalia of the Black Order of the SS. As anyone who has studied the Nazi hierarchy is well aware, Himmler's elite order had a 'no weekend Nazis need apply' policy.



Anyway, returning to MIT, the starting point for engineers was to develop a gyroscope-based guidance system. The problem though was that gyros could not be produced to MIT's exacting standards, resulting in gyro after gyro being rejected. Another problem was that translating data from the gyros into flight instructions would require, as *Moon Machines* noted, a "modern digital computer," and putting such a beast in a spaceship "was an entirely new challenge."

"Computers in the early 1960s," you see, "were huge. The idea of squeezing such a monster into a spacecraft seemed preposterous." But that wasn't really going to be a problem since, as we have already seen, clearing seemingly insurmountable obstacles was something that the aerospace community was uniquely skilled at in the 1960s. The engineers working on the onboard computer utilized an entirely new technology known as the silicon chip. The technology was so new though that no one knew what it could actually do. And as with the gyros, it proved to be nearly impossible to produce chips of acceptable quality.

At the time, 'software' was a virtually unknown concept. As *Moon Machines* duly reported, "With nobody clear on exactly what the computer should do, the software engineers were free to write almost anything they liked." One of those flight software developers, Alex Kosmala, made the following remarkable admission: "There were no specs. We made it up. Uhmm ... and it's always [been]

amazing to me – why was *I* allowed to program something that hadn't even been specified [but] that would be critical in *assuring the success of the whole Apollo Program*? I couldn't believe it, but that's the way it was. We made it up as we went along!"

I'm going to take a wild guess here and say that NASA probably wasn't unduly concerned since the functioning of the software would only have mattered if the agency was planning to actually send guys to the Moon.

The most complicated aspect of the Apollo missions was the landing of the lunar modules, which made the software program controlling that part of the mission the most difficult to design. Amazingly though, that aspect of the software design was not assigned until after most of the other programs were 2/3 complete – and it was assigned to a twenty-two-year-old gent named Don Isles who had just recently started his very first job. According to *Moon Machines*, “the program without which it would be impossible to land on the Moon ... had been written almost as an afterthought by a junior engineer.”

It is rumored that MIT first tried to pawn the job off on a kid who flipped burgers at the local McDonalds, but he apparently had prior commitments.

By mid-1966, Draper's dream of controlling the entire mission via an onboard computer had been dropped in favor of an Earth-based control system with the Draper system along as back-up. MIT allegedly produced a computer the size of a small fridge, which both the command module and the lunar module were outfitted with. Despite the overwhelming obstacles faced by the MIT team, and the seemingly lackadaisical approach taken with the project, the Apollo guidance system, as would be expected, performed nearly flawlessly on every outing.

One final note here on *Die Frau im Mond* before wrapping up this installment: the gatekeepers over at the [BAUT forum](http://www.bautforum.com) appear to be in on the joke. Why else would the site's logo contain not an image of NASA's lunar module sitting on the surface of the Moon, but rather a rocketship that looks suspiciously like the spaceship from Lang's film?



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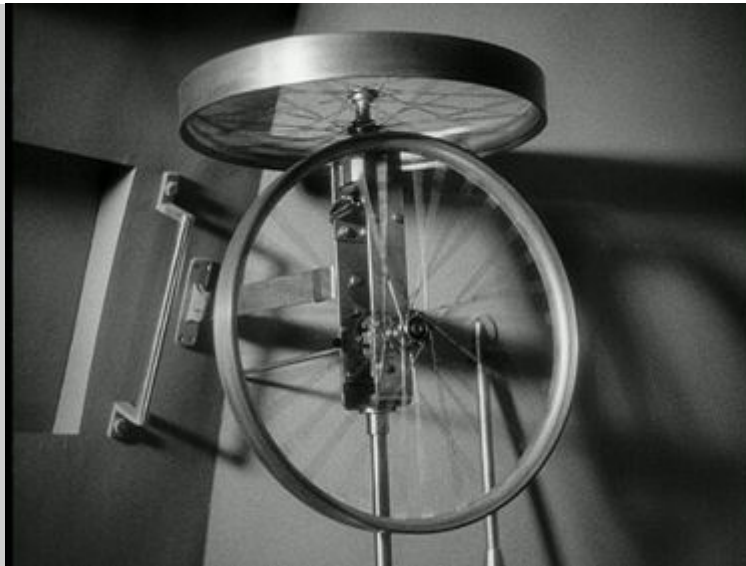
## *Wagging the Moondoggie, Part XIII*

*July 13, 2010*

*by David McGowan*

“It’s a journey we can’t repeat with today’s technology, but in 1969, a group of astronauts risked everything to walk on the Moon.”  
*When We Left Earth*, Discovery Channel, 2010

Let’s start this final (for now at least, though I reserve the right to revisit the issue should any uproariously funny new info become available) Apollo installment off with a quintet of extremely rare, previously-unreleased Apollo mission photos. In the top row, from left to right, we get a good view of the sophisticated gyroscopic navigation system, followed by a shot of Neil Armstrong about to step out of the capsule and take those historic first steps on the Moon, and then an eerily familiar shot of a camera set up on a fake lunar surface in front of a fake lunar backdrop. In the bottom row, we learn that an explosion in the ship’s oxygen tank has seriously threatened the mission of Apollo 13.





“The oxygen containers –  
the shot has hit the  
oxygen containers!”

“We have lost more than  
half of the oxygen!”

The preceding images are, of course, yet more screen-caps lifted from *Die Frau im Mond*, that remarkably prescient silent film that featured the work of technical consultants who would later work on the Apollo missions – the same missions that “we can’t repeat with today’s technology,” though I’m assuming that we could probably put together much better simulations.

The good news to report here is that, after giving it a lot of thought, I believe that I may have finally figured out why it is that we can’t put together a ‘repeat’ performance: the problem, in a nutshell, is that America now has a serious obesity problem. As has been widely reported by our ever-vigilant media, the clear majority of Americans today are overweight, many of them grossly so, oftentimes even ‘morbidly obese.’ That definitely wasn’t the case in the 1960s.

America’s first spacemen, the Mercury 7 astronauts, weighed an average of just 164 pounds each. They were, nevertheless, considered full-grown men. The average three-man Apollo crew, therefore,

probably weighed in at just under 500 pounds. Nowadays, that same three-man crew would probably weigh in at closer to 800 pounds. In addition, they would need to take roughly twice the volume of food and water rations that were needed in the '60s, and much larger fecal collection bags.

It is doubtful, in other words, that even the mighty Saturn V could handle the additional load requirements brought on by America's rampant gluttony.

Speaking of fecal collection bags, by the way, Buzz and Neil purportedly left a few of those behind at the fabled Tranquility Base. I mention that bit of trivia only because those bags now are – and, as hard as it may be to believe, this is absolutely true – well on their way to being declared national historic landmarks! The state of California, ever the trendsetter, got the ball rolling in January by declaring those excrement bags to be state 'historical resources.' Four more states are expected to follow suit by year's end.

Due to international treaties declaring that no country can lay claim to real estate on the Moon, you see, Tranquility Base itself cannot be declared a historic landmark. So California's Historical Resources Commission, in its infinite wisdom, decided to declare that *all the artifacts* allegedly left behind are now "historical resources." This is said to be a first step towards the site being declared a national landmark, and, ultimately, a UN World Heritage Site. The list of protected artifacts includes, specifically, human excrement bags. Seriously. ("Apollo 11 Excrement Claimed as Historic by California," *Technorati.com*, January 29, 2010)

The concern, it is claimed, is that future lunar explorers, either from other nations or on privately funded missions, will run roughshod over the historic site, looting the valuable artifacts. The message California wants to send to such potential hooligans is that bringing home a souvenir sack of astronaut dung will be treated just as harshly as, say, snapping off a piece of the Great Barrier Reef. So if someone reading this should have the good fortune to be the first space tourist to visit Tranquility Base, please do the right thing and cordon off the area and maybe post a few signs informing people of the status of the artifacts. And as tempting as it may be, please refrain from bringing home a bag of astronaut shit as a souvenir.

As the state of California realizes, that astronaut shit was left there so that it could be enjoyed by everyone. And while it would undoubtedly look good on your fireplace mantle, fecal matter is best viewed in its natural habitat, just as Buzz and Neil left it. If you feel that you just can't live without owning your very own sack of Buzz turds, I'm fairly sure that he would be willing to put one up for auction on E-Bay, given that he seems eager to whore himself out in every other conceivable way.

I'm also pretty sure, by the way, that this is the first time that a movement has been underway to bestow historical landmark status upon a site that existed only in our minds and on our TV screens. Should our next goal be to have Mayberry declared a UN World Heritage Site?

In other news, Aldrin is in full agreement with NASA's plan to scrap the Constellation Program and focus on low-Earth orbit flights, with an eye to sending men to Mars at some unspecified time in the future. According to Buzz (who couldn't see stars from the Moon, which may be why he didn't have much luck dancing with them), "getting long-range space flight right requires getting near-Earth orbit perfect ... Just as deep sea exploration began with practice in our littoral waters, a successful Mars mission begins with near-Earth orbit testing. To get to the final stage, we must perfect all that we'll need for the journey." ("Trading the Moon for Mars," *New York Times*, February 25, 2010)

The first question that comes to my mind, obviously, is: when did Aldrin become such a fucking pussy? I mean, we obviously didn't have low-Earth orbit anywhere near "perfect" in 1969, but that didn't stop him from allegedly blasting off to the Moon, which I would think would qualify as a "long-range space flight." And exactly how much "near-Earth orbit testing" will be required to "perfect all that [they'll] need for the journey"? Back in the good ol' Apollo days, if I recall correctly, we didn't need to send so much as *a single manned Saturn V* into low-Earth orbit before allegedly sending one all the way to the Moon!

Buzz's old sidekick, as it turns out, begs to differ. According to *Space.com*, Armstrong "blasted NASA's new plans for future space exploration ... The United States is risking losing its role as a leader in space exploration with its new plan, Armstrong said, adding that he was concerned with the looming gap in American human spaceflight." Fellow Apollo astronauts Jim Lovell and Eugene Cernan are also unhappy with the change of direction. Speaking before a Senate subcommittee, Cernan had this to say: "We (Armstrong, Lovell and myself) have come to the unanimous conclusion that this budget proposal presents no challenges, has no focus, and in fact is a blueprint for a mission to nowhere." ("Neil Armstrong: Obama's New Space Plan 'Poorly Advised,'" May 12, 2010)

Cernan and his fellow Apollo astronauts, needless to say, know a little more than the rest of us do about taking a "mission to nowhere."

And now, with that out of the way, let's turn our attention to UFOs and aliens (the saucer-flying kind, not the currently popular jumping-the-border-fence variety), which figure rather prominently in some Apollo 'conspiracy theories.' One such theory holds that we did indeed make it to the Moon in the 1960s – only to encounter either active alien colonies or artifacts of past alien colonies. As the story goes, we were either scared off or warned off and have therefore never returned. These theories generally hold that the early Apollo missions succeeded but that the later ones had to be faked – because we were, you know, scared to go back and piss off the aliens.

We can only hope, by the way, that the Moon's resident aliens have little interest in human fecal matter and have therefore left Buzz's and Neil's "historical resources" untouched. Of course, most readers are probably aware of the fact that many aliens have an intense fascination with anal probes, so it seems quite likely that other things associated with the anus would be of interest to them as well.

The other predominant alien theory (which often appears hand-in-hand with the first) seems to be that we did indeed make it to the Moon – but not with the ridiculous hardware of the Apollo program. That was all for show, you see, to cover up the *real* technology that was used, which invariably is said to be technology that was retro-engineered from the recovered alien spacecraft that Mulder and Scully keep hidden out at Area 51.

Both theories, in other words, posit that we did indeed send men to the Moon, though the home audience was lied to about the details of the missions – specifically, how we got there and/or what we found there.

Some of these theories go so far as to say that there are artifacts of alien colonies on Mars as well, and/or that Mars has already been secretly colonized by us Earthlings. One of President Eisenhower's granddaughters, for example, has been making the rounds lately claiming that she was targeted for some sort of ongoing Mars colonization project involving all kinds of exotic technology that is in the hands of various secret societies. Or something like that. The details aren't really important.

Many of the folks who tell such tales also like to claim that it was NASA itself that seeded into the conspiracy literature the notion that we never made it to the Moon. Better for the skeptics in the crowd to buy into that scenario, so the story goes, than to figure out the 'truth' – that our Moon has been taken over by hostile aliens (or whatever other equally dubious alien theory it is that is being promoted).

To anyone with a working brain, of course, it should be perfectly obvious that it is actually the opposite that is true – that it is in fact the alien theories that pose the least threat to the status quo, for two rather obvious reasons: first, the alien theories generally hold that we did actually send men to the Moon, so they pose no direct challenge to the core lie of the Apollo Program; additionally, these theories contain deliberately outlandish elements that are designed to marginalize 'conspiracy theories' and drive most sane people away not only from Apollo theories, but from the entire field of conspiracy literature.

Anyone who has spent time in the conspiracy trenches should recognize a very obvious pattern, and one which is certainly not unique to Apollo. A substantial body of solid research on what really happened on September 11, 2001, for example, has been tainted by the deliberate introduction of such inanities as 'pod' planes, holograms and particle beam weapons. Compelling evidence of the existence of elite international pedophile rings, on the other hand, has been marginalized by blending in stories of shape-shifting alien/human hybrids. And so it goes.

While we're on the subject of aliens, I'm sure that it was just a coincidence that Erich von Daniken's *Chariots of the Gods* was released just months before the first alleged Apollo Moon landing and then relentlessly promoted into runaway bestseller status (*Chariots* and its sequels have reportedly sold in excess of 60 million copies). The book, which purported to present evidence of alien visitations in

days of yore, firmly planted two ideas in the minds of many readers: long-range space travel was not only possible, but had already occurred; and aliens were all around us, keeping an eye on the planet.

Interestingly enough, some of America's illustrious astronauts have themselves seeded the literature with alien tales. None of them, to my knowledge, has ever endorsed the notion of alien colonies on the Moon, but they have certainly added fuel to that fire by dropping allusions to UFO sightings. Our old friend Buzz Aldrin, most notoriously, has claimed that Apollo 11 was tailed all the way to the Moon by a UFO!

Why do you suppose it is, by the way, that the 'debunker' crowd seems to have little to say about the UFO tales told by America's astronauts? After all, these very same 'debunkers' damn near go into cardiac arrest whenever a 'conspiracy theorist' such as myself either implicitly or explicitly calls into question the integrity and honesty of America's virile astronauts. But if we are supposed to accept as truth everything that they have to say about their alleged lunar missions, then doesn't that mean that we necessarily need to embrace their claims about UFOs? Those stories are, after all, part of the package. If the 'debunkers' are so sure that our astronauts can be trusted to tell us the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, then why do the 'debunker' sites not trumpet the existence of the UFOs that were allegedly witnessed by their knights-in-magic-spacesuits?

Speaking of the 'debunkers,' it appears that the most prolific of them, Jay Windley (who posts under the *nom de poofster* Jay Utah – and undoubtedly under various other pseudonyms as well, thus creating the appearance of 'peer' acceptance of his pompous posturing), has provided an answer to one of the other enduring mysteries of the Apollo Program. According to a particularly grandiose claim made on a discussion board by Windtunnel (he apparently doesn't like being referred to as Windbag), he "personally can produce drawings and analysis of the LM (lunar module) structural, pressure, and thermal designs from memory."

So it seems that NASA did not, in fact, lose and/or destroy the original plans and specs for the lunar modules; the agency instead decided to store that invaluable data in Windley's spacious head.

Let's back up now to 1962, to review a bastard stepchild of the U.S. space program known as Operation Fishbowl, which was without a doubt one of the most ill-conceived operations ever undertaken by the brain-trust in Washington. In a nutshell, Fishbowl was a series of rocket launches aimed at detonating nuclear weapons at high altitudes. Why? Washington was rather coy about that, but I'm sure that they had perfectly valid reasons for conducting high-altitude nuke tests.

A number of the rockets powering those flights failed, one quite spectacularly and devastatingly. Four of the launches succeeded in reaching altitude and detonating, but those ‘successes’ came at a price, as we shall see. Most of the warheads were mounted on Thor rockets, similar to the one pictured below. All were launched from Johnston Island in the Pacific ... because we’ve always found bucolic islands in the Pacific to be really good places to do nuke testing.



The first warhead, codenamed Bluegill, was launched on June 2, 1962, but the radar tracking system failed and, with no way to verify the rocket’s trajectory, it had to be destroyed in flight. The second warhead, Starfish, took flight on June 19, 1962, but the rocket failed after burning for just under a minute and the craft once again had to be destroyed in flight. Missile debris, some of it radioactive, rained down on the island and the surrounding waters. A couple guys were dispatched with brooms and dustpans and the project was quickly resumed.

The next launch, on July 9, 1962, was the first to ‘succeed.’ It was also, according to some theorists, the one that was supposed to accomplish a key goal of the program: blasting a hole through the van Allen radiation belts to hopefully allow for the safe passage of the Apollo spacecraft. Starfish Prime, a 1.4 megaton nuclear warhead, detonated at an altitude of about



250 miles. If theorists are correct about the prime objective, the test failed miserably. Instead of punching a hole through the belts, the blast actually created an additional, man-made radiation belt! It also damaged as many as nine U.S. and Soviet satellites, six of which failed within months of the test. And it caused electrical damage in nearby Hawaii.

The next attempted launch – which was apparently undertaken because, as should be obvious, the program was going so well – failed on the launch pad and the Thor rocket exploded, causing extensive radioactive contamination of the area as well as the destruction of the launch pad. The spectacular failure of Bluegill Prime, on July 25, 1962, necessitated a brief break.

The launches resumed on October 15, 1962, with a third attempt to launch the Bluegill warhead. That test, Bluegill Double Prime, failed when the rocket went into a serious tumble not long after taking flight. It was, once again, destroyed in flight. Next up was Checkmate, just four days later. Checkmate detonated at an altitude of about 91 miles, considerably lower than the previous ‘success,’ and with a smaller payload.

The next launch was the *fourth attempt* at Bluegill, dubbed Bluegill Triple Prime. Not many years later, of course, we would get much better at that whole rocket-launching thing (despite the fact that the Saturn V’s F-1 engines were notoriously unstable), eliminating the need for such flights as, for example, Apollo 12 Double Prime (“Goddamn it!! We lost another one?! How many more crews do we have back there? None?! Shit! Can somebody run down to the Home Depot and pick up a few guys and get them suited up?”)

Bluegill Triple Prime detonated on October 25, 1962, at an altitude of only about 30 miles. I think we can probably all agree that getting an unmanned rocket to an altitude of 30 miles in just four attempts, at the very same time that the manned Mercury missions were allegedly attaining low-Earth orbit on every launch, was quite a stunning achievement. In any event, the last of the Fishbowl launches was on November 1, 1962. Dubbed Kingfish, it detonated at about twice the altitude of the previous blast. And so ended a largely forgotten corollary of the U.S. space program.

Moving on, I happened to stumble upon a couple of fascinating articles on *Space.com* – and by “fascinating,” I mean that they unintentionally raise questions about the legitimacy of the Apollo missions, as so frequently happens whenever NASA types talk about going ‘back’ to the Moon.

In one of the articles, we find Michael Wargo, identified as the “chief lunar scientist for Exploration Systems at NASA Headquarters,” contemplating a return trip to the Moon:

“None of our spacesuits that we currently have would be appropriate for that extreme environment,’ [says Wargo]. Any materials built for Earth-like temperatures won’t work on the moon. ‘They don’t bend anymore, they fracture, and they fracture brittle-y, and so everything gets extremely brittle at those temperatures.’” (“Water Discovery Fuels Hope to Colonize the Moon,” November 13, 2009)

And so we discover that there is yet *another* piece of 1960s technology that has now fallen into an all-consuming black hole: non-brittle materials from which to fashion spacesuits suitable for lunar exploration. Back in the day, it will be recalled, Playtex’s bra seamstresses knew a thing or two about stitching together a non-brittle spacesuit.

In the same article, Jack Burns, “of the Center for Astrophysics and Space Astronomy at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and director of the Lunar University Network for Astrophysics Research,” claimed that, “We only went to the moon six times and we didn’t even go to the most interesting places on the moon. There’s so much more to discover about the moon just from a scientific perspective, what it can tell us about the formation of the Earth.”

So ... what’s that story again that the ‘debunkers’ like to tell about there being no compelling reason to go ‘back’ to the vast wasteland that is the Moon? Who am I supposed to believe here – the guy with all the fancy academic titles, or the guys whose primary area of expertise seems to be mastering the art of self flagellation?

The other article from *Space.com* details yet more of the lost technology of the 1960s: “Though engineers are well on their way to preparing us for life on the moon, some major issues have yet to be resolved. ‘Something that we’ll have to consider is radiation,’ Zacny (with Honeybee Robotics, a NASA contractor) said. ‘We can close ourselves in habitats, but radiation protection requires a lot of shielding. *We cannot solve this problem yet*. Radiation can kill us.’ Moon dwellers will also have to contend with the ubiquitous dust on the surface of the moon, which gets into everything and can wear down joints and connectors and prevent sealing off doors. It also poses a health risk to people, as it can cause breathing difficulties and is difficult to filter out of habitats.” (“How to Build Lunar Homes From Moon Dirt,” September 3, 2008)

The radiation problem has already been covered, both here and elsewhere, so let’s focus instead once again on the dust problem. As previously discussed, NASA nowadays acknowledges that dealing with lunar dust will require the development of sophisticated new technology. No explanation has been provided, of course, for why the Apollo astronauts didn’t have any problems with the dust despite allegedly venturing out on multiple EVAs during their alleged missions.

During the alleged Apollo 17 mission, for example, our fearless astronauts supposedly took the Moon buggy out on three separate occasions, returning each time, by their own accounts, covered from head to toe in Moon dust, which they necessarily would have brought back into the lunar module with them, and then ultimately transferred to the command module when the supposed docking later took place. Why then is there no mention in the Apollo literature of any health problems arising from this, or of any problems with any of the delicate instrumentation, or of any problems with any of the door seals? If it is “difficult to filter out of habitats” even with the technology we possess today, then how were we able to do it 40+ years ago?

The ‘debunker’ crowd, despite loudly proclaiming that they have thoroughly debunked every ‘conspiracy’ claim that has ever been made, has had nothing to say on this issue. I wonder why that is?

No ... seriously ... I really do wonder why that is. It would be understandable if there were some requirement that their ‘debunkings’ have some actual merit, but their body of ‘work’ clearly demonstrates that they are not bound by any such restrictions. So the silence is a bit puzzling.

Before signing off, there is one final point that needs to be addressed here – one that has been on my mind since first undertaking this series. It is generally claimed, as previously noted, that getting to the Moon from low-Earth orbit is a relatively straightforward procedure: you simply accelerate enough to ‘slingshot’ out of low-Earth orbit, thus escaping Earth’s gravitational pull, and then just sort of freefall to the Moon, firing the engines every now and then to make minor course corrections.

That all sounds just fine in theory ... until you take a step back and realize that the Moon itself is a satellite of the Earth, held in place by – you guessed it! – Earth’s gravitational attraction. Isn’t that, after all, what keeps it from drifting randomly about the solar system, whoring itself out to any planet that would have it? So I guess the obvious question that is begged here is: when exactly is it, while traveling from the Earth to the Moon, that one leaves Earth’s orbit?

The answer, quite obviously, is, uhmm, *never*. Earth’s gravitational pull would obviously get progressively weaker the farther out one ventured, but common sense dictates that it wouldn’t just abruptly end once you got beyond low-Earth orbit. Indeed, an article that appeared in various newspapers not long ago noted that the satellites that enable GPS devices to work orbit the Earth at an altitude of roughly 12,000 miles, about 11,800 miles beyond low-Earth

orbit. And yet they are, miraculously enough, still held in place by Earth's gravity and there have been no reported cases of one of them suddenly freefalling to the Moon.

There would come a time during a journey to the Moon when that body's own gravitational attraction would be stronger than that of Earth, but given the relative masses of the two bodies, that time wouldn't come until the tail end of the trip. You could conceivably freefall most of the way *back*, but you would first, of course, have to actually get there.

I guess what I am trying to say here is that I'm not really buying into the claim that you wouldn't need much fuel to get to the Moon after reaching low-Earth orbit. Logic would seem to dictate that the path to the Moon would not be the largely linear one we have been sold on, but rather a series of steadily increasing circles (probably ellipses, actually), requiring the expenditure of considerable amounts of fuel.

Perhaps that is the reason why the Space Shuttle has never done a lunar fly-by, or left low-Earth orbit for any other reason. Of course, there are also the problems posed by space radiation, and extreme temperatures, and micrometeorites, and reentry, and ...

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# the Center for an Informed

## *Wagging the Moondoggie, Part XIV*

May 12, 2011

by David McGowan

Yeah, I know, I know – a lot of you were expecting, and have been waiting somewhat patiently for, and have probably even been promised, a new installment of the Laurel Canyon series. And I will readily admit that I did say, with the launch of the last Apollo installment, that I was done with this topic for now. But how was I supposed to know that just four months after that launch, it would be announced, albeit so quietly that almost all of you probably missed it, that we will be boldly taking another stab at sending men to the Moon?!

So no, we have not quite resumed our journey through Laurel Canyon, but because I'm all about the giving, we're going to take one more quick trip to the Moon! And on the way there, there is a very high probability that we will encounter some advertisements. Because, like I said, I'm all about the giving. And I thought to myself the other day, "what more can I give them?," and the answer that I came up with was, "I know! I'll randomly and rather awkwardly insert some cool ads!"

Anyway, as I noted in the last Apollo post, "whenever NASA types talk about going 'back' to the Moon," they invariably seem to "unintentionally raise questions about the legitimacy of the Apollo missions." And sure enough, the boys over at Lockheed Martin (one of NASA's longtime partners-in-crime) certainly didn't let me down in that regard with this latest proposal.

Before proceeding, I should probably first clarify here that the proposed missions are not so ambitious as to involve actually landing on the Moon. No, these proposed missions involve merely flying to the Moon's far side and then sort of hanging out in Lunar orbit for a couple of weeks. In other words, all of the most technologically demanding aspects of the alleged Apollo missions – like actually landing on the Moon, surviving on the Moon, lifting off from the Moon, and docking while in Lunar orbit – have been eliminated.

Even these far less ambitious missions, of course, won't actually happen – but let's play along while Space.com's "Space Insider Columnist," Leonard David, fills us in on what we have to look forward to ("Mission Proposed to Send Astronauts to the Moon's Far Side," November 23, 2010):

"While NASA has officially given up its plans to send humans back to the surface of the moon anytime soon, a contractor is proposing a mission to send a crew to a stationary spot in orbit over the far side of Earth's neighbor. Lockheed Martin has begun pitching an L2-Farside Mission using its Orion spacecraft under development ... The Earth-moon L2 Lagrange point

is where the combined gravity of the Earth and the moon allows a spacecraft to hover over one spot and be synchronized with the moon in its orbit around the Earth. From a halo orbit around that L2 point, a crew would control robots on the lunar surface. Teleoperated science tasks include snagging rock specimens for return to Earth from the moon's South Pole-Aitken basin – one of the largest, deepest, and oldest craters in the solar system – as well as deploy a radio telescope array on the farside.”

Everybody got all of that? Sounds pretty easy, doesn't it? After all, the bar has been set substantially lower than it was in the glorious 1960s, when we easily mastered such things as landing men on the Moon, walking on the Moon, driving dune buggies on the Moon, and playing golf on the Moon. Nevertheless, there are some potential problems – just as there are, as is usually the case, some aspects of these proposed missions that directly contradict the entrenched, though slightly insane, belief that we sent men to the Moon back in the days when telephones were heavy enough to be used as lethal weapons.

Let's begin with one of the stated benefits of these proposed missions, as listed in a Lockheed Martin 'white paper' and laid out by Daniel Bates of the UK's Daily Mail (“Astronauts to be Sent to the Far Side of the Moon for First Time in 40 Years in Pre-Mars Mission,” November 25, 2010): “Both [NASA and Lockheed Martin] would also have the chance to address the problem of a higher re-entry speed which is accumulated on trips further away from the Earth.”

There they go again, pretending as though we've never done this before! Already we have heard from NASA types about how we haven't yet solved the radiation problem, and how we haven't yet developed spacesuit materials capable of withstanding the temperature extremes on the Moon, and how we haven't yet solved the problem of how to deal with all that Lunar dust ... and now we find that we apparently also haven't yet worked out how to deal with the fact that spacecraft returning from the Moon would have to survive much higher re-entry speeds than spacecraft returning from low-Earth orbit! And I'm guessing that we might also have a problem with controlling the all-important reentry angle.

At this point, I really am beginning to wonder if there is any of that classic 1960s space technology that hasn't been lost? Perhaps NASA needs to hire a crack team of archeologists to dig through their warehouses.

Another problem arises from the proposed duration and timeline of the missions. According to Space.com, “Each flight would prove out the Orion capsule's life support systems for one-month duration missions.” Later in the same article, we find that on each mission, our fearless astronauts “would orbit the L2 point for about two weeks.” It would appear then that Lockheed and NASA are allowing a full two weeks to travel to and from the Moon – which would be all well and good were it not for the obvious fact that it is roughly twice the time that it took for the mighty Apollo craft to allegedly get to the Moon and back!

The 1960s was, as some will surely recall, the era of 'muscle cars,' so perhaps it was the era of 'muscle spaceships' as well. But since we have now apparently sacrificed raw power in favor of fuel economy, I guess today's spaceships just don't burn rubber like the spacecraft of the wild and wooly '60s – though there is, I suppose, an alternative explanation: the last forty years of space research has taught us that it would actually take twice as long to get to the Moon as was believed back when we faked the Apollo flights.

According to Josh Hopkins of Lockheed Martin, in order to achieve the not-so-lofty goal of



sending men out to orbit the Moon, the company's Human Spaceflight Advanced Programs division has "come up with a sequence of missions that [they]'ve named 'Stepping Stones,' which begins with flights in low Earth orbit and incrementally builds." Lockheed views the first Orion missions as "feasible by 2016 to 2018."

Do I really need to belabor the point that, back in the days when mankind was transitioning from the use of stone tools, we didn't need any 'stepping stones' to get to the Moon – the very first manned launch of an Apollo craft allegedly flew its crew all the way there and back without a hitch! And do I also need to once again point out that, despite setting our sights much lower, and despite having vastly improved technology to work with, and despite having an additional fifty years of spaceflight experience, it will still take just as long to get men near the Moon as it did in the 1960s to actually walk on the Moon?

Returning now to the alleged benefits of running these missions, we find that Lockheed's 'white paper' also talks about being able to "measure astronauts' radiation dose from cosmic rays and solar flares to verify that Orion provides sufficient protection, as it is designed to do. Currently the medical effects of deep space radiation are not well understood, so a one-month mission would improve our understanding without exposing astronauts to excessive risk."

So despite the fact that some forty-three years have now passed since we first allegedly sent men into deep space, we still don't really know anything about the effects of deep space radiation ... but we are pretty sure, apparently, that a thirty-day dosage is a good, safe place to start! And just to be on the safe side, we could always pull Buzz and Neil out of retirement to pilot the first flight. They can't have too many years left in them anyway.

In all seriousness, NASA initially considered for the Apollo missions, according to "To The Moon" (a Time-Life Book), "men doomed by fatal disease." Also considered were "midget[s], to cut the payload weight." They said it, not me. I would have used a more politically correct term. Imagine though, if NASA had followed through on that idea, what kind of records could have been set in the Midget Toss?

One final curious aspect of these latest proposed missions that we need to delve into was explained by Space.com: "The robotic lander and rover would be launched first on a slow but efficient trajectory to the moon, to ensure that the rover is on its way before risking the crew launch."

Say what?! Are you kidding me? What kind of girly-men are these new breed of astronauts? Stepping stones? Supplemental launches before "risking the crew"? Can't we just find some real men like John Glenn and Alan Shepard to pilot the Orion craft? And what is this nonsense about a "slow but efficient trajectory to the moon"? "Efficient" in what way? Last time I checked, the 'debunkers' were still claiming that getting to the Moon was pretty much a matter of just free-falling your way there. What could be more efficient than that?

Oh wait ... I remember now. As I pointed out in the last Apollo post, getting to the Moon does not actually involve free-falling. It involves battling the Earth's gravity by flying in ever-increasing ellipses. And burning lots and lots of fuel. And Lockheed's oblique reference to a "slow but efficient trajectory" is, in fact, a confirmation of that. And so, by the way, is this artist's conception of the proposed Orion missions, which shows the spacecraft outside of low-Earth orbit and yet clearly still burning its engines.



Following the launch of the lander and rover (both of which, it will be recalled, stored easily aboard the Apollo flights), “three astronauts would be launched in an Orion spacecraft. If NASA has built a heavy lift launch vehicle by then, it would be capable of launching the crew directly to the moon. If that mega-booster is a no-show, smaller rockets can be used instead, but a more complex arrangement would be required. First, Orion would be launched to low-Earth orbit on a rocket such as a Delta 4 Heavy. Then, a modified Centaur upper stage would launch on a separate rocket. Orion would dock to the Centaur stage in orbit, and the Centaur would boost Orion toward the moon.”

To briefly recap then, we now know that getting three men near the Moon in modern times is considerably more difficult than landing three men on the Moon was in ancient times. It now requires taking a number of baby-steps before taking the big plunge. And it requires the launch of three separate high-tech spacecraft. And it will take the astronauts a full week to get there, as there are now speed limits in deep space that are strictly enforced and the U.S. can not afford to have another moving violation on its record. The equipment, of course, will take even longer to get there, because it's on a slower and more efficient course. And we may have some problems to work out in regards to deep space radiation and reentry speed.

And even after all of that, needless to say, we won't be actually landing men on the Moon. That would probably require an additional ten years of baby-steps and the launch of at least five spacecraft. And since we'll be checking out the far side on these proposed missions, we still won't be able to verify all those Apollo artifacts supposedly littering the Moon. Which is really kind of a moot point, because we won't actually be going at all.

Speaking of the far side of the Moon, by the way, the Daily Mail noted that the “surface was first photographed by Luna 3, a Soviet probe, in 1959 then the Apollo 8 mission followed in 1968 but there has been scant exploration of it since.” Translation: there has been no

exploration of the far side since 1959, and it would be nice if the Daily Mail would throw in a comma now and then.

But enough about that. Let's move on to a different topic. Remember how I argued that if it were possible to send crews to the Moon, private enterprise would have a strong financial incentive to have done so to exploit any available resources? And remember how the 'debunkers,' not surprisingly, claimed that there was nothing much on the Moon to see or do, especially since the strip club was shut down over some zoning dispute, so there was not really any compelling reason to go back? Well, it turns out – and this is quite shocking – that the 'debunkers' may be lying once again. As the LA Times reported on April 8, 2011 (W.J. Hennigan "MoonEx Aims to Scour Moon for Rare Materials"):

"A team of prominent Silicon Valley entrepreneurs are shooting for the moon with a new private venture aimed at scouring the lunar surface for precious metals and rare metallic elements. The private company Moon Express Inc., or MoonEx, is building robotic rovers alongside scientists at NASA's Ames Research Center northwest of San Jose. MoonEx's machines are designed to look for materials that are scarce on Earth but found in everything from a Toyota Prius car battery to guidance systems on cruise missiles. While there is no guarantee the moon is flush with these materials, MoonEx officials think it may be a 'gold mine' of so-called rare earth elements."

The company won't, naturally enough, be sending any human cargo to the Moon, because that isn't really possible, but the point here is that there are in fact compelling reasons for 'return' flights to the Moon, for both financial and scientific gain, so there is no validity at all to the argument that no one has been back for some forty years simply because there is no reason to go back.

Let's briefly return now to Operation Fishbowl, which was also discussed in the last Apollo offering. Unbeknownst to me until very recently, NPR decided to dredge up the nearly fifty-year-old high-altitude nuke tests less than two weeks before I did (Robert Krulwich "A Very Scary Light Show: Exploding H-Bombs In Space," July 1, 2010). And the facts they brought to the table were rather compelling.

"If you are wondering why anybody would deliberately detonate an H-bomb in space, the answer comes from a conversation we had with science historian James Fleming of Colby College." According to Fleming, who has been busily reading through James Van Allen's papers while working on a biography, "a good entry point to the story is May 8, 1958, when James Van Allen, the space scientist, stands in front of the National Academy in Washington, D.C., and announces that they've just discovered something new about the planet."

What Van Allen's team had discovered, of course, was that Earth is ringed by belts of high-energy particles, now known as the Van Allen radiation belts. And what Fleming's recent research revealed, incredibly enough, is that the "day after the press conference, [Van Allen] agreed with the military to get involved with a project to set off atomic bombs in the magnetosphere to see if they could disrupt it."

Let's pause here for a moment to reflect on the almost unfathomable level of megalomania at play here: immediately upon learning of the existence of the radiation belts, the military/intelligence complex decided, without even giving it much thought, that it would be a great idea to attack said belts with atomic weapons! And the 'scientist' who had made the discovery immediately agreed that that was a swell idea! As Fleming noted, "this is the first

occasion I've ever discovered where someone discovered something and immediately decided to blow it up."

Never mind that the belts are there to shield the planet from incoming space radiation, and that their existence is one of the primary reasons that biological lifeforms can thrive on this sphere ... let's just see if we can blow a big fucking hole in them! It apparently never occurred to the geniuses in Washington that if you blow a hole in the belts to, say, allow for the safe passage of spacecraft, you would also presumably allow for the unsafe passage of massive amounts of incoming, and very lethal, radiation.

This, dear readers, says a lot about the true nature of the men who rule behind the curtain. What hubris is required to put at risk every living creature on this planet, and do so without even giving it a second thought, for the dubious purpose of facilitating space missions that were never going to actually take place? And bear in mind, by the way, that these 'tests' took place during the tenure of a nearly mythical figure known as John Fitzgerald Kennedy. For those then who are inclined to believe that the sitting President actually calls the shots, I would suggest taking a little time to contemplate why it is that the man who many consider to have been a knight-in-shining-armor was the man who gave the thumbs-up to the most recklessly arrogant nuclear weapons tests ever conceived?

The first such tests were conducted in 1958, almost immediately after the discovery of the radiation bands. But those tests used just lowly ol' atom bombs, and according to NPR, "Atom bombs had little effect on the magnetosphere." Which is why in 1962, the powers-that-be decided to up the ante by using hydrogen bombs ... really, really big hydrogen bombs. How big? Starfish Prime, the most 'successful' of the 'tests,' was tipped with a warhead 100 times as powerful as the bomb that leveled Hiroshima!

As detailed by NPR, "The plan was to send rockets hundreds of miles up, higher than the Earth's atmosphere, and then detonate nuclear weapons to see: a) If a bomb's radiation would make it harder to see what was up there (like incoming Russian missiles!); b) If an explosion would do any damage to objects nearby; c) If the Van Allen belts would move a blast down the bands to an earthly target (Moscow! for example); and – most peculiar – d) if a man-made explosion might 'alter' the natural shape of the belts. The scientific basis for these proposals is not clear."

Objective "a" roughly translates to: "we had to do it to protect ourselves from those crazy Russkies!" Those with atypically long memories may recall that before the collapse of the international Communist threat neatly coincided with the rise of the international Terrorist threat, that was pretty much the all-purpose excuse for all manner of heinous activities undertaken by the Western powers. The main problem here though is that Starfish Prime was detonated at an altitude of 250 miles, roughly 50 miles beyond low-Earth orbit, and I'm reasonably certain that Soviet ICBMs weren't designed to fly at anywhere near that altitude.

Moving on to "b," I feel fairly confident in saying that even back in 1962, at the tender age of two, I could have provided an answer to that question, and that answer would have been: "Yes, detonating a very large hydrogen bomb will cause extensive collateral damage. Duh!"

Proceeding to "c," I'm afraid I'm going to have to respectfully disagree with NPR on its decision to label "d" as the most peculiar. Attempting to take out Moscow in a nuclear holocaust redirected through the Van Allen belts has to rank pretty high up on the peculiarity scale. And what would be the point? Plausible deniability? "Looky what just happened to

Moscow! It's as if God himself struck a blow against the Evil Empire! I damn sure know we didn't do it!"

As for "d," altering the natural shape of the belts appears to have been the primary goal. Because as we all know, man can always improve upon the natural order of things. And it was immediately apparent, right from the time of their discovery, that the shape of the belts was entirely wrong for this planet. Sure, they would have been fine for, say, Mars or Venus – or even Pluto, before it was rudely kicked out of the Fraternity of Planets – but they were clearly unfit to circle this planet. So we had to try to fix them.

Luckily, we failed.

And with that, I really am now over my Apollo obsession. See you all back in Laurel Canyon!

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# WEIRD SCENES Inside The Canyon



**Laurel Canyon, Covert Ops &  
The Dark Heart of the Hippie Dream**

**David McGowan**

*with a foreword by Nick Bryant*

HEADPRESS



**WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON**

LAUREL CANYON, COVERT OPS &  
THE DARK HEART OF THE HIPPIE DREAM

DAVID McGOWAN

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# FOREWORD

## by Nick Bryant

OSCAR WILDE SAID OF ART, “THOSE WHO GO BENEATH THE SURFACE DO SO at their peril.” And author David McGowan has found that Wilde’s quote is quite prophetic for the rock’n’roll scene that thrived in Laurel Canyon in the 1960s and 1970s. *Weird Scenes Inside the Canyon* is McGowan taking a hammer to the icons and mythologies of 1960s counterculture, reducing them to dust, swept away by gusts of pomp, pretense, and even deceit. McGowan though isn’t wielding his hammer with the zeal of an establishment conformist or neocon, but rather in the same forlorn spirit as Nietzsche declaring that “God is dead.” As a homegrown product of Los Angeles with an encyclopedic knowledge of the southern California rock scene, McGowan appears to be essentially declaring that the gods of his youth are dead.

Laurel Canyon was the fountainhead for the peace, love, and brown rice vibes that overflowed America’s airwaves as the Vietnam War raged, but lurking beneath its tie-dyed and florid veneer was an exquisite darkness of drugs, unbridled debauchery, full-tilt depravity, and shocking carnage. When readers of this book are delivered to Laurel Canyon’s blood-drenched tapestry of murder and mayhem, they will have to decide whether or not those sinister synchronicities are uncanny coincidences, conspiracies—or perhaps a kaleidoscopic blending of both.

Sprinkled throughout these pages is the ominous specter of the military/intelligence complex, and perched quite literally atop Laurel Canyon was the top-secret Lookout Mountain Laboratory, which seems to be McGowan’s grand metaphor for Dr. Strangelove having a bird’s-eye view of the nascent hippie movement, treating it as though it were a

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petri dish brimming with a lethal biological weapon that could be unleashed in meticulously monitored increments. Indeed, many of Laurel Canyon's rock 'n' roll idols had former incarnations steeped in the world of military/intelligence operations. Jim Morrison, aka "the Lizard King," was one such example. Mr. Mojo Risin' didn't much like to talk about his parents and was even known to tell reporters that his parents were dead. But as it turns out, Lizard King, Sr. was not only alive and well, he just happened to be the commander of the US warships that allegedly came under attack by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin, sparking America's napalm-fueled bloodbath in Vietnam.

Frank Zappa, another major mover and shaker of the Laurel Canyon scene, was certainly the raddest of the rad, so surely he couldn't have had any connections to the military/intelligence complex... right? Not exactly. According to various accounts collected by McGowan, Zappa was a pro-military autocrat who didn't really resonate with the counterculture's peace and love vibe. Like the Lizard King's dad, Zappa, Sr. was a cog in the intelligence community's dark machinations; Francis Zappa was a chemical warfare specialist with a top security clearance at Edgewood Arsenal near Baltimore, Maryland. Some readers might recognize Edgewood as the location of ominous mind control experiments conducted by the CIA under the rubric of MK-ULTRA.

Guilt by familial association has the potential to be an ill-fated formula for speculation, but McGowan relates accounts of Laurel Canyon luminaries whose own hands were possibly awash in the blood of the military/intelligence complex. Consider, for example, "Papa" John Phillips, who penned the smash hit San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair), imploring thousands of runaways to make bacchanal-laced pilgrimages to the City by the Bay. The son of a Marine Corps captain, Phillips was among the more prominent fixtures of Laurel Canyon who had a particularly interesting interrelationship with the military machine.

Rock superstar Stephen Stills was the cofounder of two Laurel Canyon dynamos—Buffalo Springfield, and, of course, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. Surely then hippie icon Stills couldn't possibly be enmeshed in the military-intelligence complex? Maybe, maybe not. The progeny of yet another military family, Stills spent chunks of his childhood in El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Panama, where the US has a history of spread-



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ing a genocidal form of “democracy.” And McGowan has sifted through accounts of Stills actually confessing to running around the jungles of Vietnam in the early 1960s—anecdotes generally dismissed, as the author notes, as drug-fueled delusions.

Tales of drugs, unbridled debauchery and full-tilt depravity are often populated by ethical eunuchs whose elite deviance yields to particularly malignant appetites, and the people calling Laurel Canyon home were no exception. McGowan introduces us to aging beatnik Vito Paulekas and his “Freaks,” a dance troupe of Dionysian goddesses who accompanied Vito to the LA nightclubs where the fledgling Laurel Canyon bands were playing their early gigs. In addition to saturating the dance floors with sultry young nubilees for emerging bands, Vito was also a purveyor of teenage girls for the up-and-coming rockers. McGowan also comments on Vito’s swift exodus to Haiti, for reasons explained herein.

Vito Paulekas certainly isn’t a household name, but he was far from being a fringe player on the Laurel Canyon scene, where he and his Freaks mingled freely with rock ‘n’ roll’s burgeoning royalty. McGowan collects anecdotes suggesting that Vito may have played a key role in the formation and early success of the Byrds—though his name is conspicuously absent from the autobiographical tome of Byrds co-founder David Crosby. We also find Vito in a string of low-budget films, and in a cameo appearance on one of rock’s first concept albums: Zappa’s *Freak Out!* Vito’s parental skills, however, left a lot to be desired, as evinced by the very mysterious and bizarre death of his young son, Godo.

Further excavating the idolatry of his youth, McGowan encounters Laurel Canyon fixture Billy Bryars, a male madam and gay porn entrepreneur. Bryers was investigated for trafficking child pornography in the 1970s, whereupon his stable of male hustlers began coughing up the names of frequent flyers at his bordello, the most notable among them being super freak G-man J. Edgar Hoover and partner Clyde Tolson.

The 1960s was a “revolutionary” epoch not only in music but also in Hollywood, and McGowan discusses the symbiosis between the Laurel Canyon music scene and Hollywood’s “Young Turks,” with the box office phenomenon *Easy Rider* providing a salient nexus between Laurel Canyon rockers and Hollywood upstarts. Many of those upstarts, including Warren Beatty, Peter and Jane Fonda, Jack Nicholson, Candice Bergen, Marlon Brando, Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate, Peter Lawford, Den-

nis Hopper, Ryan O'Neal, Mia Farrow, Peter Sellers, and Zsa Zsa Gabor, were among Papa John and Mama Michelle Phillips' circle of friends.

Also making the rounds in Laurel Canyon was America's favorite psychopath, Charles Manson. And Charlie and his "Family" weren't just a peripheral flock of crazed killers among the Laurel Canyon sovereigns; to the contrary, the Family mingled with many of the Canyon's rock stars. Manson even laid down tracks in Brian Wilson's home studio, stunning the likes of Neil Young. "He had this kind of music that nobody else was doing," said Neil of Charlie. "I thought he really had something crazy, something great. He was like a living poet." Charlie also impressed Terry Melcher, the Byrds' first producer and a major force in sculpting the Laurel Canyon music scene. Melcher also recorded Manson, finding him to be a much more amicable character than David Crosby.

Manson's homicidal lieutenant Bobby Beausoleil also had some impressive moves as a guitarist—and an occultist. Beausoleil played in a number of forgotten bands that had an occult topspin, one of which even opened for Buffalo Springfield. Bobby eventually landed a gig as a rhythm guitarist for the Grass Roots, which later transmuted into the Laurel Canyon band Love.

McGowan also touches on the grisly "Four on the Floor" or "Wonderland" murders, which left notorious drug dealer Ron Launius and three of his gang bludgeoned to death on the floor of a house on Laurel Canyon's Wonderland Avenue. Launius dealt drugs to Laurel Canyon's aristocracy, as well as to porn star John Holmes, then in the twilight of his career. Holmes also befriended LA crime boss/club owner Eddie Nash, who he then betrayed, with fatal consequences.

Truth be told, the Manson and Wonderland Murders were merely spatters on Laurel Canyon's blood-drenched tapestry. In the pages of this fascinating book, McGowan chronicles tale after tale of suicide and murder, while delivering readers to a web of sinister synchronicities. Ultimately, it is up to the reader to decide whether Laurel Canyon, in its heyday, was the counterculture haven portrayed by other chroniclers of the era, or whether it was the epicenter of intrigues whose ripple effects are like the aftershock of a nuclear bomb.

Nick Bryant  
*July 29, 2013*





**"I think these days, especially in the States, you have to be a politician or an assassin or something to really be a superstar." Jim Morrison**

*Before he was the Lizard King: US Navy Admiral George Stephen Morrison and his son, James Douglas Morrison, on the bridge of the USS Bon Homme Richard, January 1964.*

*This book is dedicated to all those whose blood still stains the canyon floor.*

# PREFACE

IT BEGAN INNOCENTLY ENOUGH.

In my normal, everyday life I spend a fair amount of time researching corruption and criminality in the realms of politics and law enforcement. Much of that research has taken me down some very dark and twisted paths. But this was going to be different. I was, after all, going to be vacationing in a lush, tropical paradise and I really just wanted to turn my brain off for a couple weeks and forget about all of that.

Not long before this much-anticipated break from reality, my eldest daughter had given me a copy of Michael Walker's *Laurel Canyon: The Inside Story of Rock-and-Roll's Legendary Neighborhood*, which chronicles the Los Angeles music scene of the late 1960s through the 1970s. It seemed like the ideal escapist entertainment that would undoubtedly conjure up many fond memories of the music that provided the soundtrack to my formative years. What could be further removed from my usual reading material?

As is often the case though, things didn't work out exactly as planned. Alarm bells started going off in my head soon after arriving at my destination and diving into the book. What was this about secret underground tunnels connecting some of the iconic Laurel Canyon properties? And what about all those mysterious fires that wiped away the homes of a number of prominent singers and musicians? And why were there so many violent deaths so closely associated with a scene that was supposed to be all about peace and love? And what of Walker's throwaway mention of a "secret fortified" military installation sitting right smack-dab in the middle of hippiedom? And why did at least a few of America's new minstrels seem to come from career military families and from the world of covert intelligence operations? And how exactly do the casual allusions to pedophilia fit into this increasingly curious scene?

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While Walker had done a decent job of telling the Laurel Canyon story from a mainstream perspective, there seemed to be a much more intriguing story hidden in the details that he tended to cast aside as interesting but largely meaningless incongruities. Before I was even halfway through my sorely needed rest-and-relaxation time, I was champing at the bit to get back home and dig deeper into this story. And immediately upon my return, I began devouring everything I could find that had been written on the subject.

Although I am regarded by many people as a ‘conspiracy theorist,’ which is more often than not utilized as a pejorative term, I do all of my research through very mainstream channels. I am a big believer in the notion that ‘the truth is out there,’ but don’t expect it to be delivered to you in a tidy package by any mainstream media outlets. Finding it involves assembling a jigsaw puzzle of sorts, with the goal being to gather up all the bits and pieces of information that other writers tend to present as throwaway facts and/or interesting anomalies. Sometimes those bits and pieces end up being no more than interesting anomalies, but past experience has taught me that if those divergent facts are properly assembled, a new picture often begins to emerge that is strikingly at odds with what is widely accepted as our consensus reality.

At the end of the day, it is really all about pattern recognition. If, for example, just a few prominent Laurel Canyon musicians happened to come from military/intelligence families, then we could probably safely write that off as an interesting but largely inconsequential aberration. But if an uncanny number of the leading lights of the Laurel Canyon scene grew up in such an environment, then that is clearly a meaningful pattern. And if a few of the new breed of stars happened to have violent death intrude upon their personal lives, then that would be a tragic but largely inconsequential fact. But when it becomes clear that violent death surrounded the entire scene, with whole families at times dying off under suspicious circumstances, then that again is a distinguishing pattern—and one that has been all but ignored by other chroniclers of the scene.

There is little doubt in my mind that this book will not be warmly received by all readers. In our celebrity-driven culture, calling into question the character and motivations of so many widely admired and respected figures from the entertainment community is never a good



## P R E F A C E

way to win popularity contests. And when those revered figures are overwhelmingly viewed as icons of various leftist causes, it is definitely not the way to win fans among those who consider themselves to be liberals, progressives or leftists. But while my sympathies lie solidly in the leftward flanks of the political spectrum, there are no sacred cows in either this book or in any of my past work.

I really have no agenda other than to seek out unspoken truths and better my own understanding of the world we live in. I have no political party affiliations and have never been associated in any way with any governmental or quasi-governmental entities. And for the record, I was not born into the world of military intelligence operations; my rather uneventful childhood was spent in a quiet slice of suburbia with two public school teachers as parents. I have never claimed to be in possession of any 'inside information' or to have access to any highly placed, confidential sources. My research and the views expressed in my work are very much my own.

While almost all of my past and present literary contributions are generally regarded as being quite controversial, the individual facts contained in this volume are not really controversial at all. All of them, as previously noted, have been mined from very respectable mainstream sources. It is only the way that I have presented those facts—in other words, the way that I have chosen to assemble the puzzle—that makes them controversial.

There will undoubtedly be those who will stridently claim that I have carefully cherry-picked my facts to paint an unnecessarily dark portrait of many of the iconic figures who make up the cast of this story. Anyone, so the argument goes, could be made to look bad through such a journalistic approach. I would strongly disagree with that assessment, however. Such criticisms, in my opinion, completely miss the point of the book—which is that when stripped of the usual spin that accompanies them, and when assembled so that they become part of overriding patterns, these 'anomalous' facts reveal truths that would not otherwise be visible.

Another criticism I anticipate is that I did not go out and attempt to speak directly to the people who made up the scene. True enough, but the primary reason for that is that there is very little chance that the aging rock stars and their handlers would have wanted anything to

do with me. Other chroniclers of the era have gained access to those involved, but that access has come, or so it appears to me, with a steep price in journalistic integrity. The inevitable result is what amounts to puff pieces with a mind-numbing sameness, with the same tired anecdotal stories uncritically told over and over again in the very same way, even when those stories can't possibly be true.

I have no desire to serve as a publicist for the estates of Jim Morrison, John Phillips or Frank Zappa, nor do I have any interest in filling the pages of this book with the same apocryphal tales told by other scribes. There are any number of literary offerings listed in the bibliography that will provide that type of a reading experience. My goal here is to break new ground and open readers' minds to the possibility that other writers may have left out some of the most important elements of this underreported tale.

The story of the scene that played out in Laurel Canyon from the mid-1960s through the end of the 1970s is an endlessly fascinating one. It wasn't until fairly recently that the mainstream version of the tale was belatedly told, and even now it remains a story unknown by most of those who were not a part of it. Virtually everyone has heard of the Haight-Ashbury scene up north in San Francisco, but even most native Angelenos remain ignorant of the even larger music and counterculture scene that played out in the Hollywood Hills.

It seems a bit odd that, nearly a full half-century after the fact, the Haight is almost universally regarded as the birthplace of hippies and flower children, despite the fact that the Laurel Canyon scene preceded and largely inspired what became a parallel scene up north. Why is it that the Haight has been thrust into the spotlight for so long while so little attention has been paid to the scene that spawned it? Perhaps the Laurel Canyon scene was hiding so many dark secrets that it was better to just let it lie undisturbed.

And perhaps it is now time to shine a light into some of the darker corners of the canyon to see what kind of skeletons might be hiding there.

# 1

## VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED BY WAY OF AN INTRODUCTION

**“There’s something happening here /  
What it is ain’t exactly clear”**

JOIN ME NOW, IF YOU HAVE THE TIME, AS WE TAKE A STROLL DOWN MEMORY lane to a time nearly five decades ago—a time when America last had uniformed ground troops fighting a sustained and bloody battle to impose some decidedly Orwellian ‘democracy’ on a sovereign nation.

It is the first week of August, 1964, and US warships under the command of US Navy Admiral George Stephen Morrison have allegedly come under attack while patrolling Vietnam’s Tonkin Gulf. This event, subsequently dubbed the ‘Tonkin Gulf Incident,’ will result in the immediate passing by the US Congress of the obviously pre-drafted Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which will, in turn, quickly lead to America’s deep immersion into the bloody Vietnam quagmire. Before it is over, well over 50,000 American bodies—along with literally millions of Southeast Asian bodies—will litter the battlefields of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

For the record, the Tonkin Gulf Incident appears to differ somewhat from other alleged provocations that have driven this country to war. This was not, as we have seen so many times before, a ‘false flag’ operation (which is to say, an operation that involves Uncle Sam attacking himself and then pointing an accusatory finger at someone else). It was also not, as we have also seen on more than one occasion, an

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attack that was quite deliberately provoked. No, what the Tonkin Gulf Incident actually was, as it turns out, is an 'attack' that never took place at all. The entire incident, as has been all but officially acknowledged, was spun from whole cloth. (It is quite possible, however, that the *intent* was to provoke a defensive response, which could have then been cast as an unprovoked attack on U.S. ships. The ships in question were on an intelligence mission and were operating in a decidedly provocative manner. It is quite possible that when Vietnamese forces failed to respond as anticipated, Uncle Sam decided to just pretend as though they had.)

Nevertheless, by early February 1965, the US will—without a declaration of war and with no valid reason to wage one—begin indiscriminately bombing North Vietnam. By March of that same year, the infamous Operation Rolling Thunder will commence. Over the course of the next three-and-a-half years, millions of tons of bombs, missiles, rockets, incendiary devices and chemical warfare agents will be dumped on the people of Vietnam in what can only be described as one of the worst crimes against humanity ever perpetrated on this planet.

Also in March of 1965, the first uniformed US soldier officially sets foot on Vietnamese soil (although Special Forces units masquerading as 'advisers' and 'trainers' have been there for at least four years, and likely much longer). By April 1965, fully 25,000 uniformed American kids, most still teenagers barely out of high school, are slogging through the rice paddies of Vietnam. By the end of the year, US troop strength will have surged to 200,000.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the world in those early months of 1965, a new 'scene' is just beginning to take shape in the city of Los Angeles. In a geographically and socially isolated community known as Laurel Canyon—a heavily wooded, rustic, serene, yet vaguely ominous slice of LA nestled in the hills that separate the Los Angeles basin from the San Fernando Valley—musicians, singers and songwriters suddenly begin to gather as though summoned there by some unseen Pied Piper. Within months, the 'hippie/flower child' movement is begotten there, along with the new style of music that will provide the soundtrack for the tumultuous second half of the 1960s.

Beginning in the mid-1960s and carrying through the decade of the 1970s, an uncanny number of rock music superstars will emerge from

Laurel Canyon. The first to drop an album is the Byrds, whose biggest star will prove to be David Crosby. The band's debut effort, *Mr. Tambourine Man*, is released on the summer solstice of 1965. It will quickly be followed by releases from the John Phillips-led Mamas and the Papas (*If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears*, January 1966), Love with Arthur Lee (*Love*, May 1966), Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention (*Freak Out*, June 1966), Buffalo Springfield, featuring Stephen Stills and Neil Young (*Buffalo Springfield*, October 1966), and the Doors (*The Doors*, January 1967).

One of the earliest on the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene is Jim Morrison, the enigmatic lead singer of the Doors. Jim will quickly become one of the most iconic, controversial, critically acclaimed, and influential figures to take up residence in Laurel Canyon. Curiously enough though, the self-proclaimed "Lizard King" has another claim to fame as well, albeit one that none of his numerous chroniclers will feel is of much relevance to his career and possible untimely death: he is the son, as it happens, of the aforementioned Admiral George Stephen Morrison.

And so it is that, even while the father is actively conspiring to fabricate an incident that will be used to massively accelerate an illegal war, the son is positioning himself to become an icon of the 'hippie'/anti-war crowd. Nothing unusual about that, I suppose. It is, you know, a small world and all. And it is not as if Jim Morrison's story is in any way unique.

During the early years of its heyday, Laurel Canyon's father figure is the rather eccentric personality known as Frank Zappa. Though he and his various Mothers of Invention lineups will never attain the commercial success of the band headed by the admiral's son, Frank will be a hugely influential figure among his contemporaries. Enconced in an abode dubbed the 'Log Cabin'—which sat right in the heart of Laurel Canyon, at the crossroads of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue—Zappa will play host to virtually every musician who passes through the canyon in the mid- to late-1960s. He will also discover and sign numerous acts to his various Laurel Canyon-based record labels. Many of these acts will be rather bizarre and somewhat obscure characters (think Captain Beefheart and Larry "Wild Man" Fischer), but some of them, such as psychedelic rocker cum shock-rocker

Alice Cooper, will go on to superstardom.

Zappa, along with certain members of his sizable entourage (the Log Cabin was run as an early commune, with numerous hangers-on occupying various rooms in the main house and the guest house, as well as the peculiar caves and tunnels lacing the grounds of the home; far from the quaint homestead the name seems to imply, the Log Cabin was a cavernous five-level home that featured a 2,000+ square-foot living room with three massive chandeliers and an enormous floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace), will also be instrumental in introducing the look and attitude that will define the 'hippie' counterculture—although the Zappa crew prefers the label 'freak'. Nevertheless, Zappa will never really make a secret of the fact that he has nothing but contempt for the hippie culture that he will help create and with which he will surround himself.

Given that Zappa is, by various accounts, a pro-military, rigidly authoritarian control-freak, it is perhaps unsurprising that he will not feel a kinship with the youth movement that he will help nurture. And it is probably safe to say that Frank's dad also would have had little regard for the youth culture of the 1960s, given that Francis Zappa was, in case you were wondering, a chemical warfare specialist assigned to—where else?—the Edgewood Arsenal near Baltimore, Maryland. Edgewood is, of course, the longtime home of America's chemical warfare program, as well as a facility frequently cited as being deeply enmeshed in MKULTRA operations. Curiously enough, Frank Zappa literally grew up at the Edgewood Arsenal, having lived the first seven years of his life in military housing on the grounds of the facility. The family later moved to Lancaster, California, near Edwards Air Force Base, where Francis Zappa continued to busy himself doing classified work for the military/intelligence complex. His son, meanwhile, prepped himself to become an icon of the peace and love crowd. Again, nothing unusual about that, I suppose.

Zappa's manager is a shadowy character by the name of Herb Cohen, who had come out to LA from the Bronx with his brother Mutt just before the music and club scene began heating up. Cohen, a former US Marine, had spent a few years traveling the world before his arrival on the Laurel Canyon scene. Those travels, curiously, had taken him to the Congo in 1961, at the very time that leftist Prime Minister Patrice



Lumumba was being tortured and killed by our very own CIA. Not to worry though; according to one of Zappa's biographers, Cohen wasn't in the Congo on some kind of nefarious intelligence mission. No, he was there, on the contrary, *to supply arms to Lumumba* "in defiance of the CIA." Because, you know, that is the kind of thing that globetrotting ex-Marines did in those days (as we'll see soon enough when we take a look at another Laurel Canyon luminary).

Making up the other half of Laurel Canyon's First Family is Frank's wife, Gail Zappa, known formerly as Adelaide Sloatman. Gail hails from a long line of career Naval officers, including her father, who spent his life working on classified nuclear weapons research for the US Navy. Gail herself once worked as a secretary for the Office of Naval Research and Development (she also once told an interviewer that she had "heard voices all [her] life"). Many years before their nearly simultaneous arrival in Laurel Canyon, Gail had attended a Naval kindergarten class with "Mr. Mojo Risin'" himself, Jim Morrison (it is claimed that, as children, Gail once hit Jim over the head with a hammer). The very same Jim Morrison had later attended the same Alexandria, Virginia, high school as two other future Laurel Canyon luminaries—John Phillips and Cass Elliot.

"Papa" John Phillips, more so than probably any of the other illustrious residents of Laurel Canyon, will play a major role in spreading the emerging youth 'counterculture' across America. His contribution will be twofold: first, he will co-organize the famed Monterey Pop Festival, which, through unprecedented media exposure, will give mainstream America its first real look at the music and fashions of the nascent hippie movement. Second, Phillips will pen an insipid song known as San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear Flowers In Your Hair), which will quickly rise to the top of the charts. Along with the Monterey Pop Festival, the song will be instrumental in luring the disenfranchised (a preponderance of whom will be underage runaways) to San Francisco to create the Haight-Ashbury phenomenon and the famed 1967 Summer of Love.

Before arriving in Laurel Canyon and opening the doors of his home to the soon-to-be famous, the already famous, and the infamous (such as Charlie Manson, whose 'Family' also spent time at the Log Cabin and at the Laurel Canyon home of "Mama" Cass Elliot, which, in case you didn't know, sat right across the road from the Laurel Canyon home

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of Abigail Folger and Voytek Frykowski, but let's not get ahead of ourselves here), John Edmund Andrew Phillips was, shockingly enough, yet another child of the military/intelligence complex. The son of US Marine Corp Captain Claude Andrew Phillips and a mother who claimed to have psychic and telekinetic powers, John attended a series of elite military prep schools in the Washington, DC area, culminating in an appointment to the prestigious US Naval Academy at Annapolis.

After leaving Annapolis, John married Susie Adams, a direct descendant of Founding Father John Adams. Susie's father, James Adams, Jr., had been involved in what Susie described as "cloak-and-dagger stuff with the Air Force in Vienna," or what others like to call covert intelligence operations. Susie herself would later find employment at the Pentagon, alongside John Phillips' older sister, Rosie, who dutifully reported to work at the complex for nearly thirty years. John's mother, "Dene" Phillips, also worked for most of her life for the federal government in some unspecified capacity. And John's older brother, Tommy, was a battle-scarred former US Marine who found work on the Alexandria police force as a cop, albeit one with a disciplinary record for exhibiting a violent streak when dealing with people of color.

John Phillips, of course—though surrounded throughout his life by military/intelligence personnel—did not involve himself in such matters. Or so we are to believe. Before succeeding in his musical career, however, John did seem to find himself, quite innocently of course, in some rather unusual places. One such place was Havana, Cuba, where Phillips arrived at the very height of the Cuban Revolution. For the record, Phillips has claimed that he went to Havana as nothing more than a concerned private citizen, with the intention of—you're going to love this one—"fighting for Castro." Because, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of folks in those days traveled abroad to thwart CIA operations before taking up residence in Laurel Canyon and joining the 'hippie' generation. During the two weeks or so that the Cuban Missile Crisis played out, a few years after Castro took power, Phillips found himself cooling his heels in Jacksonville, Florida—alongside the Mayport Naval Station.

Anyway, let's move on to yet another of Laurel Canyon's earliest and brightest stars, Mr. Stephen Stills. Stills will have the distinction of being a founding member of two of Laurel Canyon's most acclaimed and beloved bands: Buffalo Springfield, and, needless to say, Crosby, Stills

& Nash. In addition, Stills will pen perhaps the first, and certainly one of the most enduring anthems of the sixties generation, *For What It's Worth*, the opening lines of which appear at the top of this chapter (Stills' follow-up single will be entitled *Bluebird*, which, coincidentally or not, happens to be the original codename assigned to the CIA's MK-ULTRA program).

Before his arrival in Laurel Canyon, Stephen Stills was the product of yet another career military family. Raised partly in Texas, young Stephen spent large swaths of his childhood in El Salvador, Costa Rica, the Panama Canal Zone, and various other parts of Central America—alongside his father, who was, we can be fairly certain, helping to spread 'democracy' to the unwashed masses in that endearingly American way. As with the rest of our cast of characters, Stills was educated primarily at schools on military bases and at elite military academies. Among his contemporaries in Laurel Canyon, he was widely viewed as having an abrasive, authoritarian personality. Nothing unusual about any of that, of course, as we have already seen.

There is, however, an even more curious aspect to the Stephen Stills story: Stephen will later tell anyone who will sit and listen that he had served time for Uncle Sam in the jungles of Vietnam. These tales will be universally dismissed by chroniclers of the era as nothing more than drug-induced delusions. Such a thing couldn't possibly be true, it will be claimed, since Stills arrived on the Laurel Canyon scene at the very time that the first uniformed troops began shipping out and he remained in the public eye thereafter. And it will of course be quite true that Stephen Stills could not have served with uniformed ground troops in Vietnam, but what will be ignored is the undeniable fact that the US had thousands of 'advisers'—which is to say, CIA/Special Forces operatives—active in the country for a good many years before the arrival of the first official ground troops. What will also be ignored is that, given his background, his age, and the timeline of events, Stephen Stills not only could indeed have seen action in Vietnam, he would seem to have been a prime candidate for such an assignment. After which, of course, he could rather quickly become—stop me if you've heard this one before—an icon of the peace generation.

Another of those icons, and one of Laurel Canyon's most flamboyant residents, is a young man by the name of David Crosby, founding mem-

ber of the seminal Laurel Canyon band the Byrds, as well as, of course, Crosby, Stills & Nash. Crosby is, not surprisingly, the son of an Annapolis graduate and WWII military intelligence officer, Major Floyd Delafield Crosby. Like others in this story, Floyd Crosby spent much of his post-service time traveling the world. Those travels landed him in places like Haiti, where he paid a visit in 1927, when the country just happened to be, coincidentally of course, under military occupation by the US Marines. One of the Marines doing that occupying was a guy that we met earlier by the name of Captain Claude Andrew Phillips.

But David Crosby is much more than just the son of Major Floyd Delafield Crosby. David Van Cortlandt Crosby, as it turns out, is a scion of the closely intertwined van Cortlandt, van Schuyler and van Rensselaer families. And while you're probably thinking, "the Van Who families?," I can assure you that if you plug those names in over at Wikipedia, you can spend a pretty fair amount of time reading up on the power wielded by this clan for the last, oh, two-and-a-quarter centuries or so. Suffice it to say that the Crosby family tree includes a truly dizzying array of US senators and congressmen, state senators and assemblymen, governors, mayors, judges, Supreme Court justices, Revolutionary and Civil War generals, signers of the Declaration of Independence, and members of the Continental Congress. It also includes, I should hasten to add—for those of you with a taste for such things—more than a few high-ranking Masons. Stephen van Rensselaer III, for example, reportedly served as Grand Master of Masons for New York. And if all that isn't impressive enough, according to the New England Genealogical Society, David Van Cortlandt Crosby is also a direct descendant of Founding Fathers and Federalist Papers authors Alexander Hamilton and John Jay.

If there is, as many believe, a network of elite families that has shaped national and world events for a very long time, then it is probably safe to say that David Crosby is a bloodline member of that clan (which may explain, come to think of it, why his semen seems to be in such demand in certain circles—because, if we're being honest here, it certainly can't be due to his looks or talent). If America had royalty, then David Crosby would probably be a Duke, or a Prince, or something similar. But other than that, he is just a normal, run-of-the-mill kind of guy who just happened to shine as one of Laurel Canyon's brightest stars. And who, I guess I should add, has a real fondness for guns, espe-

cially handguns, which he has maintained a sizable collection of for his entire life. According to those closest to him, it is a rare occasion when Mr. Crosby is not packing heat (John Phillips also owned and sometimes carried handguns). And according to Crosby himself, he has, on at least one occasion, discharged a firearm in anger at another human being. All of which made him, of course, an obvious choice for the Flower Children to rally around.

Another shining star on the Laurel Canyon scene, just a few years later, will be singer-songwriter Jackson Browne, who is—are you getting as bored with this as I am?—the product of a career military family. Browne’s father was assigned to postwar reconstruction work in Germany, which very likely means that he was in the employ of the OSS, precursor to the CIA. As readers of my earlier work, *Understanding the F-Word*, may recall, US involvement in postwar reconstruction in Germany largely consisted of maintaining as much of the Nazi infrastructure as possible while shielding war criminals from capture and prosecution. Against that backdrop, Jackson Browne was born in a military hospital in Heidelberg, Germany. Some two decades later, he emerged as... oh, never mind.

Let’s talk instead about three other Laurel Canyon vocalists who will rise to dizzying heights of fame and fortune: Gerry Beckley, Dan Peek and Dewey Bunnell. Individually, these three names are probably unknown to virtually all readers, but collectively, as the band America, the three will score huge hits in the early seventies with such songs as Ventura Highway, A Horse With No Name, and the Wizard of Oz-themed The Tin Man. I guess I probably don’t need to add here that all three of these lads were products of the military/intelligence community. Beckley’s dad was the commander of the now-defunct West Ruislip USAF base near London, England, a facility deeply immersed in intelligence operations. Bunnell’s and Peek’s fathers were both career Air Force officers serving under Beckley’s dad at West Ruislip, which is where the three boys first met.

We could also, I suppose, discuss Mike Nesmith of the Monkees and Cory Wells of Three Dog Night (two more hugely successful Laurel Canyon bands), who both arrived in LA not long after serving time with the US Air Force. Nesmith also inherited a family fortune estimated at \$25 million. Gram Parsons, who will briefly replace David Crosby in the

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Byrds before fronting the Flying Burrito Brothers, was the son of Major Cecil Ingram “Coon Dog” Connor II, a decorated military officer and bomber pilot who reportedly flew over fifty combat missions. Parsons was also an heir, on his mother’s side, to the formidable Snively family fortune. Said to be the wealthiest family in the exclusive enclave of Winter Haven, Florida, the Snively family was the proud owner of Snively Groves, Inc., which reportedly owned as much as one-third of all the citrus groves in the state of Florida.

And so it goes as one scrolls through the roster of Laurel Canyon superstars. What one finds, far more often than not, are the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence complex and the sons and daughters of extreme wealth and privilege—oftentimes, you’ll find both rolled into one convenient package. Every once in a while, you will also stumble across a former child actor, like Brandon DeWilde, or Monkee Mickey Dolenz, or eccentric prodigy Van Dyke Parks. You might also encounter some former mental patients, such as James Taylor, who spent time in two different mental institutions in Massachusetts before hitting the Laurel Canyon scene, or Larry “Wild Man” Fischer, who was institutionalized repeatedly during his teen years, once for attacking his mother with a knife (an act that was gleefully mocked by Zappa on the cover of Fischer’s first album). Finally, you might find the offspring of an organized crime figure, like Warren Zevon, the son of William “Stumpy” Zevon, a lieutenant for infamous LA crimelord Mickey Cohen.

All these folks gathered nearly simultaneously along the narrow, winding roads of Laurel Canyon. They came from across the country—although the Washington, DC area was noticeably over-represented—as well as from Canada and England, and, in at least one case, all the way from Nazi Germany. They came even though, at the time, there was no music industry in Los Angeles. They came even though, at the time, there was no live music scene to speak of. They came even though, in retrospect, there was no discernible reason for them to do so.

It would, of course, make sense these days for an aspiring musician to venture out to Los Angeles. But in those days, the centers of the music universe were Nashville, Memphis and New York. It wasn’t the industry that drew the Laurel Canyon crowd, you see, but rather the Laurel Canyon crowd that transformed Los Angeles into the epicenter of the music industry. To what then do we attribute this unprecedented-



ed gathering of future musical superstars in the hills above Los Angeles? What was it that inspired them all to head out west? Perhaps Neil Young said it best when he told an interviewer that he couldn't really say why he headed out to LA circa 1966; he and others "were just going like Lemmings."

## 2

# POWER TO THE PEOPLE CALL THIS A COUNTERCULTURE?

**“Everyone there had at one time or another been into Satanism, or, like myself, had dabbled around the edges for sexual kicks.”** Sammy Davis, Jr., referring to the victims at 10050 Cielo Drive

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, WE MET A SAMPLING OF SOME OF THE MOST successful and influential rock music superstars who emerged from Laurel Canyon during its glory days. But these were, alas, more than just musicians and singers and songwriters who had come together in the canyon; they were destined to become the spokesmen and *de facto* leaders of a generation of disaffected youth (as Carl Gottlieb noted in David Crosby’s co-written autobiography, “the unprecedented mass appeal of the new rock’n’roll gave the singers a voice in public affairs”). That, of course, makes it all the more curious that these icons were, to an overwhelming degree, the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence complex and the scions of families that have wielded vast wealth and power in this country for a very long time.

It could of course be argued that there was nothing necessarily nefarious in the fact that so many of these icons of a past generation hailed from military/intelligence families. Perhaps, it could be suggested, they had embarked on their chosen careers as a form of rebellion against the values of their parents. And that, I suppose, might be true in a couple of

cases. But what are we to conclude from the fact that such an astonishing number of these folks (along with their girlfriends, wives, managers, etc.) hail from a similar background? Are we to believe that the *only* kids from that era who had musical talent were the sons and daughters of Navy admirals, chemical warfare engineers and Air Force intelligence officers? Or are they just the only ones who were signed to lucrative contracts and relentlessly promoted by their labels and the media?

If these artists were rebelling against, rather than subtly promoting, the values of their parents, then why didn't they ever speak out against the people they were allegedly rebelling against? Why did Jim Morrison never denounce, or even mention, his father's key role in escalating one of America's bloodiest illegal wars? And why did Frank Zappa never pen a song exploring the horrors of chemical warfare (though he did pen a charming little ditty entitled *Ritual Dance Of The Child-Killer*)? And which Mamas and the Papas song was it that laid waste to the values and actions of John Phillips' parents and in-laws? And in which interview, exactly, did David Crosby and Stephen Stills disown the family values that they were raised with?

We will be taking a much closer look at these performers, as well as at many of their contemporaries, as we endeavor to determine how and why the youth 'counterculture' of the 1960s was given birth. According to virtually all the accounts that I have read, this was essentially a spontaneous, organic response to the war in Southeast Asia and to the prevailing social conditions of the time. 'Conspiracy theorists,' of course, have frequently opined that what began as a legitimate movement was at some point co-opted and undermined by intelligence operations such as ColIntelPro. Entire books, for example, have been written examining how presumably virtuous musical artists were subjected to FBI harassment and/or whacked by the CIA.

Here we will, as you may have already ascertained, take a decidedly different approach. The question that we will be tackling is a more deeply troubling one: "what if *the musicians themselves* (and various other leaders and founders of the 'movement') were every bit as much a part of the intelligence community as the people who were supposedly harassing them?" What if, in other words, the entire youth culture of the 1960s was created not as a grass-roots challenge to the status quo, but as a cynical exercise in discrediting and marginalizing the bud-

ding anti-war movement and creating a fake opposition that could be easily controlled and led astray? And what if the harassment these folks were subjected to was largely a stage-managed show designed to give the leaders of the counterculture some much-needed 'street cred'? What if, in reality, they were pretty much all playing on the same team?

I should probably mention here that, contrary to popular opinion, the hippie/flower child movement was not synonymous with the anti-war movement. As time passed, there was, to be sure, a fair amount of overlap between the two 'movements.' And the mass media outlets, as is their wont, did their very best to portray the flower-power generation as the torch-bearers of the anti-war movement—after all, a ragtag band of unwashed, drug-fueled long-hairs sporting flowers and peace symbols was far easier to marginalize than, say, a bunch of respected college professors and their concerned students. The reality, however, is that the anti-war movement was already well underway before the first aspiring 'hippie' arrived in Laurel Canyon. The first Vietnam War 'teach-in' was held on the campus of the University of Michigan in March of 1965. The first organized walk on Washington occurred just a few weeks later. Needless to say, there were no hippies in attendance at either event. That 'problem' would soon be rectified. And the anti-war crowd—those who were serious about ending the bloodshed in Vietnam, anyway—would be none too appreciative.

As Barry Miles has written in his coffee-table book, *Hippie*, there were some hippies involved in anti-war protests, "particularly after the police riot in Chicago in 1968 when so many people got injured, but on the whole the movement activists looked on hippies with disdain." Peter Coyote, narrating the documentary *Hippies* on the History Channel, added that, "Some on the left even theorized that the hippies were the end result of a plot by the CIA to neutralize the anti-war movement with LSD, turning potential protestors into self-absorbed naval-gazers." An exasperated Abbie Hoffman once described the scene as he remembered it thusly: "There were all these activists, you know, Berkeley radicals, White Panthers... all trying to stop the war and change things for the better. Then we got flooded with all these 'flower children' who were into drugs and sex. *Where the hell did the hippies come from?!*"

As it turns out, they came, initially at least, from a rather private, isolated, largely self-contained neighborhood in Los Angeles known as

Laurel Canyon. In contrast to the other canyons slicing through the Hollywood Hills, Laurel Canyon has its own market, the semi-famous Laurel Canyon Country Store; its own deli and cleaners; its own elementary school, the Wonderland School; its own boutique shops and salons; and, in more recent years, its own celebrity rehab facility named, as you may have guessed, the Wonderland Center. During its heyday, the canyon even had its own management company, Lookout Management, to handle the talent. At one time, it even had its own newspaper.

One other thing that I should add here is that this has not been an easy line of research for me to conduct, primarily because I have been, for as long as I can remember, a huge fan of 1960s music and culture. Though I didn't come of age, so to speak, until the 1970s, I have always felt as though I was cheated by being denied the opportunity to experience firsthand the era that I was so obviously meant to inhabit. During my high school and college years, while my peers were mostly into faceless corporate rock (think Journey, Foreigner, Kansas, Boston, etc.) and, perhaps worse yet, the twin horrors of new wave and disco music, I was faithfully spinning my Hendrix, Joplin and Doors albums (which I still have, in the original vinyl versions) while my color organ (remember those?) competed with my black light and strobe light. I grew my hair long until well past the age when it should have been sheared off. I may have even strung beads across the doorway to my room... but it is possible that I am confusing my life with that of Greg Brady, who, as we all remember, once converted his dad's home office into a groovy bachelor pad.

Anyway, one of the most difficult aspects of this journey that I have been on for the last fifteen years or so has been watching so many of my former idols and mentors fall by the wayside as it became increasingly clear to me that people who I once thought were the good guys were, in reality, something entirely different. The first to fall, naturally enough, were the establishment figures—the politicians who I once, quite foolishly, looked up to as people who were fighting the good fight, within the confines of the system, to bring about real change. Though it now pains me to admit this, there was a time when I admired the likes of (egads!) George McGovern and Jimmy Carter, as well as California pols Tom Hayden and Jerry Brown. I even had high hopes, oh-so-many-years-ago, for (am I really admitting this in print?) Bill Clinton.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

Since I mentioned Jerry “Governor Moonbeam” Brown, by the way, I must now digress just a bit. As luck would have it, Jerry Brown was, curiously enough, a longtime resident of a little place called Laurel Canyon. As readers of my previous work, *Programmed to Kill*, may recall, Brown lived on Wonderland Avenue, not too many doors down from 8763 Wonderland Avenue, the site of the infamous “Four on the Floor” murders, regarded by grizzled LA homicide detectives as the most bloody and brutal multiple murder in the city’s very bloody history.

As it turns out, the most bloody mass murder in LA’s history took place in one of the city’s most serene, pastoral and exclusive neighborhoods. And strangely enough, the case usually cited as the runner-up for the title of bloodiest crime scene—the murders of Stephen Parent, Sharon Tate, Jay Sebring, Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger at 10050 Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon, just a couple miles to the west of Laurel Canyon—had deep ties to the Laurel Canyon scene as well.

As previously mentioned, victims Folger and Frykowski lived in Laurel Canyon, at 2774 Woodstock Road, in a rented home right across the road from a favored gathering spot for Laurel Canyon royalty. Many of the regular visitors to Cass Elliot’s home, including a number of shady drug dealers, were also regular visitors to the Folger/Frykowski home. (Frykowski’s son, by the way, was stabbed to death on June 6, 1999, thirty years after his father met the same fate.) Victim Jay Sebring’s acclaimed hair salon sat right at the mouth of Laurel Canyon, just below the Sunset Strip, and it was Sebring, alas, who was credited with sculpting Jim Morrison’s famous mane. One of the investors in his Sebring International business venture was none other than Mr. John Phillips.

Sharon Tate was also well known in Laurel Canyon, where she was a frequent visitor to the homes of friends like John Phillips, Cass Elliot, and Abigail Folger. And when she wasn’t in Laurel Canyon, many of the canyon regulars, both famous and infamous, made themselves at home at her place on Cielo Drive. Canyonite Van Dyke Parks, for example, dropped by for a visit on the very day of the murders. And Denny Doherty, the other “Papa” in the Mamas and the Papas, has claimed that he and John Phillips were invited to the Cielo Drive home on the night of the murders, but, as luck would have it, they never made it over. (Similarly, Chuck Negron of Three Dog Night, a regular visitor to the Wonderland death house, had set up a drug buy on the night of that



mass murder, but he fell asleep and never made it over.)

Along with the victims, the alleged killers also lived in and/or were very much a part of the Laurel Canyon scene. Bobby “Cupid” Beausoleil, for example, lived in a Laurel Canyon apartment during the early months of 1969. Charles “Tex” Watson, who allegedly led the death squad responsible for the carnage at Cielo Drive, lived for a time in a home on—guess where?—Wonderland Avenue. During that time, curiously enough, Watson co-owned and worked in a wig shop in Beverly Hills, Crown Wig Creations, Ltd., that was located near the mouth of Benedict Canyon. Meanwhile, one of Jay Sebring’s primary claims-to-fame was his expertise in crafting men’s hairpieces, which he did in his shop near the mouth of Laurel Canyon. A typical day then in the late 1960s would find Watson crafting hairpieces for an upscale Hollywood clientele near Benedict Canyon, and then returning home to Laurel Canyon, while Sebring crafted hairpieces for an upscale Hollywood clientele near Laurel Canyon, and then returned home to Benedict Canyon. And then one crazy day, as we all know, one of them became a killer and the other his victim. But there’s nothing odd about that, I suppose, so let’s move on.

Oh, wait a minute... we can’t quite move on just yet, as I forgot to mention that Sebring’s Benedict Canyon home, at 9820 Easton Drive, was a rather infamous Hollywood death house that had once belonged to Jean Harlow and Paul Bern. The mismatched pair were wed on July 2, 1932, when Harlow, already a huge star of the silver screen, was just twenty-one years old. Just two months later, on September 5, Bern caught a bullet to the head in his wife’s bedroom. He was found sprawled naked in a pool of his own blood, his corpse drenched with his wife’s perfume. Upon discovering the body, Bern’s butler promptly contacted MGM’s head of security, Whitey Hendry, who in turn contacted Louis B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg. All three men descended upon the Benedict Canyon home to, you know, tidy up a bit. A couple hours later, they decided to contact the LAPD. This scene would be repeated years later when Sebring’s friends would rush to the very same home to clean up before officers investigating the Tate murders arrived.

Bern’s death was, as is so often the case, written off as a suicide. His newlywed wife, strangely enough, was never called as a witness at the inquest. Bern’s *other* wife—which is to say, his common-law wife, Dorothy Millette—reportedly boarded a Sacramento riverboat on Septem-

ber 6, 1932, the day after Paul's death. She was next seen floating belly up in the Sacramento River. Her death, as would be expected, was also ruled a suicide. Less than five years later, Harlow herself dropped dead at the ripe old age of twenty-six. At the time, authorities opted not to divulge the cause of death, though it was later claimed that bad kidneys had done her in. During her brief stay on this planet, Harlow had cycled through three turbulent marriages and yet still found time to serve as godmother to Bugsy Siegel's daughter, Millicent.

Though Bern's was the most famous body to be hauled out of the Easton Drive house in a coroner's bag, it certainly wasn't the only one. Another man had reportedly committed suicide there as well, in some unspecified fashion. Yet another unfortunate soul drowned in the home's pool. And a maid was once found swinging from the end of a rope. Her death, needless to say, was ruled a suicide as well. That's a lot of blood for one home to absorb, but the house's morbid history, though a turn-off to many prospective residents, was reportedly exactly what attracted Jay Sebring to the property. His murder would further darken the black cloud hanging over the home.

As Laurel Canyon chronicler Michael Walker has noted, LA's two most notorious mass murders, one in August of 1969 and the other in July of 1981 (both involving five victims, though at Wonderland one of the five miraculously survived), provided rather morbid bookends for Laurel Canyon's glory years. Walker though, like others who have chronicled that time and place, treats these brutal crimes as though they were unfortunate aberrations. The reality, however, is that the nine bodies recovered from Cielo Drive and Wonderland Avenue constitute just the tip of a very large, and very bloody, iceberg.

To partially illustrate that point: Diane Linkletter (daughter of famed entertainer Art Linkletter), legendary comedian Lenny Bruce, screen idol Sal Mineo, starlet Inger Stevens, and silent film star Ramon Novarro, all have something in common—all were found dead in their homes, either in or at the mouth of Laurel Canyon, in the decade between 1966 and 1976. And all five were, in all likelihood, murdered in those Laurel Canyon homes.

Only two of them are officially listed as murder victims (Mineo, who was stabbed to death outside his home at 8563 Holloway Drive on February 12, 1976, and Novarro, who was killed near the Country

Store in a decidedly ritualistic fashion on the eve of Halloween, 1968). Inger Stevens' death in her home at 8000 Woodrow Wilson Drive, on April 30, 1970 (*Walpurgisnacht* on the occult calendar), was officially a suicide, though why she opted to propel herself through a decorative glass screen as part of that suicide remains a mystery. Perhaps she just wanted to leave behind a gruesome crime scene, and simple overdoses can be so, you know, bloodless and boring.

Diane Linkletter, according to legend, sailed out the window of her Shoreham Towers apartment because, in her LSD-addled state, she thought she could fly. We know this because Art himself told us that it was so, and because the story was retold throughout the 1970s as a cautionary tale about the dangers of drugs. What we weren't told, however, is that Diane (born, curiously enough, on Halloween day, 1948) wasn't alone when she plunged six stories to her death on the morning of October 4, 1969. *Au contraire*, she was with a gent by the name of Edward Durston, who, in a completely unexpected turn of events, accompanied actress Carol Wayne to Mexico some fifteen years later. Carol, alas, perhaps weighed down by her enormous breasts, managed to drown in barely a foot of water, while Mr. Durston promptly disappeared. As would be expected, he was never questioned by authorities about Wayne's curious death. After all, it is quite common for the same guy to be the sole witness to two separate 'accidental' deaths.

Art also neglected to mention that just weeks before Diane's curious death, another member of the Linkletter clan, Art's son-in-law, John Zwyer, caught a bullet to the head in the backyard of his Hollywood Hills home. But that, of course, was an 'unconnected' suicide.

I'm not even going to discuss here the circumstances of Lenny Bruce's death from acute morphine poisoning on August 3, 1966, because, to be perfectly honest, I don't know too many people who don't already assume that Lenny was whacked. I'll just note here that his funeral was well-attended by the Laurel Canyon rock icons, and control over his unreleased material fell into the hands of a guy by the name of Frank Zappa. And another unsavory character named Phil Spector, whose crack team of studio musicians, dubbed the Wrecking Crew, were the actual musicians playing on many studio recordings by such Laurel Canyon bands as the Monkees, the Byrds, the Beach Boys, and the Mamas and the Papas.

### 3

## **DIG! THE LAUREL CANYON DEATH LIST**

**“I mean, fuck, he auditioned for Neil [Young]  
for fuck’s sake.”** Graham Nash, explaining  
to author Michael Walker how close Charles  
Manson was to the Laurel Canyon scene

DURING THE TEN-YEAR PERIOD DURING WHICH LENNY BRUCE, RAMON Novarro, Sal Mineo, Diane Linkletter, Inger Stevens, Sharon Tate, Jay Sebring, Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger all turned up dead, numerous other people connected to Laurel Canyon did as well, often under very questionable circumstances. The list includes, but is certainly not limited to, all of the following names:

☠ Marina Elizabeth Habe, whose body was carved up and tossed into the heavy brush along Mulholland Drive, just west of Bowmont Drive, on December 30, 1968. Habe, just seventeen at the time of her death, was the daughter of Hans Habe, who emigrated to the US from fascist Austria circa 1940. Shortly thereafter, Hans married a General Foods heiress and began studying psychological warfare at the Military Intelligence Training Center. After completing his training, he put his psychological warfare skills to use by creating eighteen newspapers in occupied Germany—under the direction, no doubt, of the OSS.

☠ Christine Hinton, who was killed in a head-on collision on Septem-

ber 30, 1969. At the time, Hinton was a girlfriend of David Crosby and the founder and head of the Byrds' fan club. She was also the daughter of a career Army officer stationed at the notorious Presidio military base in San Francisco. Another of Crosby's girlfriends from that same era was Shelley Roecker, who grew up on the Hamilton Air Force Base in Marin County.

☠ Jane Doe #59, found dumped into the heavy undergrowth of Laurel Canyon in November 1969, within sight of where Habe had been dumped less than a year earlier. The teenage girl, who was never identified, had been stabbed 157 times in the chest and throat.

☠ Alan "Blind Owl" Wilson, singer, songwriter and guitarist for the Laurel Canyon blues-rock band, Canned Heat, was found dead in his Topanga Canyon home on September 3, 1970. His death was written off as a suicide/OD. Wilson had moved to Topanga Canyon after the band's Laurel Canyon home—on Lookout Mountain Avenue, next door to Joni Mitchell and Graham Nash's home—burned to the ground. "Blind Owl" was just twenty-seven years old at the time of his death. A little more than a decade later, Wilson's former bandmate, Bob "The Bear" Hite, who had once acknowledged in an interview that he had partied in the canyons with various members of the Manson Family, died of a heart attack at the ripe old age of thirty-six.

☠ Jimi Hendrix, who reportedly briefly occupied the sprawling mansion just north of the Log Cabin after he moved to LA in 1968, died in London under seriously questionable circumstances on September 18, 1970. Though he rarely spoke of it, Jimi had served a stint in the US Army with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell. His official records indicate that he was forced into the service by the courts and then released after just one year when he purportedly proved to be a poor soldier. One wonders though why he was assigned to such an elite division if he was indeed such a failure. One also wonders why he wasn't subjected to disciplinary measures rather than being handed a free pass out of his ostensibly court-ordered service. In any event, Jimi himself once told reporters that he was given a medical discharge after breaking an ankle during a parachute jump. One biographer has claimed that Jimi faked

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being gay to earn an early release. The truth, alas, remains rather elusive. At the time of Jimi's death, the first person called by his girlfriend—Monika Danneman, last to see Hendrix alive—was Eric Burden of the Animals. Two years earlier, Burden had relocated to LA and taken over ringmaster duties from Frank Zappa after Zappa had vacated the Log Cabin and moved into a less high-profile Laurel Canyon home. Within a year of Jimi's death, a reported prostitute-turned-groupie named Devon Wilson, who had been with Jimi the day before his death, plunged from an eighth-floor window of New York's Chelsea Hotel. On March 5, 1973, a shadowy character named Michael Jeffery, who had managed both Hendrix and Burden, was killed in a midair plane collision. Jeffery was known to openly boast of having organized crime connections and of working for the CIA. After Jimi's death, it was discovered that Jeffery had been funneling most of Hendrix's gross earnings into offshore accounts in the Bahamas linked to international drug trafficking. Years later, on April 5, 1996, Danneman, the daughter of a wealthy German industrialist, was found dead near her home in a fume-filled Mercedes.

💀 Jim Morrison, who for a time lived in a home on Rothdell Trail, behind the Laurel Canyon Country Store, may or may not have died in Paris on July 3, 1971. The events of that day remain shrouded in mystery and rumor, and the details of the story, such as they are, have changed over the years. What is known is that, on that very same day, Admiral George Stephen Morrison delivered the keynote speech at a decommissioning ceremony for the aircraft carrier *USS Bon Homme Richard*, from where, seven years earlier, he had helped choreograph the Tonkin Gulf Incident. A few years after Jim's death, his common-law wife, Pamela Courson, dropped dead as well, officially of a heroin overdose. Like Hendrix, Morrison had been an avid student of the occult, with a particular fondness for the work of Aleister Crowley. According to super-groupie Pamela Des Barres, he had also "read all he could about incest and sadism." Also like Hendrix (and Wilson), Morrison was just twenty-seven at the time of his (possible) death.

💀 Brandon DeWilde, a good friend of David Crosby and Gram Parsons, was killed in a freak accident in Colorado on July 6, 1972, when his van plowed under a flatbed truck. In the 1950s, DeWilde had been an



in-demand child actor since the age of eight. He had appeared on-screen with some of the biggest names in Hollywood, including Alan Ladd, Lee Marvin, Paul Newman, John Wayne, Kirk Douglas and Henry Fonda. Around 1965, DeWilde fell in with Hollywood's 'Young Turks,' through whom he met and befriended Crosby, Parsons, and various other members of the Laurel Canyon Club. DeWilde was just thirty at the time of his death.

☠ Christine Frka, a former governess for Moon Unit Zappa and the Zappa family's former housekeeper at the Log Cabin, died on November 5, 1972, of an alleged drug overdose, though friends suspected foul play. As "Miss Christine," Frka had been a member of the Zappa-created GTOs, a musical act, of sorts, composed entirely of very young groupies. She was also the inspiration for the song, Christine's Tune: Devil In Disguise by Gram Parsons' Flying Burrito Brothers. Frka may have been in her early twenties when she died, possibly even younger.

☠ Danny Whitten, a guitarist/vocalist/songwriter with Neil Young's sometime band, Crazy Horse, died of an overdose on November 18, 1972. According to rock'n'roll legend, Whitten had been fired by Young earlier that day during rehearsals in San Francisco. Young and Jack Nitzsche, Phil Spector's former top assistant, had given Whitten \$50 and put him on a plane back to LA. Within hours, he was dead. Whitten was just twenty-nine.

☠ Bruce Berry, a roadie for Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, died of a heroin overdose in June 1973. Berry had just flown out to Maui to deliver a shipment of cocaine to Stephen Stills, and was promptly sent back to LA by Crosby and Nash. Berry was a brother of Jan Berry, of Jan and Dean. (Dean Torrence, the "Dean" of Jan and Dean, had played a part in the fake kidnapping of Frank Sinatra, Jr., just a couple weeks after the JFK assassination. The staged event was a particularly transparent effort to divert attention away from the questions that were cropping up, after the initial shock had passed, about the events in Dealey Plaza.)

☠ Clarence White, a guitarist who had played with the Byrds, was run over by a drunk driver and killed on July 14, 1973. White had grown up

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near Lancaster, not far from where Frank Zappa spent his teen years. At least one member of White's immediate family was employed at Edwards Air Force Base. The driver who killed young Clarence, just twenty-nine years old at the time of his death, was given a one-year suspended sentence and served no time.

☠ Gram Parsons, formerly with the International Submarine Band, the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers, allegedly overdosed on a speedball at the Joshua Tree Inn on September 19, 1973. Just two months before his death, Parsons' Topanga Canyon home had burnt to the ground. After his death, his body was stolen from LAX by the Burrito's road manager, Phil Kaufman, and then taken back out to Joshua Tree and ritually burned on the autumnal equinox. Kaufman had been a prison buddy of Charlie Manson's at Terminal Island; when Phil was released from Terminal Island in March of 1968, he quickly reunited with his old pal, who had been released a year earlier. By the time of Gram's death, his family had already experienced its share of questionable deaths. Just before Christmas 1958, Parsons' father had sent Gram, along with his mother and sister, off to stay with family in Florida. The next day, just after the winter solstice, Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr. caught a bullet to the head. His death was recorded as a suicide and it was claimed that he had sent his family away to spare them as much pain as possible. It seems just as likely, however, that Cecil knew his days were numbered and wanted to get his family out of the line of fire. The next year, 1959, Gram's mother married again, to Robert Ellis Parsons, who adopted Gram and his sister Avis. Six years later, in June of 1965, Gram's mother died the day after a sudden illness landed her in the hospital. According to witnesses, she died "almost immediately" after a visit from her husband, Robert Parsons. Many of those close to the situation believed that Parsons had a hand in her death (very shortly thereafter, Robert Parsons married his stepdaughter's teenage babysitter). Following his mother's death, Parsons briefly attended Harvard University and then launched his music career with the formation of the International Submarine Band, which quickly found its way to—where else?—Laurel Canyon. Gram's death in 1973 at the age of twenty-six left his younger sister Avis as the sole surviving member of the family. She was killed in 1993, reportedly in a boating accident, at the age of forty.

☠ “Mama” Cass Elliot, the Earth Mother of Laurel Canyon whose circle of friends included musicians, Mansonites, young Hollywood stars, the wealthy son of a State Department official, singer/songwriters, assorted drug dealers, and some particularly unsavory characters the LAPD once described as “some kind of hit squad,” died in the London home of Harry Nilsson on July 29, 1974. (Nilsson had been a frequent drinking buddy of John Lennon in Laurel Canyon and on the Sunset Strip.) At thirty-two, Cass had lived a long and productive life, by Laurel Canyon standards. Four years later, in the very same room of the very same London flat, still owned by Harry Nilsson, Keith Moon of the Who also died at age thirty-two, on September 7, 1978. Though initial press reports held that Cass had choked to death on a ham sandwich, the official verdict was heart failure. Her actual cause of death could likely be filed under “knowing where too many of the bodies were buried.” Moon reportedly died from a massive overdose of a drug used to treat alcohol withdrawal.

☠ Amy Gossage, Graham Nash’s girlfriend, was murdered in her San Francisco home on February 13, 1975. Just twenty years old at the time, she had been stabbed nearly fifty times and was bludgeoned beyond recognition. Amy’s father, a famed advertising/PR executive, had died of leukemia in 1969. Not long after, her half-sister had been killed in a car crash. In May of 1974, her mother, the daughter of a wealthy banking family, died as well, reportedly of cirrhosis of the liver. That left just Amy, age nineteen, and her brother Eben, age twenty, both of whom reportedly had serious drug dependencies. Amy’s brutal murder, cleverly enough, was pinned on Eben. Police had conveniently found blood-stained clothes, along with a hammer and scissors, sitting on the porch of Eben’s apartment, looking very much as though it had been planted. A friend of Eben’s would later remark, perhaps quite tellingly, “If Eben did kill her, I’m convinced he doesn’t know he did it.”

☠ Tim Buckley, a singer/songwriter signed to Frank Zappa’s record label and managed by Herb Cohen, died of a reported overdose on June 29, 1975. Buckley had once appeared on an episode of *The Monkees*, and, like Monkee Peter Tork (and so many others in this story), he hailed from Washington, DC. He was the son of a mentally unbalanced and occasionally violent WWII hero. Buckley was just twenty-eight at the time

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of his death, which reportedly shocked many of his friends and relatives. Despite having released nine albums during his short life, Buckley died in debt, which probably had nothing to do with his management by Cohen. His son, Jeff Buckley, also an accomplished musician, managed to remain on this planet two years longer than his dad did; he was thirty when he died in a bizarre drowning incident on May 29, 1997.

☠ Phyllis Major Browne, wife of singer/songwriter Jackson Browne, reportedly overdosed on barbiturates on March 25, 1976. Her death was—you all should know the words to this song by now—ruled a suicide. She was just thirty years old.

There are a few other curious deaths we could add here as well, though they were more indirectly related to the Laurel Canyon scene. Nevertheless, they deserve an honorable mention:

☠ Bobby Fuller, singer/songwriter/guitarist for the Bobby Fuller Four, was found dead in his car near Grauman's Chinese Theater on July 18, 1966, after being lured away from his home by a mysterious 2:00–3:00 AM phone call of unknown origin. Fuller is best known for penning the hit song *I Fought the Law*, which had just hit the charts when he supposedly committed suicide at the age of twenty-three. There were multiple cuts and bruises on his face, chest and shoulders, dried blood around his mouth, and a hairline fracture to his right hand. He had been thoroughly doused with gasoline, including in his mouth and throat. The inside of the car was doused as well, and an open book of matches lay on the seat. It was perfectly obvious that Fuller's killer (or killers) had planned to torch the car, destroying all evidence, but likely got scared away. The LAPD, nevertheless, ruled Fuller's death a suicide—despite the coroner's conclusion that the gas had been poured *after* Bobby's death. Police later decided that it wasn't a suicide after all, but rather an accident. They didn't bother to explain how Fuller had accidentally doused himself with gasoline after accidentally killing himself. At the time of his death, one of Fuller's closest confidants was a prostitute named Melody who worked at PJ's nightclub, where Bobby frequently played. The club was co-owned by Eddie Nash, who would, many years later, orchestrate the Wonderland massacre. A few years after Bobby's

death, his brother and bass player, Randy Fuller, teamed up with drummer Dewey Martin, formerly of Buffalo Springfield.

💀 Gary Hinman, a musician, music teacher, and part-time chemist, was brutally murdered in his Topanga Canyon home on July 27, 1969. Convicted of his murder was Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil, who had played rhythm guitar in a Laurel Canyon band known as the Grass Roots, which later achieved a fair amount of fame under the name Love.

💀 Janis Joplin, vocalist extraordinaire, was found dead of a heroin overdose on October 4, 1970, at the Landmark Hotel, about a mile east of the mouth of Laurel Canyon, where she occasionally visited. Indications were that she had taken or been given a “hot shot,” many times stronger than standard street heroin. Joplin’s father, by the way, was a petroleum engineer for Texaco. And though it might normally seem an odd coupling, it somehow seems perfectly natural, in the context of this story, that Janis once dated that great crusader in the war on all things immoral, William Bennett. Like Morrison, Hendrix and Wilson, Joplin died at the age of twenty-seven.

💀 Duane Allman and Berry Oakley, lead guitarist and bass player for the Allman Brothers, were killed in freakishly similar motorcycle crashes on October 29, 1971, and November 11, 1972, respectively. Allman was the son of Willis Allman, a US Army Sergeant who had been murdered by another soldier near Norfolk, Virginia (home of the world’s largest naval installation) on December 26, 1949. In 1967, Duane and his younger brother, Gregg, then billing themselves as the Allman Joys, ventured out to Los Angeles. While there, Gregg auditioned for and was almost signed by the Laurel Canyon band Poco, which featured Buffalo Springfield alumni Richie Furay and Jim Messina, as well as future Eagle Randy Meisner. Duane was killed when a truck turned in front of his motorcycle at an intersection and inexplicably stopped. Just over a year later, Oakley had a similar run-in with a bus, just three blocks from where Allman had been killed. Following the crash, Berry had dusted himself off and declined medical attention, insisting that he was okay. Three hours later, he was rushed to the hospital where he died. Both Oakley and Allman were just twenty-four years old.

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☠ Gary Thain, bassist for the band Uriah Heep—yet another group with a keen interest in magick and the occult, with album titles such as *Demons and Wizards* and *Magician's Birthday*—was found dead on December 8, 1975, five years to the day before Nilsson sidekick John Lennon would be gunned down at the Dakota Apartments in New York City. Thain had once played with sometime Canyonite Jimi Hendrix and his first live appearance with Uriah Heep was at the Whisky-a-Go-Go on February 1, 1972. His death was, alas, attributed to a drug overdose. Thain is yet another member of the 'Twenty-Seven Club.'

☠ Tommy Bolin, best known as a guitarist for the band Deep Purple, was also found dead of a reported drug overdose almost exactly one year later, on December 4, 1976, though varying stories have surfaced concerning the circumstances of his death. Bolin had previously played for the James Gang, in the position once filled by Joe Walsh, who by the time of Bolin's death had become a member of Laurel Canyon's most commercially successful band, the Eagles. Bolin died a couple years shy of making the Twenty-Seven Club.

It wasn't only the musicians with ties to Laurel Canyon who died young and often under questionable, and sometimes quite violent, circumstances. The dark undercurrents pulsing through the canyons in the early 1970s that left such a trail of destruction extended well beyond the Hollywood Hills, as illustrated by the deaths of a handful of mostly forgotten figures in the rock community:

☠ Phil King, an early frontman for Blue Öyster Cult, a band whose album art and song lyrics suggested a keen interest in the occult, was shot three times in the back of the head in New York City on April 27, 1972, just three days shy of *Walpurgisnacht*. Three months later, on July 24, 1972, Bobby Ramirez, the drummer for an early formation featuring frontman Edgar Winter, was beaten and stabbed to death in a Chicago bar. He was twenty-three years old.

☠ Rory Storm, the founder and frontman for the UK's Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, was found dead on September 28, 1972. Born Alan Caldwell on the autumnal equinox of 1939 in Liverpool, England, Storm



had close ties to that other, far more famous band from Liverpool. The Hurricanes' original drummer was none other than Ritchie Starkey, who left the band to join John, Paul and George, becoming Ringo Starr in the process. It is said that George Harrison, who dated Storm's younger sister, initially wanted to join the Hurricanes but had to settle for the Quarrymen when he was deemed too young. That same sister would later date a young Paul McCartney. Popular on the Liverpool/Hamburg club circuit, the Hurricanes at times shared the stage with the Beatles, both before and after Starr's defection. Rory's band though—which he initially wanted to name Dracula and the Werewolves—never caught fire the way the Beatles did and by the late 1960s/early 1970s, Storm had to find work as a DJ. In Amsterdam at the time of his father's death in 1972, Rory returned to Liverpool to be with his grieving mother. On September 28, 1972, just one week after Rory's thirty-third birthday, both mother and son turned up dead in the family home. In a rather unlikely turn of events, it was claimed that both had independently committed suicide on the same day in different rooms of the same house. Storm reportedly had sleeping pills in his system, but not in sufficient concentrations to have caused his demise, leaving the actual cause of death something of a mystery.

💀 Ronald "Pigpen" McKernan, a founding member of the Grateful Dead from its early incarnations as the Zodiacs and the Warlocks, died on March 8, 1973. A vocalist and multi-instrumentalist, McKernan had a short romantic relationship and a somewhat longer friendship with fellow death-list member Janis Joplin. Pigpen was found dead at his home, reportedly of a gastrointestinal hemorrhage. His death is primarily of interest because he was, like Joplin, twenty-seven years old at the time, qualifying him for membership in the Twenty-Seven Club alongside charter members Joplin, Brian Jones, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison, and more recent hall-of-famers such as Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse.

💀 Graham Bond, who was widely considered to be a founding father of the 1960s British R&B boom, was killed on May 5, 1974, when he was reportedly run over by a train at London's Finsbury Park station. His death, to no one's surprise, was ruled a suicide. Bond, who was

adopted and believed himself to be the biological son of occultist/spy Aleister Crowley, had a deep fascination with the occult. He also reportedly struggled with what the psychiatric community refers to as a manic depressive disorder, which was aggravated by chronic drug abuse. Bond was just thirty-six years old at the time of his death.

☠ Pete Ham, a singer/songwriter/guitarist and the leader of the British band Badfinger, another outfit with close ties to those lads from Liverpool, was found swinging from the end of a rope on April 23, 1975. Ham's band was first signed by the Beatles' own Apple label, and their first single, *Come And Get It*, was penned by Paul McCartney. According to rock lore, McCartney recorded the song himself and then insisted that Ham's band play and record it exactly the same way. Sir Paul also personally auditioned all four members of Badfinger to decide who would provide the lead vocal on the single. Ham's greatest claim to fame though was being the co-writer of the oft-recorded *Without You*, a song that became a monster hit around the world when it was committed to vinyl in 1972 by John Lennon's *Sunset Strip/Laurel Canyon* sidekick, Harry Nilsson—the very same Harry Nilsson whose London flat served as the death scene for both Mama Cass and Keith Moon. The song received numerous awards and Ham and his band moved over to Warner Bros. Records with the expectation that Badfinger was soon to become quite a sensation. It wasn't meant to be. Within a few years, Pete Ham was unemployed and turned up dead in his garage. Ham is yet another member of the *Twenty-Seven Club*, though not by much; his death came just three days before his twenty-eighth birthday. His passing was barely reported on, due in part to the fact that neither Warner Bros. nor the Beatles organization bothered to make an announcement or issue any public comment. Just one month later, his girlfriend gave birth to a daughter that Ham was never to know. Eight-and-a-half years later, on November 18, 1983, Tom Evans, Ham's former bandmate and the co-writer of *Without You*, was also found swinging from the end of a rope.

Shit happens, it appears.

## 4

# RELATED LIVES AND RELATIVE DEATHS

**“No one here gets out alive.”**  
Jim Morrison

BEFORE MOVING ON FROM THE LAUREL CANYON DEATH LIST, THERE ARE A few more celebrity deaths that demand a closer inspection. The first is a truly tragic tale of a rising star in Laurel Canyon, who, by the time of her death, had been completely forgotten. The second is the story of a man who had only tangential ties to Laurel Canyon, but whose life and death may provide one of the keys to understanding the canyon scene. And the third is the story of a guy who had no real connections to Laurel Canyon, but whose life arc has been so illuminatingly bizarre that it merits inclusion here.

Judee Lynn Sill was born in Studio City, California, not far from the northern entrance to Laurel Canyon, on October 7, 1944. Almost a quarter-century later, she would be favorably compared to such other Laurel Canyon singer/songwriters as Joni Mitchell, Judi Collins and Carole King. When she died though, on November 23, 1979, not a single obituary was published to note her passing.

Judee’s father, Milford “Bud” Sill, was reportedly a cameraman for Paramount Studios with numerous Hollywood connections. When Judee was still quite young, however, Bud moved the family to Oakland and opened a bar known as Bud’s Bar. He also operated a side business

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as an importer of rare animals, which required him to spend a considerable amount of time traveling in Central and South America. Such a business, it should be noted, would provide an ideal cover for covert intelligence work. In any event, Bud Sill was dead by 1952, when Judee was just seven or eight years old. Depending on who is telling the story, Bud died either from pneumonia or a heart attack.

Following Bud's death, the family relocated back to Southern California and Judee's older brother Dennis, though still in his teens, took over the family importing business. That career didn't last long though as Dennis soon turned up dead down in Central America, either from a liver infection or a car accident. The animal importing business, I guess, is a rather dangerous one.

Following Bud's death, Judee's mother, Oneta, met and married Ken Muse, an Academy Award-winning animator for Hanna-Barbera who was described by Judee as an abusive, violent alcoholic. At fifteen, Judee fled her violent home life and lived with an older man with whom she pulled off a series of armed robberies in the San Fernando Valley. Those activities landed her in reform school, which did little to curb her appetite for drugs, crime and alcohol. She spent the next few years with a serious heroin addiction, which she financed by dealing drugs and turning tricks in some of LA's seedier neighborhoods.

By 1963, Judee had cleaned herself up enough to enroll in junior college. In the early winter of 1965, however, Judee's mom, her last surviving family member, died either of cancer or of complications arising from her chronic alcoholism (take your pick; the details of this story will likely remain forever elusive). Barely an adult, Judee was left all alone in the world, and thus began another downward spiral into drugs and crime, which culminated in her being arrested and possibly serving time on forgery and drug charges.

In the late 1960s, with her addictions apparently temporarily curbed, Sill joined the Laurel Canyon scene, where she attempted to forge a career as a singer/songwriter. Her first big break came when she sold the song Lady O to the Turtles (yet another Laurel Canyon band to hit it big in the mid-1960s; best known for the hit single Happy Together, the Turtles were led by lead vocalist/songwriter Howard Kaylan, who happened to be, small world that it is, a cousin of Frank Zappa's manager and business partner, Herb Cohen). The band released the song, which

featured Judee's guitar work, in 1969. The next year, Sill became the first artist signed to David Geffen's fledgling Asylum record label. The year after that, her self-titled debut album became Asylum's first official release. The first single from the album, *Jesus Was A Crossmaker*, was produced by Graham Nash, whom she opened for on tour following the album's release.

Though critically well-received, the album's sales were disappointing, in part because the record was overshadowed by the debut albums of Jackson Browne and the Eagles, both released by Asylum shortly after the release of Judee's album. Sill's second album, 1973's *Heart Food*, was even more of a commercial disappointment. Nevertheless, in 1974, she began work on a third album in Monkee Mike Nesmith's recording studio. Prior to completion, however, she abandoned the project and promptly disappeared without a trace. What became of her between that time and her death some five years later remains largely a mystery. It is assumed that she once again descended into a life of drugs and prostitution, but no one seems to know for sure.

It is alleged that she was seriously injured when her car was rear-ended by actor Danny Kaye, causing her to suffer from chronic back pain thereafter, thus contributing to her drug addictions. According to a friend of hers, she lived in a home that featured an enormous photo of Bela Lugosi above the fireplace, a large ebony cross above her bed, and racks of candles. She is said to have read extensively from Rosicrucian manuscripts and from the writings of Aleister Crowley, to have possessed a complete collection of the work of Helena Blavatsky, and to have been a gifted tarot card reader.

What is known for sure is that, on the day after Thanksgiving, 1979, Judee Sill, the last surviving member of her family, was found dead in a North Hollywood apartment. The cause of death was listed as "acute cocaine and codeine intoxication." It was claimed that a suicide note was found, but friends insisted that the supposed note was either a portion of a diary entry or an unfinished song. One of her friends would later note that, at some point in her life, Judee began to realize that "there was a part of her that wasn't under her conscious control." I'm guessing that the guy up for review next could relate to that...

Phil Ochs, a folk singer/songwriter and political activist, was found hanged in his sister's home in Far Rockaway, New York, on April 9, 1976.

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Throughout his life, Ochs was one of the most overtly political of the 1960s rock and folk music stars. A regular attendee at anti-war, civil rights, and labor rallies, Ochs appeared to be, at all times, an unwavering political leftist (he named his first band the Singing Socialists). That all changed, however, and rather dramatically, in the months before his death.

Born in El Paso, Texas, on December 19, 1940, Phil and his family moved frequently during the first few years of his life. His father, Dr. Jacob Ochs, had been drafted by the US Army and assigned to various military hospitals in New York, New Mexico and Texas. In 1943, Dr. Ochs was shipped overseas, returning two years later with a medical discharge. Upon his return, he was immediately institutionalized and didn't return to his family for another two years. During that time, he was subjected to every psychiatric 'treatment' imaginable, including electroshock 'therapy.' When he finally returned to his family, in 1947, he was but a shell of his former self, described by Phil's sister as "almost like a phantom."

Beginning in the fall of 1956, Phil Ochs began attending Staunton Military Academy, the very same institution that future serial killer/cult leader Gary Heidnik would attend just one year after Ochs graduated. During Phil's two years there, a friend and fellow band member was found swinging from the end of a rope. (I probably don't need to add here that the death was ruled a suicide.) Following graduation, Phil enrolled at Ohio State University, but not before, oddly enough, having a little plastic surgery done to alter his appearance (doing such things, needless to say, was rather uncommon in 1958).

In early 1962, just months before his scheduled graduation, Ochs dropped out of college to pursue a career in music. By 1966, he had released three albums. In 1967, under the management of his brother, Michael Ochs, Phil moved out to Los Angeles. Michael had begun working the previous year as an assistant to Billy James, who maintained a party house at 8504 Ridpath in—you guessed it—Laurel Canyon. As the 1970s rolled around, and with his career beginning to fade, Phil Ochs began to travel internationally, usually accompanied by vast quantities of booze and pills. Those travels included a visit to Chile not long before the US-sponsored coup that toppled Salvador Allende.

In the summer of 1975, Phil Ochs' public persona abruptly changed.



Adopting the name John Butler Train, Ochs proclaimed himself a CIA operative and presented himself as a belligerent, right-wing thug. He told an interviewer that, "on the first day of summer 1975, Phil Ochs was murdered in the Chelsea Hotel by John Train... For the good of societies, public and secret, he needed to be gotten rid of." That symbolic assassination, on the summer solstice, took place at the same hotel that Devon Wilson had flown out of a few years earlier. One of Ochs' biographers would later write that Phil/John "actually believed he was a member of the CIA." Also in those final months of his life, Ochs began compiling curious lists, with entries that apparently reference US biological warfare research: "shellfish toxin, Fort Dietrich, cobra venom, Chantilly Race Track, hollow silver dollars, New York Cornell Hospital..."

Many years before Ochs' metamorphosis, in an interesting bit of foreshadowing, psychological warfare operative George Estabrooks explained, in his book *Hypnotism*, how US intelligence agencies had been working to create the perfect spy: "We start with an excellent subject... we need a man or woman who is highly intelligent and physically tough. Then we start to develop a case of multiple personality through hypnotism. In his normal waking state, which we will call Personality A, or PA, this individual will become a rabid communist. He will join the party, follow the party line and make himself as objectionable as possible to the authorities. Note that he will be acting in good faith. He is a communist, or rather his PA is a communist and will behave as such. Then we develop Personality B (PB), the secondary personality, the unconscious personality, if you wish, although this is somewhat of a contradiction in terms. This personality is rabidly American and anti-communist. It has all the information possessed by PA, the normal personality, whereas PA does not have this advantage... My super spy plays his role as a communist in his waking state, aggressively, consistently, fearlessly. But his PB is a loyal American, and PB has all the memories of PA. As a loyal American, he will not hesitate to divulge those memories."

Estabrooks never explained what would happen if the programming were to go haywire and Personality B were to emerge and become the conscious personality, but my guess is that such a person would be considered a severe liability and would be treated accordingly. They might even find themselves swinging from the end of a rope. Phil Ochs was thirty-five at the time of his death.

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Stacy Sutherland, the lead guitarist and a founding member of the 13th Floor Elevators, was shot to death on August 24, 1978. Despite considerable critical acclaim, the Elevators had only lasted a few years, from late 1965 through early 1968. Sutherland was imprisoned in 1969 on drug charges and reportedly drank heavily after that. He was just thirty-two when he was shot and killed by his wife Bunny during a domestic dispute. The shooting, curiously enough, was determined to be accidental, which I suppose means that Bunny accidentally picked up the gun, accidentally disengaged the safety, accidentally pointed it at her husband, accidentally put her finger on the trigger, and then accidentally pulled that trigger.

Even more interesting is the story of the band's frontman. During the group's brief period of existence, Sutherland was overshadowed by the enigmatic Roky Erickson. Born Roger Kynard Erickson on July 15, 1947, Roky was a musical prodigy who took up the piano at age five and the guitar at age ten. He was also, according to the 2005 documentary feature *You're Gonna Miss Me*, a severely abused child; there are strong indications, according to the filmmakers, that architect father Roger, who rarely spoke to the family, sexually abused Roky and his four younger brothers.

Though all but forgotten now, Erickson was a hugely influential figure in the mid- to late 1960s. Before there was a San Francisco scene, Texan Roky had coined the term 'psychedelic rock' and was the first to use feedback and distortion. His distinctive vocals were a major influence on fellow Texan Janis Joplin, who considered joining the Elevators before being shuffled off to San Francisco and superstardom. Erickson was also considered to be very good looking and was an immensely charismatic figure who was well liked by all who met him, men and women alike.

Roky began his music career at a young age, after making the curious decision to drop out of high school just a few weeks shy of graduating. By December 1965, he had formed the Elevators with Sutherland and a psychology student by the name of Tommy Hall, who was not a musician but who appears to have nevertheless been the driving force behind the concept of creating a psychedelic band. Hall was a very outspoken, Learyesque advocate of hallucinogenic drugs like LSD and magic mushrooms. He later became a devout follower of Scientology.

The band's first album, *The Psychedelic Sounds of the 13th Floor Elevators*, was released in November 1966, when singer/songwriter Roky was just nineteen. The band's sophomore effort, *Easter Everywhere*, was released the following November. Just months later though, the group's run would effectively end, though two more albums were subsequently released by the band's label.

The Elevators' final performance was at a world's fair in San Antonio, Texas, on, of all days, April 20, 1968. It was there, it is said, that Roky suffered a complete breakdown and began "speaking gibberish." He was still just twenty years old. Erickson was diagnosed as being a 'paranoid schizophrenic' and was forced to endure involuntary electro-convulsive 'therapy.' While hospitalized, he began hearing voices telling him "horrible things." A doctor treating him at the time claimed that Roky would not recover and would be a vegetable for the rest of his life.

After reportedly escaping with the help of a friend, Erickson headed to San Francisco where he started doing heroin and other hard drugs and soon developed hepatitis. Returning to Austin, Roky was busted with a single marijuana 'joint.' An attorney convinced him to plead 'not guilty by reason of insanity,' a ridiculous defense given the charge, and Erickson was quickly hustled off to Austin State Hospital. He was still just twenty years old at the time of his arrest.

Supposedly due to escape attempts, Roky was transferred to Rusk State Hospital, a stark, barren, maximum-security facility for the criminally insane. While there, Erickson was subjected to more forced ECT treatments and the forced administration of Thorazine. For three-and-a-half years. Also while confined there, he put together a prison band known as the Missing Links. One member of the band had killed two kids and raped and stabbed his own mother. Another had been involved in the rape and murder of a young boy in Houston. A third had killed his own parents and a sibling. And then there was Roky, who had been in possession of an insignificant amount of marijuana.

As 1972 came to a close, it was determined that Roky's sanity had been "restored" and he was released soon after. He was, however, just a shell of his former self.

In the mid-seventies, Erickson formed a new band, Roky Erickson and the Aliens, whose albums *I Think of Demons* (1980) and *The Evil One* (1981) revealed the frontman's then-current obsessions. At about

that same time, he told an interviewer that, “the devil, you see, he’s my friend.” He also told an interviewer that an alien had taken possession of his body, a belief that he still claimed to hold as recently as 2005.

During the 1980s, Erickson withdrew from public view and continued his descent into madness. It is said that he developed a bizarre obsession with the US mail, particularly junk mail solicitations, and that he indulged that obsession for years, poring for hours over his and other people’s mail. That chapter of his life reached a peak when he was arrested on mail theft charges after it was discovered that he had taken mail from neighbors and had it displayed in his home. He was, alas, once again institutionalized.

Throughout the 1990s, Roky appears to have continued to live a bizarre and troubled life. A reporter for *Rolling Stone* who attempted to interview him in 1995 described a heartbreaking scene: the formerly charismatic singer looked nothing like his younger self, with his teeth reduced to rotting stumps and his hair wild and matted. Multiple televisions, stereos and police scanners blared at maximum volume throughout his home, creating a cacophony of noise apparently intended to drown out the ever-present voices in his head.

Roky’s fortunes began to change in the following decade, after his younger brother Sumner was awarded legal custody of the troubled icon in 2001. In fact, it could be argued that Erickson deserves a special place of honor on this list in that he appears to have pulled off the unlikely feat of returning from the dead. *Rolling Stone*, after all, wrote an obituary for Roky and the band way back in December 1968. But more than forty years later, in 2010, Erickson released an album of new material entitled *True Love Cast Out All Evil*. That disc was released, naturally enough, on April 20. And in March of 2012, Roky completed his first ever tour of Australia and New Zealand.

One final note on Erickson: In 1990, a tribute album containing covers of Roky’s songs by such artists as REM and ZZ Top was released. The title of that collection, *Where The Pyramid Meets The Eye: A Tribute to Roky Erickson*, was an obvious reference to the Masonic symbol that graces the back of the US dollar bill and that plays such a key role in various one-world conspiracy theories. The title was derived from a comment made by Erickson.

And with that, I think we can move on now from the Laurel Canyon

DAVID MCGOWAN

Death List, at least temporarily. The list is not yet complete, mind you, since we have only covered the years 1966–1976. Rest assured then that we will continue to add names as we follow the various threads of this story. Lots of names. It is, as it turns out, an inordinately long list.

## 5

# DESIRABLE PEOPLE THE CANYON'S PECULIAR PAST

**“Charles R. ‘Chuck’ Heath was born in March of 1938... The family lived on Farmdale Avenue, near the base of Laurel Canyon, close to where Studio City is located today.”** Geoffrey Dunn, writing in The Lies of Sarah Palin (Chuck Heath is Sarah Palin’s father)

UNTIL AROUND 1913, LAUREL CANYON REMAINED AN UNDEVELOPED SLICE of LA, a pristine wilderness area rich in native flora and fauna. That all began to change when Charles Spencer Mann and his partners began buying up land along what would become Laurel Canyon Boulevard, as well as on Lookout Mountain. A narrow road leading up to the crest of Lookout Mountain was carved out, and upon that crest was constructed a lavish seventy-room inn with sweeping views of the city below and the Pacific Ocean beyond. The Lookout Inn featured a large ballroom, riding stables, tennis courts and a golf course, among other amenities. But the inn, alas, would only stand for a decade; in 1923, it burned down, as tends to happen rather frequently in Laurel Canyon.

In 1913, Mann began operating what was billed as the nation’s first trackless trolley, to ferry tourists and prospective buyers from Sunset Boulevard up to what would become the corner of Laurel Canyon Boul-



evard and Lookout Mountain Avenue. Around that same time, he built a massive tavern/roadhouse on that very same corner. Dubbed the Laurel Tavern, the structure boasted a 2,000+ square-foot formal dining room, guest rooms, and a bowling alley on the basement level. The Laurel Tavern, of course, would later be acquired by Tom Mix, after which it would be affectionately known as the Log Cabin.

Shortly after the Log Cabin was built, a department store mogul (or a wealthy furniture manufacturer; there is more than one version of the story, or perhaps the man owned more than one business) built an imposing, castle-like mansion across the road, at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and what would become Willow Glen Road. The home featured rather creepy towers and parapets, and the foundation is said to have been riddled with secret passageways, tunnels, and hidden chambers. The grounds of the estate were laced with trails leading to grottoes, elaborate stone benches, and hidden caves and tunnels.

Across Laurel Canyon Boulevard, the grounds of the Laurel Tavern/Log Cabin were also laced with odd caves and tunnels. As Michael Walker notes in *Laurel Canyon*, "Running up the hillside, behind the house, was a collection of man-made caves built out of stucco, with electric wiring and light bulbs inside." According to various accounts, one secret tunnel running under what is now Laurel Canyon Boulevard connected the Log Cabin, or its guesthouse, to the Houdini estate. This claim is frequently denounced as an urban legend, but given that both properties are known to possess unusual geological features, it's not hard to believe that the tunnel system on one property was connected at one time to the tunnel system on the other. The Tavern itself, as Gail Zappa would later describe it, was "huge and vault-like and cavernous."

With these two rather unusual structures anchoring an otherwise undeveloped canyon, and the Lookout Inn sitting atop uninhabited Lookout Mountain, Mann set about marketing the canyon as a vacation and leisure destination. The land that he carved up into subdivisions with names like "Bungalow Land" and "Wonderland Park" was presented as the ideal location to build vacation homes. But the new inn and roadhouse, and the new parcels of land for sale, definitely weren't for everyone. The roadhouse was essentially a country club, or what Jack Boulware of *Mojo* described as "a masculine retreat for wealthy men." And Bungalow Land was openly advertised as "a high class restricted

park for desirable people only.”

“Desirable people,” of course, tended to be wealthy people without a great deal of skin pigmentation.

As the website of the current Laurel Canyon Association notes, “restrictive covenants were attached to the new parcel deeds. These were thinly veiled attempts to limit ownership to white males of a certain class. While there are many references to the bigotry of the developers in our area, it would appear that some residents were also prone to bias and lawlessness. This article was published in a local paper in 1925:

“Frank Sanceri, the man who was flogged by self-styled ‘white knights’ on Lookout Mountain in Hollywood several months ago, was found not guilty by a jury in Superior Judge Shea’s courtroom of having unlawfully attacked Astrea Jolley, aged eleven.

“Wealthier residents were also attracted to Laurel Canyon: With the creation of the Hollywood film industry in 1910, the canyon attracted a host of ‘photoplayers,’ including Wally Reid, Tom Mix, Clara Bow, Richard Dix, Norman Kerry, Ramon Navarro, Harry Houdini and Bessie Love.”

The author of this little slice of Laurel Canyon history would clearly like us to believe that the “wealthier residents” were a group quite separate from the violent vigilantes roaming the canyon. The history of such groups in Los Angeles, however, clearly suggests otherwise. Paul Young, for example, has written in *LA Exposed* of Los Angeles’ early “vigilance committees, which stepped in to take care of outlaws on their own, often with the complete absolution of the mayor himself. Judge Lynch, for example, formed the Los Angeles Rangers in 1854 with some of the city’s top judges, lawyers, and businessmen including tycoon Phineas Banning of the Banning Railroad. And there was the Los Angeles Home Guard, another bloodthirsty paramilitary organization, made up of notable citizens, and the much-feared El Monte Rangers, a group of Texas wranglers that specialized in killing Mexicans. As one would expect, there was no regard for the victim’s rights in such kangaroo courts. Victims were often dragged from their homes, jail cells, even churches, and beaten, horse-whipped, tortured, mutilated, or castrated before being strung up on the nearest tree.”

Before moving on, I need to mention here that, of the eight celebrity residents of Laurel Canyon listed by the Association, fully half died under questionable circumstances, and three of the four did so on days

with occult significance. While Bessie Love, Norman Kerry, Richard Dix and Clara Bow all lived long and healthy lives, Ramon Navarro, as we have already seen, was ritually murdered in his home on Laurel Canyon Boulevard on the eve of Halloween, 1968. On January 18, 1923, matinee idol Wallace Reid was found dead in a padded cell at the mental institution to which he had been confined. Just thirty-one years old, Reid's death was attributed to his morphine addiction, though it was never explained how he would have fed that habit while confined to a cell in a mental hospital.

Tom Mix died on a lonely stretch of Arizona highway in the proverbial single-car crash on October 12, 1940 (the birthday of notorious occultist Aleister Crowley), when he quite unexpectedly encountered some temporary construction barricades that had been set up alongside a reportedly washed-out bridge. Although he wasn't speeding (by most accounts), Mix was nevertheless allegedly unable to stop in time and veered off the road, while a crew of what were described as "workmen" reportedly looked on. It wasn't the impact that killed Mix though, but rather a severe blow to the back of the head and neck, purportedly delivered during the crash by an aluminum case he had been carrying in the back seat of his car. There is now a roadside marker at the spot where Mix died. If you should happen to stop by to have a look, you may as well pay a visit to the Florence Military Reservation as well, since it's just a stone's throw away.

Harry Houdini died on Halloween day, 1926, purportedly of an attack of appendicitis precipitated by a blow to the stomach. The problem with that story, however, is that medical science now recognizes it to be an impossibility. According to a recent book about the famed illusionist—*The Secret Life of Houdini*, by William Kalush and Larry Sloman—Houdini was likely murdered by poisoning. Questions have been raised, the book notes, by the curious lack of an autopsy, an "experimental serum" that Houdini was apparently given in the hospital, and indications that his wife, Bess, may have been poisoned as well, though she survived. On March 23, 2007, an exhumation of Houdini's remains was formally requested by his surviving family members. It is unclear at this time when, or even if, that will happen.

Houdini's death, on October 31, 1926, came exactly eight years after the first death to occur in what would become known as the "Houdini

house.” In 1918, not long after the home was built, a lovers’ quarrel arose on one of the home’s balconies during a Halloween/birthday party. The gay lover of the original owner’s son reportedly ended up splattered on the ground below. According to legend, the businessman succeeded in getting his son off the hook, but only after paying off everyone he could find to pay off, including the trial judge. The aftermath of the party proved to be financially devastating for the family, and the home was apparently put up for sale.

Not long after that, as fate would have it, Harry Houdini was looking for a place to stay in the Hollywood area, as he had decided to break into the motion picture business. He found the perfect home in Laurel Canyon—the home that would, forever after, carry his name. By most accounts, he lived there from about 1919 through the early 1920s, during a brief movie career in which he starred in a handful of Hollywood films. A key scene in one of those films, *The Grim Game*, was reportedly shot at the top of Lookout Mountain, very near where the Lookout Inn then stood.

On October 31, 1959, precisely thirty-three years after Houdini’s death, and forty-one years after the unnamed party guest’s death, the distinctive mansion on the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Willow Glen Road burned to the ground in a fire of mysterious origin. (The ruins of the estate remain today, undisturbed for nearly fifty years.) On October 31, 1981, exactly twenty-two years after the fire across the road, the legendary Log Cabin on the other side of Laurel Canyon Boulevard also burned to the ground, in yet another fire of mysterious origin. (Some reports speculated that it was a drug lab explosion.) And twenty-five years after that, on October 31, 2006, *The Secret Life of Houdini* was published, challenging the conventional wisdom on Houdini’s death.

Far more compelling than the revelations about Houdini’s death, however, was something else about the illusionist that the book revealed for the first time: Harry Houdini was engaged in doing intelligence work for both the US Secret Service and Scotland Yard. And his traveling escape act, as it turns out, was pretty much a cover for those activities—in very much the same way that an actor by the name of John Wilkes Booth appears to have used his career as a traveling stage performer as a cover for intelligence operations. It is a time-honored tradition that seems to remain largely unchanged to this day.

The Sloman book, of course, doesn't make such reckless allegations about any performers other than Houdini. What the book does do, however, is compellingly document that Houdini was, in fact, an intelligence asset who used his magic act as a cover. Not only did the authors obtain corroborating documentation from Scotland Yard, they also received an endorsement of their claim from no less an authority than John McLaughlin, former Acting Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It appears then, that, of the eight celebrity residents of Laurel Canyon listed on the Laurel Canyon Association website, at least two (Novarro and Houdini), and quite possibly as many as four, were murdered. That seems like a rather high homicide rate given that, statistically speaking, a white person in this country has about a one-in-345 chance of being murdered. Non-white persons, of course, have a far greater chance of becoming the victims of a homicide, but nowhere near the one-in-four to one-in-two odds that a white celebrity living in Laurel Canyon faced.

Statistically speaking, if you were a famous actor in the 1920s, you would have been better off playing a round of Russian Roulette than living in Laurel Canyon.

Anyway... two ambitious projects in the 1940s brought significant changes to Laurel Canyon. First, Laurel Canyon Boulevard was extended into the San Fernando Valley, providing access to the canyon from both the north and the south. The boulevard became a winding thoroughfare, providing direct access to the Westside from the Valley. Traffic, needless to say, increased considerably, which probably worked out well for the planners of the other project, because it meant that the increased traffic brought about by that other project probably wasn't noticed at all. And that's good, you see, because the other project was a secret one.

What would become known as Lookout Mountain Laboratory was originally envisioned as a fortified air defense center. Built in 1941 and nestled in two-and-a-half secluded acres off what is now Wonderland Park Avenue, the installation was hidden from view and surrounded by an electrified fence. By 1947, the facility featured a fully operational movie studio. In fact, it is claimed that it was the world's only completely self-contained movie studio. With 100,000 square feet of floor space, the covert studio included sound stages, screening rooms, film

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

processing labs, editing facilities, an animation department, and seventeen climate-controlled film vaults. It also had a helicopter pad and a bomb shelter.

Over its lifetime, the studio produced some 19,000 classified motion pictures—more than all the Hollywood studios combined (which I guess makes Laurel Canyon the real ‘motion picture capital of the world’). Officially, the facility was run by the US Air Force and did nothing more nefarious than process AEC footage of atomic and nuclear bomb tests. The studio, however, was clearly equipped to do far more than just process film. There are indications that Lookout Mountain Laboratory had an advanced research and development department that was on the cutting edge of new film technologies. Such technological advances as 3-D effects were apparently first developed at the Laurel Canyon site. And Hollywood luminaries like John Ford, Jimmy Stewart, Howard Hawks, Ronald Reagan, Bing Crosby, Walt Disney, Hedda Hopper and Marilyn Monroe were given clearance to work at the facility on undisclosed projects. There is no indication that any of them ever spoke of their work at the clandestine studio.

The facility retained as many as 250 producers, directors, technicians, editors, animators, etc., both civilian and military, all with top security clearances—and all reporting to work in a secluded corner of Laurel Canyon. Accounts vary as to when the facility ceased operations. Some claim it was in 1969, while others say the facility remained in operation longer. In any event, by all accounts the secret bunker had been up and running for more than twenty years before Laurel Canyon’s rebellious teen years, and it remained operational for the most turbulent of those years.

The existence of the facility remained unknown to the general public until the early 1990s, though it had long been rumored that the CIA operated a secret movie studio somewhere in or near Hollywood. Film-maker Peter Kuran was the first to learn of its existence, through classified documents he obtained while researching his 1995 documentary *Trinity and Beyond*. And yet even today, nearly twenty years after its limited public disclosure, one would have trouble finding even a single mention of this secret military/intelligence facility anywhere in the ‘conspiracy’ literature.

I think we can all agree though that there is nothing the least bit



suspicious about a covert military facility operating in the epicenter of hippie culture, so let's move on.

In the 1950s, as Barney Hoskyns has written in *Hotel California*, Laurel Canyon was home to all "the hippest young actors," including, according to Hoskyns, Marlon Brando, James Dean, James Coburn and Dennis Hopper. It was home to Natalie Wood as well. In fact, Natalie lived in the very home that Cass Elliot would later turn into a Laurel Canyon party house. And like the home's later occupant, Wood died young under rather mysterious circumstances. As did, to a lesser extent, Canyonite James Dean. And as did, come to think of it, a few other people with very close ties to Canyonite Dennis Hopper.

Dean, Hopper's close friend and co-star, died in a near head-on collision on September 30, 1955, at the tender age of twenty-four. Then there was Nick Adams, who had formerly roomed with Hopper. Like Hopper, Adams had worked alongside James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*. According to Dean himself, Adams had worked alongside Dean even earlier than that, when both were young male prostitutes working the mean streets of Hollywood. Adams died on February 6, 1968, at the age of thirty-six, in his home at 2126 El Roble Lane in Coldwater Canyon (one canyon west of Laurel Canyon, thus narrowly sparing Adams from a spot on the Laurel Canyon Death List).

Adams' official cause of death was listed as suicide, of course, but no one really seems to believe that. Actor Forrest Tucker has bluntly declared that, "All of Hollywood knows Nick Adams was knocked off." Nick's relatives reportedly received numerous hang-up calls on the day of his death, and his tape recorder, journals and various other papers and personal effects were conspicuously missing from his home. His lifeless body, sitting upright in a chair, was discovered by his attorney, Ervin "Tip" Roeder. On June 10, 1981, Roeder and his wife, actress Jenny Maxwell (best known for being spanked by Elvis in *Blue Hawaii*), were gunned down outside their Beverly Hills condo.

Next to fall was Sal Mineo, who, like Dean and Adams, had worked with Hopper on *Rebel Without a Cause* and remained a friend thereafter. Like Hopper, Mineo was a regular in the Sunset Strip clubs where the Doors, Love, the Byrds and the Mothers played. He had been alongside Hopper and Peter Fonda during the infamous 'riot' on the Sunset Strip in November 1966. And as has already been discussed, Mineo was

stabbed to death in close proximity to those very same clubs on February 12, 1976.

Last to fall was Natalie Wood, who also appeared in *Rebel Without a Cause* and who had at various times dated both Dennis Hopper and Nick Adams. Wood died on November 29, 1981, in a drowning incident off Catalina Island that has never been adequately explained. At the time, she was in the company of actors Robert Wagner and Christopher Walken. Natalie was forty-three when she was laid to rest.

Of the four actors stricken with what has been dubbed the “*Rebel Without a Cause* Curse,” two were former residents of Laurel Canyon, another lived at—and was killed at—the mouth of the canyon, and the fourth lived just a mile away, as the crow flies, in neighboring Coldwater Canyon. As I may have mentioned previously, Laurel Canyon seems to be a rather dangerous place to live.

The list of famous former residents of Laurel Canyon also includes the names W.C. Fields, Mary Astor, Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle, Errol Flynn, Orson Welles, and Robert Mitchum, who was infamously arrested on marijuana charges in 1948 at 8334 Ridpath Drive, the same street that would later be home to rockers Roger McGuinn, Don Henley and Glen Frey, as well as Paul Rothchild, producer of both the Doors and Love. Mitchum’s arrest, by the way, appears to have been a thoroughly staged affair that cemented his ‘Hollywood bad boy’ image and gave his career quite a boost, but I guess that’s not really relevant here.

Another famous resident of Laurel Canyon was science-fiction writer Robert Heinlein, who resided at 8775 Lookout Mountain Avenue. Like so many other characters in this story, Heinlein was a graduate of the US Naval Academy at Annapolis and he had served as a naval officer. After that, he embarked on a successful writing career. And despite the fact that he was, by any objective measure, a rabid right-winger, his work was warmly embraced by the flower-power generation.

If that capsule biography sounds vaguely familiar, by the way, it is probably because it is virtually identical to the biography of a guy named L. Ron Hubbard, whom you may have heard of.

Heinlein’s best-known work is the novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*, which many in the Laurel Canyon scene found to be hugely influential. Ed Sanders has written, in *The Family*, that the book “helped provide a theoretical basis for Manson’s Family.” Charlie frequently used *Strange*

*Land* terminology when addressing his flock, and he named his first family-born son Valentine Michael Manson in honor of the book's lead character.

David Crosby was a big Heinlein fan as well. In his autobiography, he references Heinlein on more than one occasion, and proclaims that, "In a society where people can go armed, it makes everybody a little more polite, as Robert Heinlein says in his books." Frank Zappa was also a member of the Robert Heinlein fan club. Barry Miles notes in his biography of the rock icon that his home contained "a copy of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* and other essential sixties reading, including Robert Heinlein's sci-fi classic, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, from which Zappa borrowed the word 'disincorporate' for [the song] *Absolutely Free*."

And that, fearless readers, brings us to the Laurel Canyon era that we are primarily concerned with, the wild and wooly 1960s. But before returning to that era, what conclusions can be drawn from this brief look at early canyon history? For one, it appears that murder and random acts of violence have been a part of the culture of the canyon since the earliest days of its development. It also appears that intelligence operatives posing as entertainers have likewise been a part of the canyon scene since the earliest days. And, finally, it seems that intelligence operatives who didn't even bother to pose as entertainers were streaming into the canyon to report to work at Lookout Mountain Laboratory for at least twenty years before the first rock star set foot there.

We are supposed to believe that all of the musical icons who settled in Laurel Canyon in the 1960s and 1970s just sort of spontaneously came together (one finds the word "serendipitous" sprinkled freely throughout the literature). But how many peculiar coincidences do we have to overlook in order to believe that this was just a chance gathering?

Let's suppose, hypothetically speaking, that you happen to be Jim Morrison and have recently arrived in Laurel Canyon and now find yourself fronting a band that is on the verge of taking the country by storm. Just a mile or so down Laurel Canyon Boulevard from you lives another guy who also recently arrived in Laurel Canyon, and who also happens to front a band on the verge of stardom. He happens to be married to a girl that you attended kindergarten with, and her dad, like yours, was involved in atomic weapons research and testing (Admiral George Morrison for a time did classified work at White Sands). Her husband's

dad, meanwhile, is involved in another type of WMD research: chemical warfare.

This other guy's business partner/manager is a spooky ex-Marine who just happens to have a cousin who, bizarrely enough, also fronts a rock band on the verge of superstardom. And this third rock-star-on-the-rise also happens to live in Laurel Canyon, just a mile or two from your house. Just down a couple of other streets, also within walking distance of your home, live two other kids who—wouldn't you know it?—also happen to front a new rock'n'roll band. These two kids happened to attend the same Alexandria, Virginia, high school that you attended, and one of them also attended Annapolis, just like your dad did, and just like your kindergarten friend's dad did.

Though almost all of you hail from the Washington, DC area, you now find yourselves on the opposite side of the country, in an isolated canyon high above the city of Los Angeles, where you are all clustered around a secret military installation. Given his background in research on atomic weapons, your father is probably familiar to some extent with the existence and operations of Lookout Mountain Laboratory, as is the father of your kindergarten friend.

The question that naturally arises here, I suppose, is this: What do you suppose the odds are that all of that just came together purely by chance?

When early installments of this story were posted online, I received a fair amount of negative feedback. Among other things, I was accused of inferring "guilt by association" and of engaging in "character assassination." One rather strident respondent complained that it was unfair to take a few isolated facts about an individual and use them to paint a sinister picture.

To some extent, these are valid complaints. And yes, it is fairly easy to gather together a few *different* isolated facts and use them to paint a much different portrait of these artists and pen an impassioned defense of any of them. (Jim Morrison and Frank Zappa seem to have the most rabid fans, by the way, in case anyone was wondering.) But what I ask is that you try to stand back and take in the big picture, and then ask yourself the following question: Exactly how many coincidences does it take to make a conspiracy?

And yes, by the way, I am very much aware of the fact that Jim Mor-

risson was fond of telling interviewers that his parents were dead, and that, according to legend, he did so because they were, in essence, dead to him. But as one photograph reveals, Jim's dad wasn't dead to him just months before his emergence as a rock star. The photo, reproduced at the front of this book, shows the two Morrisons on the bridge of the *USS Bon Homme Richard* in January 1964. It seems rather obvious to me that telling people that your parents are dead could be a very effective way of avoiding talking about who your father really is. It was such an effective strategy, in fact, that it took over four decades for the truth to finally come out.

## 6

# VITO AND HIS FREAKERS THE SINISTER ROOTS OF HIPPIE CULTURE

**“Call them freaks, the underground, the counterculture, flower children or hippies—they are all loose labels for the youth culture of the sixties.”** Barry Miles, author of Hippie

**“Vito was in his fifties, but he had four-way sex with goddesses... He held these clay-sculpting classes on Laurel Avenue, teaching rich Beverly Hills dowagers how to sculpt. And that was the Byrds’ rehearsal room. Then Jim Dickson had the idea to put them on at Ciro’s, on the basis that all the freaks would show up and the Byrds would be their Beatles.”** Kim Fowley

**“THIS IS HOW I REMEMBER MY LIFE. OTHER FOLKS MAY NOT HAVE THE SAME memories, even though we might have shared some of the same experiences.”**

So begins David Crosby’s autobiography, *Long Time Gone* (co-written by Carl Gottlieb). As it turns out, quite a few other folks seem to remember some people in Crosby’s life who are all but ignored in the lengthy



book. The names are casually dropped only once, and not by Crosby but rather in a quote from Byrds' manager Jim Dickson in which he describes the scene at the Sunset Strip clubs when the Byrds were playing: "We had them all. We had Jack Nicholson dancing, we had Peter Fonda dancing with Odetta, we had Vito and his Freakers."

Following that brief mention by Dickson, Gottlieb briefly explains to readers that, "Vito and his Freakers were an acid-drenched extended family of brain-damaged cohabitants." And that, in an incredibly self-indulgent 489-page tome, is the only mention you will find of "Vito and his Freakers"—despite the fact that, by just about all other accounts, the group dismissed as "brain-damaged cohabitants" played a crucial role in the early success of Crosby's band. And in the early success of Arthur Lee's band. And in the early success of Frank Zappa's band. And in the early success of Jim Morrison's band. But especially in the early success of David Crosby's band.

As Barry Miles noted in his biography of Frank Zappa, "The Byrds were closely associated with Vito and the Freaks: Vito Paulekas, his wife Szou and Carl Franzoni, the leaders of a group of about thirty-five dancers whose antics enlivened the Byrds early gigs." In *Waiting for the Sun*, Barney Hoskyns wrote that the early success of the Byrds and other bands was due in no small part to "the roving troupe of self-styled 'freaks' led by ancient beatnik Vito Paulekas and his trusty, lusty side-kick Carl Franzoni." Alban "Snoopy" Pfisterer, former drummer and keyboardist for the band Love, went further still, claiming that Vito actually "got the Byrds together, as I remember—they did a lot of rehearsing at his pad."

According to various other accounts, the Byrds did indeed utilize Vito's 'pad' as a rehearsal studio, as did Arthur Lee's band. More importantly, the freaks drew the crowds into the clubs to see the fledgling bands perform. But as important as their contribution was to helping launch the careers of the Laurel Canyon bands, "Vito and his Freakers" were notable for something else as well; according to Barry Miles, writing in his book *Hippie*, "The first hippies in Hollywood, perhaps the first hippies anywhere, were Vito, his wife Szou, Captain Fuck and their group of about thirty-five dancers. Calling themselves Freaks, they lived a semi-communal life and engaged in sex orgies and free-form dancing whenever they could."

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

Some of those who were on the scene at the time agree with Miles' assessment that Vito and his troupe were indeed the very first hippies. Arthur Lee, for example, boasted that they "started the whole hippie thing: Vito, Carl, Szou, Beatle Bob, Bryan and me." One of David Crosby's fellow Byrds, Chris Hillman, also credited the strange group with being at the forefront of the hippie movement: "Carl and all those guys were way ahead of everyone on hippiedom fashion." Ray Manzarek of the Doors remembered them as well: "There were these guys named Carl and Vito who had a dance troupe of gypsy freaks. They were let in for free, because they were these quintessential hippies, which was great for tourists."

If these rather colorful people really were the very first hippies, the very first riders of that 'countercultural' wave, then we should probably try to get to know them. As it turns out, however, that is not such an easy thing to do. Most accounts—and there aren't all that many—offer little more than a few first names, with no consensus agreement on how those first names are even spelled ("Karl" and "Carl" appear interchangeably, as do "Szu" and "Zsu," and "Godot" and "Godo"). But for you, dear readers—because I am a giver—I have gone the extra mile and sifted through the detritus to dig up at least some of the sordid details.

By all accounts the troupe was led by one Vito Paulekas, whose full name was Vitautus Alphonso Paulekas. Born the son of a Lithuanian sausage-maker on May 20, 1913, Vito hailed from Lawrence, Massachusetts (though some accounts claim it was Lowell, Massachusetts). Parents John and Rose Paulekas had three other kids, giving Vito an older sister named Albena and two younger brothers, Bronislo and John.

Some accounts claim that from a young age, Vito developed a habit of running afoul of the law. According to Miles, for example, Vito spent a year-and-a-half in a reformatory as a teenager and "was busted several times after that." A family member though disputes those claims. What isn't disputed is that, in 1938, he was convicted of armed robbery and handed a twenty-five year sentence following a botched attempt at holding up a movie theater. In 1932, at the height of the Great Depression, he had won a marathon dance competition held at Revere Beach. His winnings had given him a taste of the good life that he was thereafter unable to sustain, leading to the robbery attempt.

In 1942, just four years after his conviction, Vito was released into the custody, so to speak, of the US Merchant Marines (a branch of the US Navy during wartime), ostensibly to escort ships running lend-lease missions. Following his release from the service, circa 1946, he arrived in Los Angeles. Two years later, a curious event played out in another part of the country, as documented in the February 23, 1948, edition of *Time* magazine:

“One morning last week, bespectacled Bryant Bowden, editor of the weekly Okeechobee (Fla.) News, sauntered into the Okeechobee courthouse and stopped to eye the bulletin board in the main hall. Among the marriage-license applications, which, by Florida law, must be publicly posted for three days before a ceremony, he saw something which made him goggle. Winthrop Rockefeller, thirty-five, of New York—the fourth of John D. Rockefeller Jr.’s five sons and one of the most eligible bachelors in the world—had stated his intention of marrying one Eva Sears, also of New York. Editor Bowden had a bitter moment—his paper would not be published for two days. Then he remembered that he was the Okeechobee correspondent for the Associated Press. He telephoned the AP office in Jacksonville. A few hours later, the whole US journalistic horizon glowed a bright pink with the fireworks he had touched off. While the first headlines blazed (and while Manhattan gossip columnists scrambled to assure their readers that they had known all about the romance for months), herds of reporters were dispatched to find an answer to the question: Who is Eva Sears? Hearst’s Cholly Knickerbocker (Ghighi Cassini) haughtily announced that she was Mrs. Barbara Paul Sears of the fine old Philadelphia Pauls and thus a society girl of impeccable pedigree. He was wrong.”

Indeed he was. So who was this mystery woman—this woman who, as it turns out, had once had a brief career in Hollywood before moving to Paris and taking a job as a secretary at the US embassy? She appears to have gone by many names at different times in her life, including Eva Paul, Eva Paul Sears, Barbara Paul, Barbara Paul Sears, and “Bobo” Rockefeller. None of them, however, was the name she was given at the time of her birth. As *Time* noted, “Her parents were Lithuanian immigrants and she was born Jievute Paulekiute in a coal patch near Noblestown, Pa.” Even that, however, was not her real name—at least not by American custom and tradition.

In her parents' homeland, "Paulekiute" is the feminine version of "Paulekas." Eva Paul's father, as it turns out, just happened to be the brother of Vito Paulekas' father. (A fact verified by—and brought to my attention by—a member of the Paulekas family.) I'm no genealogist, but I'm pretty sure that that means that the self-styled "King of the Hip-pies" was, improbably enough, a first cousin of Bobo Rockefeller and a cousin-in-law (for lack of a better term) of Winthrop Rockefeller himself. Vito was also a cousin of the couple's only child, Winthrop Paul Rockefeller, who would later serve as the lieutenant governor of the state of Arkansas.

The Paulekas family, alas, missed Winthrop and Bobo's day of celebration. According to *Time*, "Bobo's mother and stepfather... were unable to attend the ceremony because they were making a batch of Lithuanian cheese on their Indiana farm." I guess we all have our priorities. Truth be told though, the Paulekas clan has a somewhat different explanation: they were deliberately excluded from the ceremony as it was felt they were a bit too uncultured to break bread with the likes of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and the Marquess of Blandford.

As for Vito, he appears to have rather quickly established himself in Los Angeles as a respected artist/sculptor. As early as August of 1949, the *Los Angeles Times* announced that an art exhibit at the Biltmore Hotel was to feature his work. In May of 1956, another announcement held that there would be an exhibit by "Vito and his students" to be held at the Vito Clay Studios on Laurel Avenue. Another announcement, in February of 1958, alerted readers that a gallery on La Cienega Boulevard would be featuring the work of sculptor "Vito Bouleka." And the next year, in May 1959, a gallery on Beverly Boulevard was scheduled to host an exhibit featuring works from "Vito Clay Studios."

Also during the decade of the 1950s, Vito married and fathered two children, though that marriage had melted down by the time the 1960s rolled around. It was Vito's second marriage, his first having been to a teen bride back in his marathon dancing days, before his prison stint. On July 7, 1961, he married yet again, to the aforementioned Szou, whose real name was Susan Cynthia Shaffer. Vito was forty-eight at the time and Szou was just eighteen. She had been only sixteen when they met.

Vito and Szou made their home in an unassuming building at the corner of Laurel Avenue and Beverly Boulevard, just below the mouth

of Laurel Canyon and practically within spitting distance of Jay Sebring's hair salon. At street level was Szou's clothing boutique, which has been credited by some scenesters with being the very first to introduce hippie fashions. Upstairs were living quarters for Vito, Szou and their first-born son, Godo. Downstairs was what was known as the Vito Clay Studio, where, according to Miles and various others, Paulekas "made a living of sorts by giving clay modeling lessons to Beverly Hills matrons who found the atmosphere in his studio exciting." According to most accounts, it wasn't really the Mayan-tomb decor of the studio that many of the matrons found so exciting, but rather Vito's reportedly insatiable sexual appetite and John Holmesian physique. In any event, Vito's students also apparently included such Hollywood luminaries as Jonathan Winters, Mickey Rooney and Steve Allen.

As for his erstwhile sidekick, Carl Orestes Franzoni, he has claimed in interviews that his "mother was a countess" and his father "was a stone carver from Rutland, Vermont. The family was brought from Italy, from the quarries in the northern part of Italy, to cut the stone for the monuments of the United States." That would make his ancestors, it stands to reason, of considerable importance in the Masonic community. And there were in fact a couple of brothers named Franzoni who were brought over from Italy in the early 1800s to carve the Masonic monuments of Washington. According to Ihna Thayer Frary's *They Built the Capitol*, Guiseppe Franzoni, who came over with his brother Carlo, "had especially good family connections in Italy, he being a nephew of Cardinal Franzoni and son of the President of the Academy of Fine Arts at Carrara." Also making their way to the New World were Francisco Iardella, a cousin of the Franzoni brothers, and Giovanni Andrei, a brother-in-law of Guiseppe Franzoni.

By Carl Franzoni's own account, he himself grew up as something of a young hoodlum in Cincinnati, Ohio, and later went into business with some shady Sicilian characters selling mail-order breast and penis pumps out of an address on LA's fabled Melrose Avenue. As Franzoni remembered it, his business "partner's name was Scallacci, Joe Scallacci—the same name as the famous murderer Scallacci. Probably from the same family." Probably so.

Franzoni, born circa 1934, hooked up with the older Paulekas sometime around 1963 and soon after became his constant sidekick. Also in

the troupe was a young Rory Flynn (Canyonite Errol Flynn's statuesque daughter), a bizarre character named Ricky Applebaum who had half a moustache on one side of his face and half a beard on the other, most of the young girls who would later become part of Frank Zappa's GTO project, and a lot of other colorful characters who donned pseudonyms like Linda Bopp, Butchie, Beatle Bob, Emerald, and Karen Yum Yum.

Also flitting about the periphery of the dance troupe were Navy brat Gail Sloatman and a curious character on the LA music scene by the name of Kim Fowley. Sloatman and Fowley were, for a time, closely allied and even cut a record together, America's Sweethearts, that Fowley produced. In 1966, Fowley produced a record for Vito as well, billed as Vito and the Hands. The seven-inch single, *Where It's At*, which featured the musicianship of some of Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention cohorts, came no closer to entering the charts than did Fowley and Sloatman's effort. Sloatman though soon found work as an assistant to, and booking agent for, Elmer Valentine, whom we will meet shortly.

Fowley, as with so many other characters in this story, has a rather interesting history. He was born in 1939, the son of actor Douglas Fowley, a WWII Navy veteran and attendee of St. Francis Xavier Military Academy. According to the younger Fowley's account, he was initially abandoned to a foster home but later taken back and raised by his father. He grew up in upscale Malibu, California, where he shared his childhood home with "a bunch of actors and guys from the Navy." At the age of six-and-a-half, Fowley had an unusual experience that he later shared with author Michael Walker: dressed up in a sailor suit by his dad and his Navy buddies, he was taken "to a photographer named William, who took a picture of me in the sailor suit. His studio was next door to the Canyon [Country] Store." Right after that, he was driven down Laurel Canyon Boulevard to the near-mythical Schwab's Drugstore, where "everybody cheered and two chorus girls grabbed my six-year-old cock and balls and stuck a candy cigarette in my mouth."

It's probably safe to assume that childhood experiences such as that helped to prepare Fowley for his later employment as a young male street hustler, a profession that he practiced on the seedy streets of the City of Angels (by Fowley's own account, I should add, just as it was James Dean himself who claimed to have worked those same streets with Nick Adams). Following that, Fowley spent some time serving with



the Army National Guard, after which he devoted his life to working in the LA music industry as a musician, writer and producer—as well as, according to some accounts, a master manipulator.

Around 1957, Fowley played in a band known as the Sleepwalkers, alongside future Beach Boy Bruce Johnston. At times, a diminutive young guitarist named Phil Spector—who had moved out to LA with his mother not too many years earlier, following the suicide of his father when Phil was just nine—sat in with the group. During the 1960s, Fowley was best known for producing such ridiculous yet beloved novelty songs as the Hollywood Argyles' Alley Oop and the Rivingtons' Papa Oom-Mow-Mow, though he also did more respectable work such as collaborating on some Byrds' tracks and having some of his original songs covered by both the Beach Boys and the Flying Burrito Brothers.

In 1975, Fowley would have perhaps his greatest success when he created the Runaways, further lowering the bar that Frank Zappa had already set rather low some years earlier when he had created and recorded the GTOs. The Runaways featured underage versions of Joan Jett and Lita Ford, whom Fowley tastefully attired in leather and lingerie. As he would later boast, "Everyone loved the idea of sixteen-year-old girls playing guitars and singing about fucking." Some of the young girls in the band, including Cherie Curry, would later accuse Fowley of requiring them to perform sexual services for him and his associates as a prerequisite for membership in the group.

Prior to assembling the Runaways, one of Fowley's proudest accomplishments was producing the 1969 album *I'm Back and I'm Proud* by rockabilly pioneer Gene Vincent, featuring backing vocals by Canyonite Linda Ronstadt. Just two years later, Vincent—a Navy veteran raised in that penultimate Navy town, Norfolk, Virginia—died unexpectedly on October 12, 1971, due reportedly to a ruptured stomach ulcer. Not long before his death, Vincent had been on tour in the UK but he had hastily returned to the US due to pressure from, among others, promoter Don Arden. Known none-too-affectionately as the "Al Capone of Pop," Arden had a penchant for guns and violence and he was known to openly boast of his affiliation with powerful organized crime figures. In addition to being a business partner of the equally nefarious Michael Jeffery, Arden was also the father of Sharon Osbourne and the former manager of her husband's band, Black Sabbath... but here I have surely

digressed, so let's try to bring this back around to where we left off.

At least as early as 1962, not long before Carl Franzoni joined the group, the freak troupe was already hitting the clubs a couple nights each week to refine their unique style of dance (perhaps best described as an epileptic seizure set to music) and show off their distinctively unappealing, though soon to be quite popular, fashion sense. In those early days, they danced to local black R&B bands and to a band out of Fresno known as the Gauchos, in dives far removed from the fabled Sunset Strip—because, Franzoni has said, “There were no white bands [in LA] yet,” and “There were no clubs on Sunset Boulevard.”

That, of course, was all about to quickly change. As if by magic, new clubs began to spring up along the legendary Sunset Strip beginning around 1964, and old clubs considered to be long past their prime miraculously reemerged. In January 1964, a young Chicago vice cop named Elmer Valentine opened the doors to the now world-famous Whisky-a-Go-Go nightclub. Just over a year later, in spring of 1965, he opened a second soon-to-be-wildly-popular club, the Trip. Not long before that, near the end of 1964, the legendary Ciro's nightclub began undergoing extensive renovations. Opened in 1940 by Billy Wilkerson, an associate of Bugsy Siegel, the upscale club had flourished for the first twenty years of its existence, with a clientele that regularly included Hollywood royalty and organized crime figures. By the early 1960s, though, the Strip was dead, and the once prestigious club had gone to seed.

Ciro's reopened in early 1965, just before the Trip opened its doors and just in time, as it turns out, to host the very first club appearance by the musical act that was about to become the first Laurel Canyon band to commit a song to vinyl: The Byrds. By 1967, Gazzari's had opened up on the Strip as well, and in the early 1970s Valentine would open yet another club that endures to this day, the Roxy. Smaller clubs like the London Fog, where the Doors got their first booking as the house band in early 1966, opened their doors to the public in the mid-1960s as well.

The timing of the opening of Valentine's first two clubs, and the reopening of Ciro's, could not have been any more fortuitous. The paint was barely dry on the walls of the new clubs when bands like Love and the Doors and the Byrds and Buffalo Springfield and the Turtles and the Mothers of Invention and the Mamas and the Papas and the Lovin' Spoonful came knocking. The problem, however, was that the new clubs

were not yet known to the general public, *Ciro's* had been long left for dead, and nobody had the slightest idea who any of these newfangled bands were. What was needed then was a way to create a buzz around the clubs that would draw people in and kick-start the Strip back to life, as well as, of course, launch the careers of the new bands.

The bands themselves could not be expected to fill the new clubs, since, besides being unknown, they also—and yeah, I know that you don't really want to hear this and I will undoubtedly be deluged with letters of complaint, but I'm going to say it anyway—weren't very good, at least not in their live incarnations. To be sure, they sounded great on vinyl, but that was largely due to the fact that the band members themselves didn't actually play on their records (at least not in the early days), and the rich vocal harmonies that were a trademark of the 'Laurel Canyon sound' were created in the studio with a good deal of multi-tracking and overdubs. On stage, it was another matter entirely.

Enter then the wildly flamboyant and colorful freak squad, who were one key component of the strategy that was devised to lure patrons into the clubs. Vito and Carl's dancers were a fixture on the Sunset Strip scene from the very moment that the new clubs opened their doors to the public, and they were, by all accounts, treated like royalty by the club owners. As John Hartmann, proprietor of the Kaleidoscope Club and brother of comedian Phil Hartman, acknowledged, he "would let Vito and his dancers into the Kaleidoscope free every week because they attracted people. They were really hippies, and so we had to have them. They got in free pretty much everywhere they went. They blessed your joint. They validated you. If they're the essence of hippiedom and you're trying to be a hippie nightclub, you need hippies."

As the aforementioned Kim Fowley put it, with characteristic bluntness, "A band didn't have to be good, as long as the dancers were there." Indeed, the band was largely irrelevant, other than to provide some semblance of a soundtrack for the real show, which was taking place on the dance floor. Gail Zappa once candidly admitted that, even at her husband's shows, the real attraction was not on the stage: "The customers came to see the freaks dance. Nobody ever talks about that, but that was the case." Frank Zappa added, "As soon as they arrived they would make things happen, because they were dancing in a way nobody had seen before, screaming and yelling out on the floor and

doing all kinds of weird things. They were dressed in a way that nobody could believe, and they gave life to everything that was going on.”

For reasons that clearly had more to do with boosting attendance at the clubs than with the dancing abilities displayed by the group, Vito and Carl seem to have become minor media darlings over the course of the 1960s and into the 1970s. The two can be seen, separately and together, in a string of cheap exploitation films, including *Mondo Bizarro* from 1966, *Something's Happening (aka The Hippie Revolt)* from 1967, the notorious *Mondo Hollywood*, also released in 1967, and *You Are What You Eat*, with David Crosby, Frank Zappa and Tiny Tim, which hit theaters in 1968. In 1972, Vito made his acting debut in a non-documentary film, *The White Horse Gang*.

Paulekas reportedly also popped up on Groucho Marx's *You Bet Your Life*, and Franzoni made an appearance on a 1968 Dick Clark TV special. The golden child, Godo Paulekas, was featured in a photo in *Life* magazine circa 1966, and the whole troupe showed up for an appearance on the *Tonight Show*. According to Barry Miles, Vito also “appeared regularly on the *Joe Pyne Show* and in between the bare-breasted girls in the late fifties and early sixties men's magazines.”

Joe Pyne, for those of you too young to remember, is the guy we have to thank for paving the way for the likes of Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Michael Savage, Don Imus, Morton Downey, Jr., Jerry Springer and Wally George. For Mr. Pyne, you see, was the guy who pioneered the confrontational interview style favored by so many today. The decorated Marine Corps veteran debuted as a talk-radio host in 1950 and quickly became known for insulting and demeaning anyone who dared to disagree with him, guests and listeners alike. In 1957, he moved his show to LA and by 1965, he was nationally syndicated both on the radio and on television. His favored targets, as you may have guessed, included hippies, feminists, gays, and anti-war activists, and his interviews frequently ended with his guest either walking off or being thrown off the stage. Nearing the peak of his popularity, Pyne died on March 23, 1970, at the age of forty-five, reportedly of lung cancer. His ideological offspring, however, live on.

## 7

# THE DEATH OF GODO PAULEKAS ANGER'S INFANT LUCIFER

**"Vito would come in every night with an entourage—mostly four or five really great-looking girls. It's a weird parallel, but it was like a nonviolent Manson situation, a little cult." Lou Adler, manager/producer of the Mamas and the Papas, co-organizer of the Monterey Pop Festival, investor in Jay Sebring's hair salon, and business partner of mobster/club owner Elmer Valentine**

**"I have said for years that there are some similarities between Vito and Manson... Vito was sort of like a pimp. He was welcome as a VIP with the emerging rock crowd because he always showed up with these free thinking fourteen- and fifteen-year-old girls that would be happy to satisfy their needs." A member of the Paulekas family, in e-mail correspondence with the author**

RECRUITS FOR VITO AND CARL'S DANCE TROUPE WEREN'T LIKELY HARD TO come by, given that, according to Miles, Vito operated "the first crash pad in LA, an open house to countless runaways where everyone was

welcome for a night, particularly young women.” By the mid-1960s, the group had expanded into a second communal location in addition to the basement studio at 303 Laurel Avenue: the ubiquitous Log Cabin. According to Jack Boulware, writing in *Mojo*, architect Robert Byrd and his son built a new guesthouse (aka ‘the treehouse’) on the property in the early 1960s, and the “following year, a communal family of weirdos moved into the cabin and treehouse, centered around two underground hipsters named Vito Paulekas and Carl Franzoni, organizers of freeform dance troupes at clubs along the Sunset Strip.” By 1967, the dancers were splitting “their rent with staff from the hippie publication *The Oracle*. Retired journalist John Bilby recalls at least thirty-six people living and partying at the Log Cabin and treehouse, including the band Fraternity of Man. ‘Tim Leary was definitely there, George Harrison and Ravi Shankar were there,’ Bilby says.”

For the record, Fraternity of Man was a one-hit-wonder band best known for the ever-popular novelty song Don’t Bogart Me. Tim Leary was, in this writer’s humble opinion, best known for being a painfully obvious CIA asset. And *The Oracle* was a San Francisco-based publication with intelligence ties that specialized in pitching psychedelic occultism to impressionable youth. Leary, it probably should be noted, also had a home of his own in Laurel Canyon.

According to Barry Miles, “Franzoni’s commune ended in May 1968,” as that was when *The Oracle* moved out and our old friend Frank Zappa moved in. The lead Mother “had visited Carl at the Log Cabin on a previous trip and realized it was perfect for his needs.” And it was an easy move for Frank, since he was already living in Laurel Canyon at the home of Pamela Zarubica (aka Suzy Creamcheese) at 8404 Kirkwood Drive, where Zappa had met his new wife, Gail, and where Gail’s old kindergarten pal, Jim Morrison, was known to occasionally pass the time. Ms. Zarubica/Creamcheese was yet another member of Vito’s dance troupe.

As multiple sources remember it, Miles is mistaken in his contention that Franzoni’s commune came to an end; Frank Zappa took over as ringmaster, to be sure, but Franzoni and all his cohorts stayed on. Carl had a room in the basement, where he was known to bowl in the middle of the night, usually naked and intoxicated. The doomed Christine Frka had a room down there as well, as did other future GTOs. Various



other members of the dance troupe occupied other nooks and cran- nies in both the main house and the guesthouse/treehouse. Indeed, as Miles noted correctly, the freak dancers became so closely associated with the Mothers of Invention that “they got dubbed as ‘the Mothers Auxiliary’ and Carl Franzoni, in particular, was included in a lot of group photographs.” Vito and Carl also received vocal credits on the band’s debut album (as did none other than Bobby Beausoleil).

And that, in a nutshell, is the story of Vito and his freak dancers—or at least a sanitized version. Because there is, as it turns out, a very dark underbelly to this story. And much of it is centered around that angelic hippie child that the readers of *Life* magazine met in 1966, and who we now must sadly add to the Laurel Canyon Death List. For young Godo Paulekas, you see, never made it past the age of three. The specifics of the tragedy are difficult to determine, unfortunately, as there is little agreement in the various accounts of the event.

According to Barry Miles, “Vito and Szou’s three-year-old son Godo had fallen through a trapdoor on the roof of the building and died.” Michael Walker tells of a “two or three” year old Godo “fall[ing] to his death from a scaffold at the studio.” An article in the *San Francisco Weekly* had it as “a five-year-old boy” who died when he “fell through a skylight.” Super-groupie and former freak dancer Pamela Des Barres agreed with the skylight scenario, but not the age: “Vito’s exquisite little puppet child, Godot, fell through a skylight during a wacky photo ses- sion on the roof and died at age three-and-a-half.” Alban Pfisterer of the band Love recalled a much darker scenario: “[Vito] got married, had a baby, gave it acid, and it fell off the roof and died.”

When Robert Carl Cohen digitally remastered his notorious *Mondo Hollywood* for DVD release, he added postscripts for all the famous and infamous people who were featured in his film. For “Godo” Paulekas, he inserted the following caption: “Died age two—victim of medical malpractice.” Thus we appear to have a further muddying of the waters. So muddy in fact that in addition to there being various competing ‘fell from some scaffolding/fell through a trapdoor/crashed through a sky- light’ accounts, there are also at least two medical malpractice stories!

Before reviewing those though, it would perhaps be instructive to examine the context in which this tragedy played out. We know, for example, that a musician and writer named Raphael told writer Michael

Walker that he had been present one evening at Vito's place when Godo was brought out: "They passed that little boy around, naked, in a circle with their mouths. That was their thing about 'introducing him to sensuality.'" We also know that Vito and Szou had a rather odd reaction to the death of their firstborn son and only child, as recounted by Des Barres: "I was beside myself with sorrow, but Vito and Szou insisted on continuing our plans for the evening. We went out dancing, and when people asked where little Godot was, Vito said, 'He died today.' It was weird, really weird."

Barry Miles, who was also close to the scene, had a similar recollection, though he attempted to put a more positive spin on the reaction of the parents: "Vito and Szou's three-year-old son Godo had fallen through a trapdoor on the roof of their building and died. That evening Vito, Szou and the gang went out as usual, dancing with an even fiercer intensity to assuage their grief." Godo died at 7:30 PM on December 23, 1966, some thirty-six hours before Christmas morning. On the side of reality that I live on, the death of a child at any time would deter most parents from going out and partying the night away—that it occurred virtually on the eve of Christmas makes Vito and Szou's actions that much more incomprehensible.

Adding to the weirdness factor is the full text of the quote from the *San Francisco Weekly* that I previously presented an edited version of: "[Kenneth Anger's] first candidate to play Lucifer, a five-year-old boy whose hippie parents had been fixtures on the Los Angeles counterculture scene, fell through a skylight to his death. By 1967, Anger had relocated to San Francisco and was searching for a new Lucifer." As some readers may be aware, he soon found his new Lucifer in the form of Mansonite and former Grass Roots guitarist Bobby Beausoleil.

And so it was that the soon-to-be convicted murderer replaced the cherubic hippie child as the face of Lucifer. But what was it, one wonders, that drew Anger's twisted eye to the young boy? Beausoleil has said that some of Anger's film projects were for private collectors: "every once in a while he'd do a little thing that wouldn't be for distribution." Biographer Bill Landis has written that projects such as those led at one time to Anger being investigated by the police on suspicion that he had been producing snuff films.

Pamela Des Barres has shed further light on the dark edges of the

freak troupe with this description of a scene that Vito had staged one evening in his studio: "two tenderly young girls were tonguing each other... everyone was silently observing the scene as if it were part of their necessary training by the headmaster, Vito... One of the girls on the four-poster was only twelve-years-old, and a few months later Vito was deported to Tahiti for this very situation, and many more just like it."

It was actually Haiti that Vito appears to have fled to, and then to Jamaica (which at the time had no extradition treaty with the United States), accompanied by his wife Szou and their new baby daughter Gruvi Nipples Paulekas, born on June 23, 1967. The couple would have several more offspring, each given an increasingly ridiculous name: Bp Paulekas, born on December 29, 1969; Sky Paulekas, born, bizarrely enough, on what would have been Godo's eighth birthday, December 1, 1971; and Phreekus Mageekus Paulekas, born on January 28, 1974, just a little more than a year before the couple divorced in March of 1975 in Northern California.

According to Miles, Vito's flight from justice occurred in December of 1968, though other accounts vary. Carl Franzoni, meanwhile, became embroiled in some unspecified legal troubles of his own and went into hiding, later resurfacing in Canada by some reports. At around that same time, Frank Zappa moved on to yet another location in Laurel Canyon, a high-security home on Woodrow Wilson Drive.

Also at around that same time, according to author Ed Sanders, the Manson Family came calling at the Log Cabin: "One former Manson family associate claims that a group of four to six family members lived on Laurel Canyon Boulevard in the log cabin house once owned by cowboy-actor Tom Mix. They lived there for a few weeks, in late 1968, in a cave-like hollow in back of the residence." According to Franzoni, Manson also came calling at the Vito Clay Studio on Laurel Avenue: "Applebaum took over Vito's place when Vito vacated at Beverly and Laurel. So he inherited all the people that came after that... he was the beginning of the Manson clan. Manson came there because he had heard about Vito but Vito was gone."

It makes perfect sense, in retrospect, that Charles Manson and his Family came calling just as Vito fled the scene, and that a Mansonite replaced the freak child as the embodiment of Lucifer. For the truth, you see, is that in many significant ways, Charles Manson was little more

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than a younger version of Vito Paulekas. Consider, if you will, all of the following Mansonesque qualities that Paulekas (and to some extent, Franzoni) seemed to share:

- Vito considered himself to be a gifted artist and poet, as did our old friend Charlie Manson.

- Vito, according to Miles, “was something of a guru,” as was, quite obviously, Chuck Manson.

- Vito surrounded himself with a flock of very young (often underage) women, as did Manson.

- Vito was considerably older than his followers, and so too was Charlie.

- When Vito addressed his flock, they listened with rapt attention as though they were being delivered the word of God, as was true with Manson as well.

- Carl Franzoni was known to wear a black cape and refer to himself as “Captain Fuck,” while Manson was also partial to black capes and would at times declare himself to be “the God of Fuck.”

- Vito is said to have had a virtually insatiable libido, as did, by numerous reports, Chuck Manson.

- Vito’s flock adopted nicknames to aid in the depersonalization process, as did Charlie’s.

- Vito’s troupe included a Beverly Hills hairstylist named Sheldon Jaman, while Charlie’s included a Beverly Hills hairpiece stylist named Charles Watson.

- Vito believed in introducing children to sexuality at a very young age, while in the Manson Family, as Sanders has noted, “Infant sexuality was encouraged.”

■ Vito apparently liked to stage live sex shows for his followers involving underage participants, which was also a specialty of Charles Milles Manson.

■ Finally, Vito encouraged his followers to drug themselves while he himself largely abstained, thus enabling him to at all times maintain control, while Manson limited his own drug intake for the very same reason.

Franzoni and Manson were not, by the way, the only folks on the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene who developed a fondness for black capes in the latter half of the 1960s. As Michael Walker noted in *Laurel Canyon*, during that same period of time David Crosby had “taken to wearing an Oscar Wilde/Frank Lloyd Wright-ish cape wherever he went.”

In unrelated news, Ed Sanders notes in his controversial *The Family* that, “Around March 10, 1968, a convoy of seven Process automobiles containing thirty people and fourteen Alsatian dogs journeyed toward Los Angeles.” Vincent Bugliosi added, in his best-selling *Helter Skelter*, that in “1968 and 1969, the Process launched a major recruiting drive in the United States. They were in Los Angeles in May and June of 1968 and for at least several months in the fall of 1969.”

As Gary Lachman wrote in *Fortean Times* in May 2000, the Process Church of the Final Judgement, often referred to as just “the Process,” was “one of the most controversial cults of the Sixties.” Formed in 1963 in London as an offshoot of Scientology, the group was the brainchild of Robert Moore, a former cavalry officer who would soon adopt the name Robert DeGrimston, and Mary Ann MacLean, the proprietor of an elite prostitution ring with ties to the UK’s so-called Profumo Affair. According to various reports, MacLean was at one time married to famed pugilist and freemason Sugar Ray Robinson, who, as we will see in a later chapter, lived right around the corner from future Love frontman Arthur Lee during that time.

The group arrived in the States in 1968, establishing footholds in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, New York and Boston. The organization soon began producing a magazine that, as Lachmann says, had an “editorial policy [that] favoured Hitler, Satan and gore.” Singer/song-writer Marianne Faithfull, who appeared in an issue of the magazine,

later distanced herself from the group, saying that “There was something almost like fascism about the Process.” The cult’s fascist mind-set was amply illustrated by their choice of a symbol, which Lachman accurately describes as bearing “an uncanny resemblance to the Nazi swastika.”

In *The Family*, Sanders describes the Process as a “death-worshiping church” composed of “hooded snuffoids” who were directly connected to the Manson murders. Maury Terry likewise fleshed out connections between the Process and New York’s Son of Sam murders in his equally controversial *The Ultimate Evil*. Spokespersons for the cult, not surprisingly, vehemently denied any involvement in any such murderous activities. One thing is certain though: Processians were instantly recognizable on the streets of LA due to their curious habit of donning black capes wherever they went.

In other news, it appears as though Frank Zappa also displayed some of the same less-than-admirable qualities shared by Manson and Paulekas. As Des Barres observed, “Vito was just like Frank, he never got high either. They were both ringmasters who always wanted to be in control.” And as Barry Miles noted in his Zappa biography, Frank’s daughter Moon “recalls men with straggling beards, body odour and bad posture who crouched naked near her playthings...” Also, the “Zappa children watched porn with their parents and were encouraged in their own sexuality as soon as they reached puberty. When they became teenagers, Gail insisted they shower with their overnight guests in order to conserve water.” Apparently the Zappas were having a hard time paying their DWP bill.

By the early 1970s, Vito Paulekas had resurfaced up north in Cotati, California, with Carl Franzoni once again at his side. The two were, by all accounts, treated like rock stars in the funky little town, and they are to this day proudly and prominently featured on the city’s official website. By some accounts, Vito even served as mayor of the town, with Franzoni assisting as his Director of Parks and Recreation. Paulekas also taught dance classes at Sonoma State College. Szou went to work for an attorney, leaving the hippie life behind.

Franzoni, meanwhile, turned up now and then on that early version of *America’s Got Talent* known as *The Gong Show* (apparently as one of the ‘Worm Dancers’). *The Gong Show*, of course, was the



brainchild of Chuck Barris, who famously claimed that during the days when he appeared to be working as a mild-mannered game show producer, he was actually on the payroll of the CIA, and that while he was ostensibly serving as a chaperone to the couples who had won trips on *The Dating Game*, what he was really doing was carrying out assassinations. Possibly like that Harry Houdini guy, who we'll discuss in a later chapter.

Anyway, during the 1970s, the "cabin and treehouse scene," according to Jack Boulware, "grew creepy." Actually, it had always been pretty creepy; it likely just became a little more openly creepy. Eric Burden of the Animals moved in after Zappa vacated and the property continued to be communally occupied. In fact, it appears to have remained something of a commune throughout the 1970s, quite possibly right up until the time that it burned to the ground on October 31, 1981. Who paid the rent is anybody's guess—as is why such a prestigious property seems to have been made readily available to pretty much any "communal family of weirdos" who wanted to move in.

Vito Paulekas and Carl Franzoni appear to have remained in Northern California throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Vito married once again, for the fourth time, while he was in his sixties. Franzoni was still milling about the Santa Rosa area as of early 2013. In February of 2008, the aging freak, then reportedly seventy-four, rode along on a tour of 1960s hotspots offered by a local tour company and delighted the crowd by reenacting his distinctive dance style in front of Vito's former studio. The tour operator billed Franzoni as "the King of the Freaks," a title formerly held by his mentor, Vito Paulekas. The original king, alas, had died in October of 1992. His memorial service was held, appropriately enough, on October 31, 1992—All Hallows' Eve.

Returning now to the death of young Godo Paulekas, filmmaker Robert Carl Cohen, in an emailed defense of his medical malpractice claim, provided a detailed account of the incident—one that he said was told to him by Carl Franzoni on the evening of the tragedy and retold later by Vito himself: "Godo, two-and-a-half years of age at the time, was with his parents on the roof of 333 Laurel Ave. during a *LA Free Press* photo shoot. Two older children were holding his hands as they ran about. They led him onto a white-painted glass skylight, which collapsed. Godo fell through, sustaining a cut to his head and bruises. His parents took

him to Hollywood Emergency Hospital, where the doctors stitched the cut on his head, and recommended he be taken to LA County General Hospital for observation overnight in case he'd sustained a concussion. A few hours later Vito received a phone call from LA County General that Godo had died. LA County DA [Evelle] Younger, convinced that Godo had been given drugs, ordered two separate autopsies by LA County Coroner Noguchi. The two autopsies both revealed that Godo had no drugs in his system, and that the cause of death had been strangulation due to the child's breathing his own vomit.

"Vito sued LA County for wrongful death due to medical malpractice. The charge was that, in contradiction to standard medical practice, Godo had been restrained by being strapped down on his back—something which is not normally done following a head injury (due to the possibility of the victim strangling on their own vomit). The reason this was done in Godo's case was probably because the child was offending the hospital staff by repeating some of the first words he'd learned, ie: 'Fuck you!' The LA authorities offered Vito a \$20,000 pre-trial settlement, which he refused. I suggested to Vito that, since the case would be tried by a jury of mostly conservative people, usually retired civil servants, he get his long hair cut short, shave his beard and goatee, and wear a business suit and tie. Vito declined changing his appearance. The jury ruled in favor of the hospital."

A member of the Paulekas family heard a much different account, this one also coming directly from Vito: "He [Vito] and Sue told me that Godo fell from the roof through the skylight, as often told, but died when, in the hospital, the District Attorney's office insisted on testing Godot for drugs to prove Vito was drugging his own child. The best way [to test] was with a spinal tap that killed him because he was so young. That was his story to me and he elaborated about his screaming child being tied down in his presence for the spinal tap and then suddenly becoming lifeless."

It is perfectly obvious that both versions of events cannot possibly be true. In one version, Vito was present when Godo died, while in the other he received notification over the phone. One version of reality holds that the boy was tested for drugs after his death, while the other version claims that the drug test was what killed him. Godo was restrained in both versions of events, but in one it's so that he could be

administered the spinal tap that killed him, while in the other it is the restraints that killed him—restraints utilized because for some reason he was yelling “fuck you!” at the hospital staff and no one knew of a nonviolent way to deal with an injured three-year-old!

If the medical malpractice story is true, then why did Vito tell more than one version of it? This is clearly not a situation where memories could have faded over time—no parent could confuse such particulars as if they actually watched their child die... before, of course, donning their dancing shoes and heading out to the Whisky.

There are, to be sure, a number of questions raised by the malpractice scenario, particularly with Cohen’s account. For one thing, as if the reaction of the parents was not already difficult to understand, we are now being asked to believe that they went out dancing immediately after Godo was essentially murdered. Also, why is it that no one else who was making the scene in those days seems to remember a malpractice trial? And why were kids being allowed to play unsupervised on a roof? And would a toddler who crashed through a skylight and then fell a considerable distance among shards of broken glass really sustain only a minor cut and a few bruises? And would a hospital really be so callous as to inform parents of the death of a child by telephone? And if Vito was so quick to file suit against the city, why didn’t he also sue his landlord for allowing such a dangerous condition to exist?

As it turns out, Godo’s LA County Certificate of Death provides some insight into his short life and curious death. Clearly indicated is that the coroner found the cause of death to be “shock” due to “hemorrhage into deep cervical and superior mediastinal areas.” The death was deemed to be an “accident” that occurred when Godo “fell through skylight while playing.” He did, though, die at Los Angeles General Hospital, at 7:30 PM, precisely five hours after the accident occurred at 2:30 PM (though the times seem oddly approximate).

The timeline offered up by the document certainly seems a bit odd. Despite the fact that Godo died on December 23, his autopsy was not completed until April 13, a delay of nearly four months. Was that delay caused by the fabled second autopsy? Even if that were the case, four months seems like an inordinately long time to hold up the release of the body for burial. To further add to the mystery, even after the body was released, it was almost another full month before it was buried, on

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May 9, 1967. Why did it take some four-and-a-half months to lay the child to rest?

The tragedy was reported not by the parents, but by a “Mr. Marvin Cahn, Attorney.” After a child has suffered a serious accident, do parents with nothing to hide generally delay the arrival of help by calling an attorney and having him contact the proper authorities? It appears that there are, and probably always will be, unanswered questions surrounding the short life and curious death of the angelic hippie child who missed his big-screen debut as Lucifer.

I’ll let a member of the Paulekas family provide the final words on the King of the Freaks. Asked by the author if he believed that Vito was a possible pedophile, he answered, “Probably. But I believe you have to go deeper into the libido and drives of so many rock stars and famous people who had an unhealthy relationship with sex and drugs. Any biography of the rockers of that time and probably any time just skirts [around] the reality that their greatest secret and shame includes the sex they had and have with very young girls and boys. Roman Polanski just got caught... I love hearing from people who tell me Vito saved their soul or protected them from danger when they were young and at risk... I am sure some became survivors and others fell deeper into the abyss. So it goes.”

Indeed.

## 8

# ALL THE YOUNG TURKS HOLLYWOOD TRIPPING

**“As all halfway-decent managers in the rock era have done, [Jim] Dickson worked on seducing the in-crowd and creating a buzz around [the Byrds]... The timing was perfect... LA’s baby-boomers were mobile, getting around, looking for action. And now they were joined by the hip elite of Hollywood itself, from Sal Mineo and Peter Fonda to junkie comic Lenny Bruce.” Barney Hoskyns, writing in Waiting for the Sun**

AS IMPORTANT AS THE FREAKS WERE TO BUILDING AN AUDIENCE FOR THE new Laurel Canyon bands, there was another group that played a key role as well: Hollywood’s so-called Young Turks. Like the freaks, the Turks became an immediate and constant presence on the newly emerging Sunset Strip scene. And as with the freaks, their presence on the Strip was heavily promoted by the media. Locals and tourists alike knew where to go to gawk at the freaks and, as an added bonus, quite possibly rub shoulders with the likes of Peter Fonda, Jack Nicholson, Bruce Dern, Dennis Hopper and Warren Beatty, along with their female counterparts—such as Jane Fonda, Nancy Sinatra and Sharon Tate.

And as with the freaks, the Turks were also instrumental in distract-

ing attention away from the less than stellar musicianship on the stage. After all, young men offered the chance to see Jayne Mansfield in the flesh probably didn't even notice whether there was a band on the stage at all! Mansfield, by the way, like Mansonites Susan Atkins and Bobby Beausoleil, had direct ties to Anton LaVey and his Church of Satan.

Many of these young and glamorous Hollywood stars forged very close bonds with the Laurel Canyon musicians. Some of them, including Peter Fonda, found homes in the canyon so that they could live, work and party among the rock stars (and, in their free time, pass around John Phillips' wife Michelle to just about every swinging dick in the canyon, including Jack Nicholson, Dennis Hopper, Warren Beatty, Roman Polanski, and Gene Clark of the Byrds). Some of them never left; Jack Nicholson to this day lives in a spacious estate just off the portion of Mulholland Drive that lies between Laurel Canyon and Coldwater Canyon. Not far west of Nicholson's property (which now includes the neighboring estate formerly owned by Marlon Brando) sits the longtime home of Warren Beatty.

From the symbiotic relationship between Laurel Canyon actors and Laurel Canyon musicians arose a series of feature films that are now considered countercultural classics. One such film was *The Trip* (1967), an unintentionally hilarious attempt to create a cinematic facsimile of an LSD trip. Written by, of all people, Jack Nicholson, the movie starred fellow Turks Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and Bruce Dern. Seated in the director's chair was Roger Corman, who, throughout his career, worked side-by-side with David Crosby's dad on no less than twenty-three feature films. Recruited to supply the soundtrack for the film was Gram Parsons' International Submarine Band (Parsons' music, however, was ultimately not used, though the band does make a brief onscreen appearance). The house where most of the film was shot, at the top of Kirkwood Drive in Laurel Canyon, became the home of Love's Arthur Lee.

Another 'psychedelic' cult film of the late 1960s with deep roots in Laurel Canyon was the Monkees' 1968 big-screen offering, *Head*. Also scripted by Nicholson (with assistance from Bob Rafelson), the movie included cameo appearances by canyon dwellers Dennis Hopper, Jack Nicholson and Frank Zappa. The music—performed, of course, by the Monkees—was a mix of songs written by the band and contributions



from Canyon songwriters like Carole King and Harry Nilsson. Shockingly, some of that music is actually pretty good. Even more shockingly, the movie overall is arguably the most watchable of the 1960s cult films. It is certainly a vast improvement over, for example, 1968's wretched *Psych Out* (starring Nicholson and Dern).

I do realize, by the way, that some of you out there in readerland cringe every time that I mention the Monkees as though they were a 'real' band. The reality though is that they were every bit as 'real' as most of their contemporaries. And while the made-for-TV Beatles replicants were looked down upon by music critics and fans alike, they were fully accepted as members of the musical fraternity by the other Laurel Canyon bands. The homes of both Mickey Dolenz and Peter Tork were popular canyon hangouts in the late sixties for a number of 'real' musicians. Also regularly dropping by Dolenz's party house were Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson.

The difference in perception between their peers and the public was attributable to the fact that the other bands knew something that the fans did not: the very same studio musicians who appeared without credit on the Monkees' albums also appeared without credit on their albums. And then, of course, there was the fact that so many of Laurel Canyon's 'real' musicians had taken a stab at being a part of the Monkees, including Stephen Stills, Love's Bryan MacLean, and Three Dog Night's Danny Hutton—all of whom answered the Monkees' casting call and were rejected.

There were undoubtedly other future stars who auditioned for the show as well, though most would probably prefer not to discuss such things. Despite persistent rumors, however, there was one local musician who we can safely conclude *did not* read for a part: Charles Manson. Given that the show was cast in 1965 and began its brief television run in 1966, while Charlie was still imprisoned at Terminal Island awaiting his release in March of 1967, there doesn't appear to be any way that Manson could have been considered for a part on the show. And that's kind of a shame when you think about it, because if he had been, we might today remember Charlie Manson not as one of America's most notorious criminals, but rather as the guy who made Marcia Brady swoon.

Returning to the countercultural films of the 1960s, the most criti-

cally acclaimed of the lot, and the one with the deepest roots in Laurel Canyon, was *Easy Rider*. Directed by Dennis Hopper, from a script co-written by he and Peter Fonda, the film starred Fonda and Hopper along with Jack Nicholson. Hopper's walrus-mustachioed character in the film was based on David Crosby, who was regularly seen racing his motorcycle up and down the winding streets of Laurel Canyon. (That motorcycle, by the way, had been a gift from Crosby's good buddy, Peter Fonda.) Fonda's absurd 'Captain America' character was inspired either by John Phillips' riding partner, Gram Parsons, or by Crosby's former bandmate in the Byrds, Roger McGuinn (depending upon who is telling the story). That very same Roger McGuinn scored the original music for the film. His contributions were joined on the soundtrack by offerings from fellow Canyonite musicians Steppenwolf, the Byrds, Fraternity of Man and Jimi Hendrix. And the movie's hippie commune was reportedly created and filmed in the canyons, near Mulholland Drive.

Since *Easy Rider* had such deep roots in the Laurel Canyon scene, we need to briefly focus our attention here on one other individual who worked on the film, art director Jeremy Kay, aka Jerry Kay. Before *Easy Rider*, Kay had worked on such cinematic abominations as *Angels from Hell*, *Hells Angels on Wheels* (with Jack Nicholson), and *Scorpio Rising* (Kenneth Anger's occult-tinged homage to gay biker culture). In the mid-1970s, Kay would write, direct and produce a charming little film entitled *Satan's Children*. Of far more interest here than his film credits though is his membership in the 1960s in a group known as the Solar Lodge of the Ordo Templi Orientis (or OTO), which found itself in the news, and not in a good way, just after *Easy Rider* opened on theater screens across America.

Two weeks after *Easy Rider* premiered on July 14, 1969, police acting on a phone tip raided the Solar Lodge's compound near Blythe, California, and found a six-year-old boy locked outdoors in a 6' x 6' wooden crate in the sweltering desert heat. The young boy, whose father was a Los Angeles County probation officer, had been chained to a steel plate for nearly two months in temperatures reaching as high as 117° F. According to an FBI report, the box also contained a can "partially filled with human waste and swarming with flies... The stench was nauseating." Before being put in the box, the child had been burned with matches and beaten with bamboo poles by cult members. The leader

of the cult, Georgina Brayton, had reportedly told cult members that “when it was convenient, she was going to give [the boy] LSD and set fire to the structure in which he was chained and give him just enough chain to get out of reach of the fire.” Killing the child had also been discussed (and apparently condoned by the boy’s mind-fucked mother).

Eleven adult members of the sect were charged with felony child abuse, the majority of them young white men in their early twenties. All were brought to trial and convicted. In a curious bit of timing, the raid that resulted in the arrests and convictions coincided with the torture and murder of musician Gary Hinman by a trio of Manson acolytes. Though it is, not surprisingly, vehemently denied by concerned parties, various sources have claimed that Manson had ties to the group, which also maintained a home near the USC campus in Los Angeles. There is no doubt that Charlie preached the same dogma, including the notion of an apocalyptic race war looming on the horizon. The massacre at the Tate residence occurred less than two weeks after the raid on the OTO compound. Manson’s Barker Ranch hideout would be raided a few months later, on October 12, 1969—the birthday, as I may have already mentioned, of Aleister Crowley, the Grand Poobah of the OTO until his death in 1947.

Anyway, sorry about that little digression, folks. I’m not entirely sure how we ended up at the Barker Ranch when the focus of this chapter was supposed to be on the Young Turks. So having now established that those Turks were a fully integrated part of the Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene, and also that they played an important role in luring the public out to the new clubs to check out the new bands, our next task is to get to know a little bit about who these folks were and where they came from. Let’s begin with Mr. Bruce Dern, who has some of the most provocative connections of any of the characters in this story.

It is probably safe to say that Dern’s parents had rather impressive political connections, given that baby Bruce’s godparents were sitting First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and future two-time Democratic presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson (he lost both times, in 1952 and 1956, to Eisenhower). Bruce’s paternal grandfather was a guy by the name of George Dern, who served as Secretary of War under President Franklin Roosevelt (for the youngsters in the crowd, Secretary of War is what we used to call the Secretary of Defense in a slightly less Orwellian era).

George had also served as Governor of Utah and Chairman of the National Governors' Association. Bruce's mother was born Jean MacLeish, and she happened to be the sister of Archibald MacLeish, who also served under Franklin Roosevelt, as the Director of the War Department's Office of Facts and Figures and as the Assistant Director of the Office of War Information. In other words, Archibald MacLeish was essentially America's Minister of War Propaganda. He also served at various times as an Assistant Secretary of State and as the Librarian of Congress. Perhaps the most impressive item on his résumé, however, was his membership in everyone's favorite secret society, Skull and Bones (class of 1915, one year before Prescott Bush was tapped in 1916).

It would appear then, that, even by Laurel Canyon standards, Mr. Dern has friends in very high places. Let's turn our attention next to the guy who shared the screen with Dern in *The Trip*, Mr. Peter Fonda. Of course, we all know that Fonda is the son of good ol' Hank Fonda, lovable Hollywood liberal and all-around nice guy. And certainly even a contrarian such as myself would not be so bold as to suggest that Henry Fonda might have some skeletons in his closet... right? Just for the hell of it, though, there are a few chapters of the Hank Fonda saga that we should probably review here.

We can begin, I suppose, by noting that Hank served as a decorated US Naval Intelligence officer during WWII, thus sparing Peter the stigma of being the only member of the Laurel Canyon in-crowd to have not been spawned by a member of the military/intelligence community. Not too many years after the war, Hank's wife, Francis Ford Seymour—who claimed to be a direct descendant of Jane Seymour, third wife of King Henry VIII—was found with her throat slashed open with a straight razor. Peter was just ten years old at the time of his mother's alleged suicide on April 14, 1950. When Seymour had met and married Hank, she was the widow of George Brokaw, who had, curiously enough, previously been married to prominent CIA operative Claire Booth Luce.

Fonda rebounded quickly from Seymour's unusual death and within eight months he was married once again, to Susan Blanchard, to whom he remained married until 1956. In 1957, Hank married yet again, this time to Italian Countess Afdera Franchetti (who followed up her four-year marriage to Fonda with a rumored affair with newly-sworn-in President John Kennedy). Franchetti, as it turns out, is the daughter of

Baron Raimondo Franchetti, who was a consultant to fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. The countess is also the great-granddaughter of Louise Sarah Rothschild, of the Rothschild banking family (perhaps you've heard of them?).

Before moving on, I should probably mention that Hank's first wife, Margaret Sullavan—who was yet another child of Norfolk, Virginia—also allegedly committed suicide, on New Year's Day, 1960. Nine months later, her daughter Bridget followed suit. In 1961, very soon after the deaths of first her mother and then her sister, Sullavan's other daughter, Brook Hayward, walked down the aisle with the next Young Turk on our list, Dennis Hopper. For those who may be unfamiliar with Hopper's body of work, he is the guy who was once found wandering naked and bewildered in a Mexican forest. And the guy who, after divorcing Hayward in 1969, married Michelle Phillips on Halloween day, 1970, only to have her file for divorce just eight days later claiming that Hopper had kept her handcuffed and imprisoned for a week while making "unnatural sexual demands."

Without passing judgment here, I think it's fair to say that Michelle Phillips has been around the block a time or two, if you catch my drift, so if even *she* thought Hopper's demands were a bit over the top, then one can only wonder just how "unnatural" they might have been. For what it's worth, Hopper once told a journalist that he "didn't handcuff her, [he] just punched her out!" In his mind, apparently, that made him somewhat less of a troglodyte.

Most official biographies of Hopper would lead one to believe that he was the son of a simple farmer. Dennis recently acknowledged, however, that that was clearly not the case: "My mother's father was a wheat farmer and I was raised on their farm. But my father was not a farmer." To the contrary, Hopper's dad was "a working person in intelligence" who during WWII "was in the OSS. He was in China, Burma, India." Hopper has proudly proclaimed that his father "was one of the 100 guys that liberated General Wainright out of prison in Korea," which might be a little more impressive were it not for the fact that it was actually the Red Army that freed Wainright and other prisoners; the US intel team just came to pick them up, debrief them and transport them home... but that, I suppose, isn't really relevant.

After the war, according to Hopper, his dad routinely carried a gun,

which I suppose is what most lay ministers in the Methodist Church do. The family also left the farm in Kansas and relocated to San Diego, California, home of the Imperial Beach Naval Air Station, the United States Naval Radio Station, the United States Naval Amphibious Base, the North Island Naval Air Station, Fort Rosecrans Military Reservation, the United States Naval Training Center, the United States Marine Corps Recruit Depot, and the Miramar Marine Corps Air Station. And just north of the city sits the massive Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. Other than that, though, San Diego is just a sleepy little beach town where Hopper's dad ostensibly worked for the Post Office.

The more recent incarnation of Dennis Hopper, by the way, was wildly at odds with the hippie image that he had at one time tried very hard to cultivate. Before his death on May 29, 2010, Hopper was an unapologetic cheerleader for right-wing causes, who proudly boasted of having voted a straight Republican ticket for over thirty years.

To briefly recap then, we have thus far met three of the 'Young Turks' and we have found that one of them is the nephew of a Bonesman, another is the son of a Naval Intelligence officer who was once married to a Rothschild descendent, and the third was the slightly deranged son of an OSS officer. Come to think of it, we have actually covered one of the 'Turkettes' as well, since Jane Fonda obviously came from the same family background as her younger brother, Peter. As for the other female members of the posse, Sharon Tate was the daughter of Lt. Col. Paul Tate, a career US Army intelligence officer, and Nancy Sinatra is, of course, the daughter of Francis Albert Sinatra, whose known associates included Lucky Luciano, Meyer Lansky, Sam Giancana, Carlo Gambino, Goetano Luchese and Joseph Fishetti (a cousin of Al Capone).

Frank Sinatra was also a client of hairdresser-to-the-stars Jay Sebring, as was Henry Fonda, who at one time, strangely enough, lived in the guesthouse at 10050 Cielo Drive. Yet another client of Sebring's was the next Young Turk on our list, Warren Beatty, whose father, Ira Owens Beatty, was ostensibly a professor of psychology. Young Warren, however, spent all of his early years living in various spooky suburbs of Washington, DC. He was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1937, after which his father moved the family to Norfolk, Virginia, which I think I may have mentioned is home to the world's largest Naval facility (the reason for that, by the way, is that Norfolk is the gateway to the na-



tion's capital). The family later relocated to Arlington, Virginia, home of the Pentagon, where Warren attended high school and where he was known on the football field as—recalls John Phillips, who attended a rival school—"Mad Dog" Beaty.

Ira Beaty's relatively frequent relocations, and the fact that those relocations always seemed to land the family in DC suburbs that are of considerable significance to the military/intelligence community, would tend to indicate that Warren's dad was something other than what he appeared to be—though that is, of course, a speculative assessment. But if Ira Beaty was on the payroll of some government entity, working within the psychology departments of various DC-area universities, then it wouldn't require a huge leap of faith to further speculate about what type of work he was doing, given the wholesale co-opting of the field of psychology by the MK-ULTRA program and affiliated projects.

The next Young Turk up for review is the one who went on to become arguably the most acclaimed actor of his generation, Mr. Jack Nicholson. Before getting to him though, let's take a look at a biographical sketch of serial killer Ted Bundy as presented by Wikipedia: "Bundy was born at the Elizabeth Lund Home for Unwed Mothers in Burlington, Vermont. The identity of his father remains a mystery... To avoid social stigma, Bundy's grandparents Samuel and Eleanor Cowell claimed him as their son; in taking their last name, he became Theodore Robert Cowell. He grew up believing his mother Eleanor Louise Cowell to be his older sister. Bundy biographers Stephen Michaud and Hugh Aynesworth state that he learned Louise was actually his mother while he was in high school. True crime writer Ann Rule states that it was around 1969, shortly following a traumatic breakup with his college girlfriend."

Now if we just change a few names here and there, we come up with an accurate bio of Jack Nicholson, which goes something like this: Nicholson was born at some indeterminate location to an underage, unwed showgirl. The identity of his father remains a mystery... To avoid social stigma, Nicholson's grandparents John Joseph and Ethel Nicholson claimed him as their son; in taking their last name, he became John Joseph Nicholson, Jr. He grew up believing his mother June Francis Nicholson to be his older sister. Reporters state that he learned June was actually his mother in 1974, when he was thirty-seven years old. By

then, June had been dead for just over a decade, having only lived to the age of forty-four.

It is said that Nicholson was born at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City, but there is no record of such a birth either at the hospital or in the city's archives. As it turns out, Jack Nicholson has no birth certificate. Until 1954, by which time he was nearly an adult, he did not officially exist. Even today, the closest thing he has to a birth certificate is a 'Certificate of a Delayed Report of Birth' that was filed on May 24, 1954. The document lists John and Ethel Nicholson as the parents and identifies the location of the birth as the Nicholsons' home address in Neptune, New Jersey.

It appears then that there is no way to determine who Jack Nicholson really is. He has told journalists that he has no interest in identifying who his father was, nor, it would appear, in verifying his mother's identity. What we do know is that the nucleus of the 1960s clique known as the Young Turks (and Turkettes) was composed of the following individuals: the nephew of a Bonesman; the son of an OSS officer; the son of a Naval intelligence officer; the daughter of that same Naval intelligence officer; the daughter of an Army intelligence officer; the daughter of a guy who openly associated with prominent gangsters throughout his life; the son of a possible spychologist; and a guy whose early years are so shrouded in mystery that he may or may not actually exist.

I should probably also mention here that Henry Fonda scored his first acting gig through Dorothy "Dody" Brando, the director of a local theater and the mother of Jack Nicholson's future neighbor, Marlon Brando. Being the small world that it is, Marlon's mom happened to be a good friend of Hank's mom, Elma Fonda. Truth be told, the families had likely had close ties for a long time. *A very long time*. The ancestors of both Marlon Brando and Henry Fonda, you see, arrived in New York at nearly the same time, roughly three-and-a-half centuries ago.

Marlon Brando is in a direct line of descent from French Huguenot colonists Louis DuBois and Catharine Blanchan DuBois (and no, I'm not making that up), who arrived in New York from Mannheim, Germany, circa 1660 and promptly founded New Rochelle. Other descendents of DuBois include former US Senator Leverett Saltonstall, former Massachusetts Governor and Council on Foreign Relations member William Weld, former California First Lady Maria Shriver, and quite likely US

Presidents Jimmy Carter and Zachary Taylor.

Henry Fonda, on the other hand, is a direct descendent of Jellis Douw Fonda and Hester Jans Fonda, Dutch colonists who arrived in New York circa 1650 and settled near what would become Albany. The Fondas had sailed out of Friesland, Netherlands, on a ship dubbed the *Valckenier*, which happened to be co-owned by a very wealthy Dutchman by the name of Jan-Baptist van Rensselaer. And Mr. van Rensselaer, as those who have been paying attention in class will recall, happened to be from the bloodline that would one day produce a guy by the name of David van Cortland Crosby.

It would appear then that Peter Fonda kind of owed Crosby that Triumph motorcycle that he gave him back in the sixties, what with David's ancestors having been cool enough to give Peter's ancestors a lift over to the New World and all.

Let's wrap up this chapter with a quick review of what we have learned about the people populating Laurel Canyon in the mid-to-late 1960s. We know that one subset of residents was a large group of musicians who all decided, nearly simultaneously, to flood into the canyon. The most prominent members of this group were, to an overwhelming degree, the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence community. We also know that mingled in with them were the young stars of Hollywood, who also were, to an astonishing degree, the sons and daughters of the military/intelligence community. And, finally, we know that also in the mix were scores of military/intelligence personnel who operated out of the facility known as Lookout Mountain Laboratory.

I've got to say that, given the relatively small size of Laurel Canyon, I'm beginning to wonder if there was any room left over for any normal folks who might have wanted to live the rock'n'roll lifestyle.

## 9

# WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

**“There were a lot of weird people around. There was one guy who had a parrot called Captain Blood, and he was always scrawling real cryptic things on the inside walls of my house—Neil Young’s too.”** Joni Mitchell, describing the Laurel Canyon scene toward the end of the 1960s

AS IT TURNS OUT, LAUREL CANYON WAS LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE at least a few more strange characters. Two of them were guys named Jerry Brown and Mike Curb. Actually, it’s unclear whether Curb ever lived there, but he was very much a part of the scene in the 1960s and 1970s.

Edmund G. “Jerry” Brown, Jr. had a decidedly conservative upbringing. Born into a politically well-connected Republican family, Jerry devoted his early years to pursuing a career in the Jesuit priesthood. His father, a very active Republican Party operative, was an aspiring politician who initially had no luck in getting himself elected to public office. He ultimately succeeded though in capturing the coveted California Governor’s seat in 1959, and he did it by employing a simple gimmick: he changed the “R” after his name to a “D” and was reborn as a Democrat. He held the seat for two terms, through to 1967, and then was

replaced by a guy who had employed the exact same trick in reverse: he had replaced the “D” after his name with an “R.”

That gentleman, of course, was Ronald Wilson Reagan, and he would govern the state through 1975, after which he handed the reins back over to the Brown family, this time to the younger Edmund Brown, who, like his dad, had decided that he was a liberal Democrat. In fact, according to the consensus opinion of the media at the time, Jerry was an ultraliberal extremist whose politics fell somewhere to the left of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.

During Laurel Canyon’s glory years, Jerry Brown resided in a home on Wonderland Avenue, within easy walking distance of the Wonderland death house and the homes of numerous singers, songwriters and musicians. His circle of friends in those days, as was widely reported, included the elite of Laurel Canyon’s country-rock stars, including Linda Ronstadt (with whom he was long rumored to be romantically involved), Jackson Browne and the Eagles.

Another figure making the rounds in Laurel Canyon during the same period of time was Mike Curb. At various times, Curb worked as a musician, composer, recording artist, film producer and record company executive. He also had the notable distinction of serving as the musical director on the notorious documentary feature *Mondo Hollywood*, which ostensibly chronicled the emerging Laurel Canyon/Sunset Strip scene. Filmed from 1965 through 1967, the film featured representatives from the Manson Family (Bobby Beausoleil), the Manson Family’s victims (Jay Sebring), the freak troupe (Vito, Carl, Szou and Godo), and Laurel Canyon’s musical fraternity (Frank Zappa, along with his future wife, Gail Sloatman). It also featured acid guru Richard Alpert, Jerry Brown’s father, Pat Brown, and Princess Margaret, a good friend to John Phillips and a rumored lover of Mick Jagger.

As noted, *Mondo Hollywood* was the creation of filmmaker Robert Carl Cohen. It turns out he, too, had an interesting background for a guy destined to capture on film the emerging 1960s countercultural scene. In 1954, Cohen served in the US Army Signal Corps. The following year, he was on assignment to NATO. Following that, he served in Special Services in Germany. The very next year, he produced, directed, edited and narrated a documentary short entitled *Inside Red China*. Two years later, he wore all the same hats for a documentary entitled *Inside East*

*Germany*. A few years later, he put together another documentary entitled *Three Cubans*, a decidedly unsympathetic take on the Cuban revolution.

Cohen has proudly proclaimed that he was the first (or at least among the first) Western journalists/filmmakers allowed to enter and shoot footage in each of those ostensibly communist countries. In the case of Cuba (and likely the others as well), he did so under the direct sponsorship of the US State Department. Mr. Cohen would like us to believe that he undertook those projects as nothing more than what he outwardly appeared to be—an independent filmmaker—but a great deal of naiveté is required to believe that a private citizen not working for the intelligence community could land such assignments.

The *Los Angeles Times*, in a lengthy critique of Cohen's counterculture film published on October 1, 1967, offered up some curious and long-forgotten facts about the documentary feature: "I cannot presume to guess how much real life pokes through *Mondo Hollywood*. In violent, sudden ways, real death did intrude during the eighteen months of picture making. Three people were killed in automobile crashes. One of them was Jayne Mansfield, whose brief appearance—as a celebrity in a montage of premieres—remains in the final movie. The other two, including a bona fide philosopher, were scheduled to appear but died before filming. A writer who was to play himself died of drugs. A three-year-old child died of a fall through a trap door, although he and his parents are still in the picture. A pilot, who had agreed to fly in the film, died of a midair crash. In all, six people—none of them old, none of them in bed—died before *Mondo Hollywood* was released. Several buildings were also destroyed in this impermanent place. And the Good-year blimp, which provided the platform for some spectacular aerials in the finished movie, crashed one day after its chores were done."

It appears then, that, just as in the real Laurel Canyon, Cohen's celluloid version masked a backdrop of violence, destruction and death.

As for Mike Curb, in addition to his work on *Mondo Hollywood*, he also served as 'song producer' on another key countercultural film of the era, *Riot on the Sunset Strip* (which, despite its title, had little to do with the actual event). In addition, Curb scored a slew of cheaply produced biker flicks, including *The Wild Angels*, *Devil's Angels*, *Born Losers*, *The Savage Seven* and *The Glory Stompers*. Along the way, he



worked alongside many of Laurel Canyon's 'Young Turks,' including Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper.

It is unclear whether the paths of Jerry Brown and Mike Curb crossed during Laurel Canyon's glory years, but as fate would have it, they were to cross in 1979 in Sacramento, California. Mike Curb, as it turns out, after being encouraged by Ronald Reagan to venture into politics, was elected to serve as Governor Jerry Brown's second-in-command. And so it was that these two men, both veterans of the 1960s Laurel Canyon scene, came to sit side-by-side in the governor's mansion, one sporting a "D" after his name and the other an "R."

Governor Brown, however, had little time to spend on actually governing the state of California. Tossing his hat into the presidential ring, he spent much of his time out of the state, working the campaign trail. That allowed Lieutenant Governor Curb, as acting governor of the state, to sign into law a withering array of reactionary legislation that was very far removed from what the people of California thought they were getting when they elected 'Governor Moonbeam.' This arrangement allowed the nominal liberal of the Laurel Canyon tag-team, Jerry Brown, to keep his hands clean even as his administration moved far away from its originally stated goals—and even as he made little effort to rein in his underling.

Brown and Curb weren't the only up-and-coming politicians who managed to find living space in Laurel Canyon back in the day. In July 2008, the venerable *Washington Post* revealed that a former reporter and novelist by the name of Alex Abella had "written a history of RAND, which was founded more than sixty years ago by the Air Force as a font of ideas on how that service might fight and win a nuclear war with the USSR... Abella focuses on Albert Wohlstetter, a mathematical logician turned nuclear strategist who was the dominant figure at RAND starting in the early 1950s and whose influence has extended beyond his death in 1997 into the current Bush administration... Wohlstetter epitomized what became known as the 'RAND approach'—a relentlessly reductive, determinedly quantitative analysis of whatever problem the independent, non-profit think tank was assigned, whether the design of a new bomber or improving public education in inner-city schools."

The RAND Corporation is a lot of things, but "independent" has never been one of them. Also in the *Post's* book review, we find that

“it was not so much Wohlstetter himself as his acolytes... who had a major impact in Washington.” Most of those acolytes need little introduction: former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle (who once dated Wohlstetter’s daughter); former US ambassador, President of the World Bank, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz; former US ambassador to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the UN, Zalmay Khalilzad; and Andrew Marshall, who has served as the director of the United States Department of Defense’s Office of Net Assessment for forty years and who served as a mentor to Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz.

In the latter half of the 1950s and into the early 1960s, while Wohlstetter was with the RAND Corporation and also serving as a professor at UCLA (and while his wife Roberta also worked as an analyst for RAND), Albert and his followers—the men who would serve as the architects of US foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration—regularly met in a heavily wooded neighborhood in Los Angeles known as Laurel Canyon. As Gregg Herken wrote in his review of Abella’s book, “those bright, eager and ambitious young men... had sat cross-legged on the floor with their mentor at his stylish house in Laurel Canyon.” Just as, not far away, Vito’s eager young followers sat cross-legged with their mentor. And just as, also not far away, Charles Manson’s eager young followers would sit cross-legged on the floor with their mentor.

Paul Young, writing in *LA Exposed*, revealed that, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was another curious group calling Laurel Canyon home: “The most infamous male madam [throughout LA’s sordid history] would have to be Billy Bryars, the wealthy son of an oil magnate, and part-time producer of gay porn. Bryars was said to have a stellar group of customers using his ‘brothel’ at the summit of Laurel Canyon. In fact, some have claimed that none other than J. Edgar Hoover, the founder and chief executive officer of the FBI, was one of his best clients... when Bryars fell under police scrutiny in 1973, allegedly for trafficking in child pornography, officers obtained a number of confessions from some of his hustlers, and some of them identified Hoover and [Clyde] Tolson as ‘Mother John’ and ‘Uncle Mike,’ and claimed that they had serviced them on numerous occasions.”

It appears then that the top law-enforcement officials in the nation were also a part of the Laurel Canyon scene, along with various other

unnamed persons of prominence. And we also find, perhaps not too shockingly at this point, that Laurel Canyon was a portal of child pornography.

In January of 2011, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on the passing of “Ron Patterson, the flamboyant, free-spirited creator of the Renaissance and Dickens fairs,” who had “died Jan. 15 at a friend’s house in Sausalito after an illness. He was eighty.” As staff writer Carolyn Jones noted in the article, Patterson’s creation “was sort of a medieval precursor to Burning Man.” And Burning Man is, of course, a rather explicitly occult ritual first performed on the summer solstice of 1986 and now performed every summer in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert before an audience of over 50,000.

“In the beginning, the Renaissance Faire was an experiment in Mr. Patterson’s backyard. In the early 1960s, Mr. Patterson and his wife, Phyllis, who were both interested in theater and art, began hosting children’s improvisational theater workshops at their Laurel Canyon (Los Angeles County) home.” One naturally wonders whether aspiring thespian and golden child Godo Paulekas (originally cast, it will be recalled, to play the lead in Kenneth Anger’s *Lucifer Rising*) was involved in those workshops. In any event, there is something decidedly creepy about children’s workshops being hosted in a small, tight-knit community that was home to a child pornography ring and more than its fair share of pedophiles.

Yet another curious character to take up residence in Laurel Canyon was producer Paul Rothchild, who played a key role in shaping the sound of both the Doors and Love. In June 1981, *Sports Illustrated* publisher Philip Howlett penned a short piece to introduce readers to new writer Bjarne Rostaing: “Born in Lincoln, N.Y., Rostaing grew up in various places in Connecticut, where he attended what he recalls as an even dozen schools. ‘I got my B.A. and master’s in English from the University of Connecticut,’ he says. ‘Then I did part of a Ph.D. at the University of Washington before going into the Army Intelligence Corps in 1959. We had Paul Rothchild, who later became producer for the Doors and Janis Joplin, to give you some idea of what the unit was like.’”

It was, in all likelihood, like countless other intelligence units designed to churn out shapers of public opinion, whether actors, novelists, newsmen, or, in this case, sportswriters and producers of popular

music. It is quite shocking, of course, to learn that the handler of two of Laurel Canyon's most influential and groundbreaking bands had a background in intelligence work. Apparently the search is still on for *anyone* of any prominence in the Laurel Canyon scene who *didn't* have direct connections to the intelligence community.

Bjarne Rostaing would, perhaps not surprisingly, develop his own indirect connections to the Laurel Canyon music scene. His most notable contribution to the field of literature was penning the mass-market paperback version of *Phantom of the Paradise*, the campy tale of a Phil Spector-inspired music producer who had sold his soul to the devil for fame and fortune and who subsequently manipulated a disfigured young singer/songwriter into likewise selling his soul. The theatrical version, released on Halloween day 1974 and carrying the tagline "he sold his soul for rock'n'roll," starred Laurel Canyon's own Paul Williams as Swan, the demonic producer who surrounds himself with nubile young women eager to do his bidding. Williams, who lived on Lookout Mountain alongside numerous other singer/songwriters, also scored the film.

It is, I'm sure, entirely coincidental that two guys who emerged from the same intelligence unit in the early 1960s would follow such curious career paths—one, Paul Rothchild, becoming what many on the scene in those days would have described as a demonic rock music producer, and the other, Bjarne Rostaing, penning a novel about a demonic rock music producer.

There was one other person who, while he never took up residence in Laurel Canyon, had a profound influence on the scene. That guy was Augustus Owsley Stanley III, the premier LSD chemist of the hippie era. No one—not Ken Kesey, not Richard Alpert, not even Timothy Leary—did more to 'turn on' the youth of the 1960s than Owsley. Leary and his cohorts may have captured the national media spotlight and created public awareness, but it was Owsley who flooded the streets of San Francisco and Laurel Canyon with consistently high quality, inexpensive, readily available acid. By most accounts, he was never in it for the money and he routinely gave away more of his product than he sold. What then was his motive? According to Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain, writing in *Acid Dreams*, "Owsley cultivated an image as a wizard-alchemist whose intentions with LSD were priestly and magical."

Owsley is revered by many as something of an icon of the 1960s

counterculture—a man motivated by nothing more than an altruistic desire to ‘turn on’ the world. But his rather provocative background and family history suggest that his intentions may not have necessarily been so altruistic.

Augustus Owsley Stanley III was the son, naturally enough, of Augustus Owsley Stanley II, who served as a military officer during WWII aboard the *USS Lexington* and thereafter found work in Washington, DC as a government attorney. He raised his son primarily in Arlington, Virginia. Young Owsley’s grandfather was Augustus Owsley Stanley, who served as a member of the US House of Representatives from 1903 through 1915, as the Governor of Kentucky from 1915 through 1919, and as a US Senator from 1919 through 1925; Senator Stanley’s father, a minister with the Disciples of Christ, served as a judge advocate with the Confederate Army. Owsley’s mother was a niece of William Owsley, who also served as a Governor of Kentucky, from 1844 through 1848, and who lent his name to Owsley County, Kentucky.

During Owsley III’s formative years, he attended the prestigious Charlotte Hall Military Academy in Maryland, but was reportedly tossed out in the ninth grade for being intoxicated. Not long after that, at the tender age of fifteen, Owsley voluntarily committed himself to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in the nation’s capitol. St. Elizabeth’s, it should be noted, had a far more sinister name upon its founding in 1855: the Government Hospital for the Insane. He remained confined there for treatment for the next fifteen months. During that time, his mother, in keeping with one of the recurrent themes of this saga, passed away.

Owsley apparently resumed his education following his curious confinement, but he had reportedly dropped out of school by the age of eighteen. Nevertheless, he apparently had no trouble at all gaining acceptance to the University of Virginia, which he attended for a time before enlisting in the US Air Force in 1956, at the age of twenty-one. During his military service, Owsley was an electronics specialist, working in radio intelligence and radar. After his stint in the Air Force, Owsley set up camp in the Los Angeles area, ostensibly to study ballet.

During that same time, he also worked at Pasadena’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which was undoubtedly the primary reason for his move to LA. In 1963, Owsley moved once again, this time to Berkeley, California, which just happened to be ground-zero of the budding anti-war move-

ment. He may or may not have briefly attended UC Berkeley, which is where he allegedly cribbed the recipe for LSD from the university library. Owsley soon began cooking up both Methedrine and LSD in a makeshift bathroom lab near the campus of the university. On February 21, 1965, that lab was raided by state narcotics agents who seized all his lab equipment and charged Stanley with operating a meth lab. As Barry Miles recounted in *Hippie*, “Berkeley was awash with speed and Owsley was responsible for much of it.”

Nevertheless, Owsley walked away from the raid unscathed, and, with the help of his attorney, who happened to be the vice-mayor of Berkeley, he even successfully sued to have all his lab equipment returned. He quickly put that equipment to work producing some four million tabs of nearly pure LSD in the mid-1960s.

Immediately after the raid of February 1965, Owsley and his frequent sidekicks, the Grateful Dead, moved down to the Watts area of Los Angeles, of all places, to ostensibly conduct ‘acid tests.’ The group rented a house that was conveniently located right next door to a brothel, curiously paralleling the *modus operandi* of various intelligence operatives who were (or had been) involved in conducting their own ‘acid tests.’ The band departed the communal dwelling in April 1965. It was a fortuitous departure as it turned out, since just a few months later, Watts exploded in violence that left thirty-four corpses littering the streets.

Owsley had been with the Dead from the band’s earliest days, as both a financial backer and as their sound engineer. He is credited with numerous electronic innovations that changed the way live rock music was presented to the masses—and likely not in a good way, given that his work as a sound technician undoubtedly drew heavily upon his military training.

In 1967, Owsley unleashed on the Haight a particularly nasty hallucinogen known as STP. Developed by the friendly folks at Dow Chemical, STP had been tested extensively at Frank Zappa’s former home, the Edgewood Arsenal, as a possible biowarfare agent before being distributed to hippies as a recreational drug. Owsley reportedly obtained the recipe from Alexander Shulgin, a former Harvard man who developed a keen interest in psychopharmacology while serving in the US Navy. Shulgin worked for many years as a senior research chemist at Dow and later worked very closely with the DEA.



In 1970, Owsley began serving time after a conviction on drug charges. That time was served, appropriately enough, at Terminal Island Federal Correctional Institution, the very same prison that had, just a few years earlier, housed both Charlie Manson and Flying Burrito Brothers' road manager Phil Kaufman. A few years later, it would also be home to both Timothy Leary and his alleged nemesis, G. Gordon Liddy. After his release, Owsley continued to work as a sound technician, eventually graduating to a new medium: television.

Owsley eventually moved to Australia in the 1980s, becoming a naturalized citizen in 1996. On March 12, 2012, the aging chemist was reportedly killed in an automobile accident near his Queensland home when his car veered off the road in a storm and plowed into some trees.

## 10

# HELTER SKELTER IN A SUMMER SWELTER RETURN OF THE DEATH LIST

**“Everybody was experimenting and taking it all the way. It opened up a negative force of energy that was almost demonic.”** Frank Mazolla, editor of the film Performance

IT IS NOW, SAD TO SAY, TIME TO ADD SOME MORE NAMES TO THE EVER-growing Laurel Canyon Death List. The first new name is Mr. Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, who purportedly drowned without assistance in his home swimming pool on July 3, 1969, at the age of twenty-seven. (Jim Morrison would allegedly die precisely two years later, also at the age of twenty-seven.) Just three days after Jones' tragic death, the Stones, with the Hell's Angels providing security, played a previously scheduled concert in Hyde Park, footage of which appears in Kenneth Anger's *Invocation of My Demon Brother*. Despite being the founder of the Stones and being widely regarded as the main creative force within the band, Jones had been unceremoniously dumped by the group on June 9, less than a month before his death. He was replaced just four days later by Mick Taylor, who in turn was later replaced by Ron Wood. It would later be claimed that Jones was booted from the band due to his chronic substance abuse problems, although Keith Richards' legen-

dary drug intake never seemed to pose a problem for the group.

The Rolling Stones were not, to be sure, a Laurel Canyon band, but they did spend a considerable amount of time there and they were very closely tied to the scene. As Barney Hoskyns writes in *Hotel California*, "In the summer of 1968 the English band was flirting heavily with Satanism and the occult... and spending a lot of time in Los Angeles." A lot of time, that is, in and around Laurel Canyon—and during that time, Mick Jagger was involved in two occult-drenched, Crowley-influenced film projects, Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising* and Donald Cammell's *Performance*.

Jagger was the first musical superstar tapped by Anger to compose a soundtrack for his *Lucifer Rising* project, which at the time was to star Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil. Anger would later solicit a soundtrack for the long-delayed film project from Led Zeppelin's Jimmy Page, the proud owner of one of the world's largest collections of Aleister Crowley memorabilia, including Crowley's notorious Boleskine estate on the shores of Scotland's Loch Ness. When ultimately released, however, the film featured a soundtrack by neither Jagger nor Page, but rather one that was composed, recorded and arranged inside a prison cell by convicted murderer Bobby Beausoleil. The footage that Anger had shot of Beausoleil, meanwhile, ended up in a different film, the aforementioned *Invocation of My Demon Brother*. Costarring in *Lucifer Rising*, as Osiris, was *Performance* writer and co-director Donald Seaton Cammell, who happened to be a good friend of Roman Polanski.

Cammell, who some described as a master manipulator, was the son of Charles Richard Cammell, who happened to be a close friend and biographer of notorious occultist Aleister Crowley. Donald himself was, or at least claimed to be, Crowley's godson. Cammell's decidedly Crowleian film was originally to star his good friend Marlon Brando, but the role ultimately went to actor James Fox. Brando and Cammell did, however, find time to write a novel together.

Speaking of Brando, he somehow found himself at the center of a curious string of deaths that began on May 16, 1990, when Marlon's son Christian gunned down Dag Drollet, the father of his sister Cheyenne's unborn child, in Marlon's Laurel Canyon-adjacent home. Though convicted, Christian got off with a rather light sentence, thanks primarily to Marlon having had his own daughter, the prosecution's poten-

tial star witness, locked away in a mental institution in Tahiti, safe from subpoena. A few years later, on April 14, 1995, twenty-five-year-old Cheyenne was found swinging from the end of a rope, her death unsurprisingly ruled a suicide. The next year, Christian Brando was released from prison and promptly became involved with a woman by the name of Bonnie Lee Bakley, who caught a bullet to the head on May 4, 2001, while in the company of new hubby Robert Blake (her tenth husband). Marlon dropped dead next, on July 1, 2004, though his death wasn't particularly shocking given that he was getting on in years. His home was promptly purchased by good friend and neighbor Jack Nicholson, who immediately announced plans to bulldoze it, declaring the structure to be decrepit. He never did though explain why a man wealthy enough to own his own Polynesian island was purportedly living in a derelict home. A few years later, on January 26 of 2008, Christian Brando dropped dead at the relatively young age of forty-nine.

Returning now, after that brief digression, to our discussion of Donald Cammell's *Performance*, we find that Mick Jagger was cast to play the role of 'Turner,' a debauched rock star (which, obviously, was a real stretch for Mick). James Fox played 'Chas,' a violent organized-crime figure. He was trained for the role by David Litvinoff, a real-life crime figure and associate of the notoriously sadistic Kray brothers. Litvinoff reportedly sent Fox to the south of London for a couple of months to hang out with his gangster buddies; when he returned, according to various accounts, Fox had literally *become* the violent character he portrayed in the film. After completing work on the project, Fox reportedly suffered a massive nervous breakdown, suspended his acting career and withdrew from public view for over a decade.

Recruited to create the film's soundtrack was Bernard Alfred "Jack" Nitzsche, an occultist and the son of a supposed 'medium.' Nitzsche, along with Sonny Bono, had begun his music career as a lieutenant for gun-brandishing producer Phil Spector (Nitzsche was one of the architects of Spector's famed "wall of sound"). Nitzsche was also a familiar presence on the Laurel Canyon scene, collaborating with such noted bands and artists as Buffalo Springfield, Neil Young, Randy Newman, Michelle Phillips, the Turtles, Captain Beefheart, Carole King, David Blue, Ricky Nelson and Tim Buckley.

Nitzsche's *Performance* soundtrack was composed, according to au-

thor Michael Walker, “in a witch’s cottage in the canyon.” (I’m not exactly sure what a “witch’s cottage” is, but it’s nice to know that Laurel Canyon had one.) One of the musicians hired by Nitzsche to play on that soundtrack was Lowell George, who we will also be adding to the Laurel Canyon Death List. For now, let’s add Donald Cammell to the list, since on April 24, 1996, he became yet another of the characters in this story to catch a bullet to the head, and yet another to allegedly die by his own hand. David Litvinoff, *Performance’s* Director of Authenticity, reportedly also committed suicide. Nitzsche died of a heart attack on August 25, 2000. A few years earlier, he had made an appearance on primetime television—as a gun-brandishing drunkard arrested on the streets of Hollywood on *Cops*.

The next name on the Death List is Steve Brandt, who was a close friend of both John Phillips and one of the victims at 10050 Cielo Drive. Brandt allegedly overdosed on barbiturates in late November of 1969, some three-and-a-half months after the Manson murders. In the days and weeks following those murders, Brandt had placed numerous phone calls to the LAPD. Those calls became increasingly frantic in nature, and Brandt became increasingly fearful that his own life might be in jeopardy. He soon decided to put some distance between himself and LA, so he headed for New York City. On the night of his death, according to Phillips’ autobiography, Brandt attended a Rolling Stones concert at Madison Square Garden, where he attempted to run on stage but was repelled and beaten by a security guard. He then went home and, according to official mythology, overdosed.

It seems obvious that if someone had information that desperately needed to be made public, and if it was the kind of information that authorities had, say, willfully failed to act upon, and if the information was of the type that could not be taken to the mainstream media, and if the year was 1969 and the mass communication technology that we now take for granted did not yet exist, then grabbing the mic at a Stones concert at Madison Square Garden might just be one of the most effective means of disseminating that information. Brandt failed in what may have been an attempt to do just that, and he turned up dead just hours later.

Next up is David Blue, another of the forgotten talents of Laurel Canyon. Blue was born Stuart David Cohen on February 18, 1941; shortly

thereafter, his father was deployed overseas. According to David, his dad “came hobbling home on crutches and stayed depressed all his life” (not unlike, it seems fair to say, the family situation of our old friend Phil Ochs). David and his slightly older half-sister, Suzanne, endured a hellish existence consisting of alternating periods of rages and silences. Suzanne got out first, only to end up busted for prostitution in New York City in 1963. Suzanne’s next stop, just a few months later, was at the county morgue.

David, meanwhile, had gotten out of the house as well, by dropping out of school and joining the US Navy at the age of seventeen—just as Lenny Bruce had done. And, like Jimi Hendrix, Blue was purportedly booted out of the service, after which he decided to become a folk singer. His first album was released in 1966. A later effort was produced by Graham Nash, who also, as previously noted, produced a record for the forgotten talent Judee Sill, with whom Blue had much in common. Like Sill, David Blue was one of the Laurel Canyon stars who never quite shone as brightly as they should have. And also like Sill, Blue was one of the first few acts signed by David Geffen’s fledgling Asylum label. Finally, as with Judee, David was long forgotten by the time of his death, on December 2, 1982, when the forty-one-year-old Blue dropped dead while jogging in New York’s Washington Square Park. The former rising star (and occasional actor) lay in the morgue for three days before anyone noticed that he was missing.

Next on the list is Ricky Nelson, who—like Brandon DeWilde, Kenneth Anger, Mickey Dolenz and Van Dyke Parks—began his Hollywood career as a child actor. He was the son, as everyone surely knows, of America’s favorite 1950s TV mom and dad, Ozzie and Harriet Nelson. Ricky began his rock’n’roll career in 1957, when he was just seventeen. By 1962, he had scored no fewer than thirty top forty hits, trailing only superstars Elvis Presley and Pat Boone.

Speaking of Elvis, he arrived in LA in 1956 to begin what would prove to be a prolific film career that would continue throughout the 1960s and would result in the inexcusable creation of nearly three dozen motion pictures. In the early years of his film career, Elvis reportedly spent his off-hours hanging out with his two best Hollywood pals—a couple of young roommates and Canyonites named Dennis Hopper and Nick Adams. In later years, Presley’s backing musicians—considered to be



among the best session musicians in the business—were in high demand among the Laurel Canyon crowd. Elvis' bass player, for example, can be heard on some of the Doors' tracks. The entire band was recruited by "Papa" John Phillips to play on his less-than-memorable solo project. Mike Nesmith's critically acclaimed post-Monkees project, the First National Band, featured Presley's band as well. Gram Parsons also hired Elvis' band to back him up on the two solo albums he recorded at what proved to be the twilight of his life and career.

Those two solo efforts by Parsons, by the way, prominently featured the voice of a young singer/guitarist named Emmylou Harris, a relatively late arrival to the canyon scene. Harris was the daughter—brace yourselves here for a real shocker, folks—of a career US Marine Corps officer. As with so many other characters in this story, she grew up in the outlying suburbs of Washington, DC, primarily in Woodbridge, Virginia—which happens to be the home of an imposingly large Army research and development installation known as the Harry Diamond Laboratories Woodbridge Research Facility.

In 1972, during the time that Parsons and Harris were recording and performing together, columnist Jack Anderson revealed that, "Experiments to control human behavior with science fiction devices are being conducted secretly at the Army's high-fenced Harry Diamond Laboratories in Washington... Ultimately, human guinea pigs will be used to test the devices. Although a classified memorandum in our hands specifies the tests are for riot and civil disturbance control, the memo admits the general purpose is 'short-time-span control of human behavior.'" It sounds as though Emmylou Harris probably fit right in with the rest of the Laurel Canyon crowd.

But here I seem to have digressed from our discussion of Elvis, which was, if I remember correctly, itself a digression from our discussion of Ricky Nelson. Given though that he had only peripheral connections to Laurel Canyon, I guess I don't really have much more to say about Elvis other than that he reportedly died on August 16, 1977, the victim of a drug overdose at the young age of forty-two. As with Morrison, however, there have been persistent rumors that Elvis didn't actually die at all, but rather reinvented himself to escape from the fishbowl. Also as with Morrison, Elvis apparently had a keen interest in the occult, particularly the writings of Madame Blavatsky.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

As for Nelson, in the mid-1960s he successfully shed his 'teen idol' image and emerged as a respected pioneer of the country-rock wave that Canyonites Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt and the Eagles would soon ride to dizzying heights of commercial success. One future member of the Eagles, Randy Meisner, played in Nelson's Stone Canyon Band. As the name of the band would seem to imply, Nelson had moved to one of the many neighboring canyons, but he had previously lived on Mt. Olympus in Laurel Canyon and he and his band were very much a part of the early country-rock scene that included bands like the Byrds, Poco, the Flying Burrito Brothers and the First National Band.

Nelson was killed on New Year's Eve, 1985, in a rather unusual plane crash. According to Nelson's Wikipedia entry, "the original NTSB investigation long ago stated that the crash was probably due to mechanical problems. The pilots attempted to land in a field after smoke filled the cabin. An examination indicated that a fire originated in the right hand side of the aft cabin area at or near the floor line. The passengers were killed when the aircraft struck obstacles during the forced landing; the pilots were able to escape through the cockpit windows and survived." Nothing unusual about that, I suppose. Shit happens.

For the final eight years of his life, Nelson lived in a rather unique home. In 1941, swashbuckling actor Errol Flynn had purchased an eleven-and-a-half-acre chunk of the Hollywood Hills just off Mulholland Drive and had a sprawling home built to his specifications. According to Laurie Jacobson and Marc Wanamaker, writing in *Haunted Hollywood*, the mansion featured "several mysterious secret passageways, and more than a few peepholes." The home appeared to have been designed to allow for surreptitious observation of guests in the home's numerous bedrooms. It is claimed that Flynn incorporated the unusual design features so that he could satisfy his own voyeuristic impulses. Researcher/writer Charles Higham, however, has cast Flynn as a Western intelligence asset, and if true, then it is far more likely that the home was built not so much for Flynn's personal pleasure but rather as a means of compromising prominent public figures.

After Nelson's death, the palatial home stood vacant until a curious incident took place; referring once again to Jacobson and Wanamaker, we find that "A gang broke in and murdered a girl in the living room. Then a mysterious fire burned half the house. The ruins were torn

down.” Like I said, shit happens.

Moving on to the next name on the list, we find that on December 31, 1943—precisely forty-two years before the plane crash that would claim the life of Ricky Nelson—Henry John Deutschendorf, Jr., better known as John Denver, was born in Roswell, New Mexico. A few years later, the town of Roswell would make a name for itself and become something of a tourist destination. But that is not really the focus here, though it should be noted that Henry John Deutschendorf, Sr. might well have known a little something about that incident, given that he was a career US Air Force officer assigned to the Roswell Army Air Field (later renamed the Walker Air Force Base), which was likely the origin of the object that famously crashed in Roswell.

After spending his childhood being frequently uprooted, as did many of our cast of characters, Denver attended Texas Tech University in the early 1960s. In 1964, he apparently heard the call of the Pied Piper and promptly dropped out of school and headed for LA. Once there, he joined up with the Chad Mitchell Trio, the group from which Jim McGuinn had recently departed to co-found the Byrds. By November 1966, Denver was front-and-center at the so-called ‘Riot on the Sunset Strip,’ alongside folks like Peter Fonda, Sal Mineo and a popular husband-and-wife duo known as Sonny and Cher.

A decade later, in the latter half of the 1970s, Denver could be found working alongside a spooky chap by the name of Werner Erhard, creator of so-called ‘EST’ training. After graduating from the training program, Denver penned a little ditty that became the organization’s theme song. In 1985, Denver testified alongside our old friend Frank Zappa at the PMRC hearings. Twelve years later, in autumn of 1997, Denver died when his self-piloted plane crashed soon after taking off from Monterey Airport, very near where the Monterey Pop Festival had been held thirty years earlier. The date of the crash, curiously enough, was one that we have stumbled across before: October 12.

The next name we need to add to the list is one that has already worked its way into this narrative a time or two, Sonny Bono. As previously noted, Bono began his Hollywood career as a lieutenant for reclusive murderer Phil Spector. In the early 1960s, Bono hooked up with an underage Cherilyn Sarkisian LaPierre to form a duo known first as Caesar and Cleo, and then as Sonny and Cher. The pair were phenom-

enally successful, first on the Sunset Strip and later on television. Bono, of course, ultimately gave up the Hollywood life and found work in a different branch of the federal government: the US House of Representatives.

On January 5, 1998, Sonny Bono died after purportedly skiing into a tree. At the time, he occupied a seat on the House Judiciary Committee, which was about to come to sudden prominence with the investigation and impeachment of President Clinton. The ball was already rolling by the time of Bono's death, and on January 26, 1998, just three weeks after the alleged skiing incident, Clinton held his now-notorious press conference. By that time, Bono's seat on the panel had been set aside for his robowife.

Let's turn our attention now to Phil Hartman, the *Saturday Night Live* alumnus who was murdered in his Encino home on May 28, 1998. That much is not in dispute. Decidedly less clear is the answer to the question of who it was that actually shot and killed Hartman. The official story holds that it was his wife Brynn, who shortly thereafter shot herself—with a different gun, naturally, and reportedly after she had left the house and then returned with a friend, and *after* the LAPD had arrived at the home. There is a very strong possibility, however, that both Phil and his wife were murdered, with the true motive for the crime covered up by trotting out the tired but ever-popular murder/suicide scenario.

In most people's minds, of course, Phil Hartman is not associated with the Laurel Canyon scene of the late 1960s and early 1970s. But as it turns out, Hartman did indeed have substantial ties to that scene. To begin with, during the time that Jimi Hendrix lived in LA (in the spacious mansion just north of the Log Cabin on Laurel Canyon Boulevard), Hartman worked for him as a roadie. Soon after that, Phil found work as a graphic artist and he quickly found himself much in demand by the Laurel Canyon rock royalty. In addition to designing album covers for both Poco and America, Hartman also designed a readily recognizable rock symbol that has endured for over forty years: the distinctive CSN logo for Crosby, Stills & Nash.

Hartman was also the brother of record executive/club proprietor John Hartmann, who was an associate of David Geffen. Hartmann had begun his career as a protégé of Elvis handler Colonel Tom Parker, who,

in the 1940s, had worked with cowboy actor/Log Cabin owner Tom Mix. And Tom Mix, in turn, had frequently used the Spahn Movie Ranch as a filming location. That same ranch later became the home of Charles Manson and his girls, including Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme, who happened to have been a high school chum of Phil Hartman. Curiously enough, the Log Cabin’s guesthouse, also known as the Bird House, was designed and built by architect Robert Byrd, who also, according to one report, designed the house at 10050 Cielo Drive where Sharon Tate and friends were murdered, *and* the house at 5065 Encino Avenue where Phil Hartman was murdered.

Phil Hartman was not the only Laurel Canyon luminary who had past school ties to Squeaky Fromme; Mark Volman, co-lead vocalist for the Turtles, knew Ms. Fromme from their days together in Westchester where they attended Orville Wright Junior High School.

During the days of the Manson clan’s stay at the now infamous Spahn Ranch, there was a similarly dilapidated movie set that was located right across the road. Its name, being the small world that it is, was the Wonderland Movie Ranch. Speaking of Wonderland, let’s turn our attention next to four individuals whose names will probably not be familiar to most readers: Ronald Launius, Billy Deverell, Barbara Richardson and Joy Miller. All died on July 1, 1981, all by bludgeoning, and all at the same location: 8763 Wonderland Avenue in Laurel Canyon. All were members of a gang that trafficked heavily in cocaine and occasionally in heroin.

The leader of the group was Ron Launius, who reportedly embarked on his criminal career, and established his drug connections, while serving for Uncle Sam over in Vietnam, which is also where he began to build his carefully crafted reputation as a merciless, cold-blooded killer. At the time that he became a murder victim himself, Launius was a suspect in no fewer than twenty-seven open homicide investigations. He was also a drug supplier to various members of the Laurel Canyon aristocracy, including Chuck Negrón of Three Dog Night.

Victim Billy Deverell was Launius’ second-in-command, and victim Joy Miller was Billy’s girlfriend as well as the renter of the Laurel Canyon drug den. Victim Barbara Richardson was the girlfriend of another member of the gang, David Lind, who conveniently was not at the home at the time of the mass murder. That could well have been due to the

fact that Lind was, according to various rival drug dealers, a police informant for both the Sacramento and Los Angeles Police Departments. He was also a member of the ultra-violent prison gang known as the Aryan Brotherhood (as is, by several accounts, Bobby Beausoleil). Lind, who met Launius when the two had served time together, is alleged to have overdosed in 1995, though it is widely believed that he actually went into the federal witness protection program.

A year-and-a-half earlier, another drug dealer with close connections to the music scene was brutally murdered in his Laurel Canyon home, though his death was dismissed by the LAPD as a suicide. Lawrence Eugene “Larry” Williams was a singer, songwriter, musician, producer and actor born on May 10, 1935, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He achieved some success in the late 1950s as a solo artist before being convicted and sent to prison on drug dealing charges in 1960. Following a three-year prison stint, he returned to the music business, working frequently with longtime friend Little Richard. He also continued to spend a good deal of time in the violent world of drug trafficking and prostitution.

Williams had no shortage of fans among the Laurel Canyon and British Invasion bands. The Beatles scored a hit with his Dizzy Miss Lizzy and the Rolling Stones covered his She Said Yeah. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, Williams also tried his hand at acting, including a co-starring role alongside O.J. Simpson in 1974’s *The Klansman*. He failed to achieve significant success in the entertainment business; his lavish lifestyle, however, indicated that he did very well for himself as a pimp and drug trafficker.

On January 7, 1980, Williams was found dead in his Laurel Canyon home with a gunshot wound to his head and his blood splattered all over his garage walls. Though ruled a suicide, no one who was familiar with Larry’s violent lifestyle was much convinced of that. In a bizarre turn of events, another blues singer named Martin Allbritton appropriated his name before Williams’ body was even cold. He continues to this day to claim that he is the real Larry Williams and even tours and performs under the name “Big” Larry Williams.

The next name on the list is Brian Cole, bass player for the Association, a Laurel Canyon folk-rock band known for the hit songs Along Comes Mary and Never My Love. The Association was formed by Terry Kirkman and Jules Alexander; Kirkman had formerly played in a band



with Frank Zappa, while Alexander was fresh from a stint in the US Navy. Jerry Yester, a guitarist and keyboardist with the band, was formerly with the Modern Folk Quartet, a band managed by Zappa manager Herb Cohen and produced by Byrds manager Jim Dickson. Guitarist Larry Ramos had formerly been with the New Christy Minstrels, which also produced Gene Clark of the Byrds.

On June 16, 1967, Cole and his band were the first to take the stage at the Monterey Pop Festival, followed by such Laurel Canyon stalwarts as the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and the Mamas and the Papas. Five years later, on August 2, 1972, Cole was found dead in his Los Angeles home. The cause of death was reportedly a heroin overdose. Cole was one month shy of his thirtieth birthday at the time of his death.

Another new name on the Laurel Canyon Death List is Lowell George, the founder and creative force behind the critically acclaimed but largely obscure band known as Little Feat. George was the son of Willard H. George, a famous furrier to the Hollywood movie studios. Lowell's first foray into the music world was with a band known as the Factory, which cut some demos with a guy by the name of Frank Zappa. The Factory evolved into the Fraternity of Man, though without George, who had left to serve as lead vocalist for the Standells. George returned, however, to join the band in the studio for the recording of their second album. By that time, as we have already learned, the Fraternity of Man had taken up residence in the Log Cabin, alongside Carl Franzoni and his fellow freaks.

George next joined up with Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention, though his tenure there was destined to be a short one; like so many others, Lowell left embittered by Zappa's dictatorial approach to making music and his condescending treatment of his bandmates. After parting company with Zappa, George formed Little Feat, a band composed mostly of musicians from the Fraternity of Man sessions. Lowell, who is credited with being a pioneer of the use of slide guitar in rock music, served as singer, songwriter and lead guitarist for the band, which released its debut album in 1970. Though well regarded within the industry and by critics, the band's albums failed to sell and George ultimately announced the demise of the band and recorded a solo album. After playing a show on June 29, 1979, at George Washington University in support of that album, George was found dead in an Arlington, Virginia,

hotel room, very near the Pentagon. Cause of death was said to be a massive heart attack, though George was just thirty-four years old at the time.

According to Barney Hoskyns, writing in *Hotel California*, “A regular social stop-off for George was a Laurel Canyon house on Wonderland Avenue belonging to Three Dog Night singer Danny Hutton. A drop-in den of debauchery, the Hutton house featured a bedroom with black walls and a giant fireplace. Lowell would often swing by and entertain the likes of Brian Wilson or Harry Nilsson.” Nilsson and his regular drinking buddy, John Lennon, were frequent guests at this “den of debauchery.”

Former Beatle John Lennon is, to be sure, one of the most famous names to be found on the Laurel Canyon Death List. Lennon also has the distinction of being one of the few Laurel Canyon alumni whose cause of death is acknowledged to have been homicide. The ex-Beatle, of course, never lived in the canyon, but he was a fixture on the Sunset Strip and at various Laurel Canyon hangouts, frequently in the company of Harry Nilsson.

Lennon was, as is fairly well known, murdered on December 8, 1980, in front of New York’s Dakota Apartments, which had been portrayed by filmmaker Roman Polanski in his film *Rosemary’s Baby* as a den of Satanic cult activity. Not long before Lennon’s murder, assassin Mark David Chapman had approached occult filmmaker Kenneth Anger and offered him a gift of live bullets. Just days after Lennon was felled, Anger’s long-delayed final cut of *Lucifer Rising* made its New York debut, very near the bloodstained grounds of the Dakota Apartments.

Precisely three weeks after Lennon’s death, Tim Hardin—Canyonite, folk musician, close associate of Frank Zappa, onetime tenant in Lenny Bruce’s Laurel Canyon-adjacent home, and former United States Marine—died of a reported heroin and morphine overdose in Los Angeles. At the time of his death, on December 29, 1980, Hardin was just thirty-nine years old, one year younger than Lennon.

Eight years later, on July 18, 1988, singer/songwriter/keyboardist Christa Paffgen, better known as Nico, died of a reported cerebral hemorrhage in Ibiza, Spain, under unusual circumstances. After achieving some level of fame as a vocalist with the Velvet Underground, Nico had left the Warhol stable and migrated west to Laurel Canyon, where

she formed a bond with a then-unknown singer-songwriter named Jackson Browne, who contributed a few songs to Nico's 1967 debut album, *Chelsea Girl*. The title was derived from New York's Chelsea Hotel, where Devon Wilson took a dive and where the persona of John Train murdered the persona of Phil Ochs.

## **DETOURS RUSTIC CANYON & GREYSTONE PARK**

**“By the time Manson shifted base from Rustic Canyon to an old ranch in Chatsworth, he’d begun formulating the notion that he and his followers had to prepare themselves for a race war with Black America.”** Barney Hoskyns, writing in Hotel California

WE MUST NOW TEMPORARILY RELOCATE TO RUSTIC CANYON, WHICH LIES about nine miles west of Laurel Canyon in the Hollywood Hills. It was there, in Lower Rustic Canyon, that Beach Boy Dennis Wilson lived in the late 1960s in what Steven Gaines described in *Heroes and Villains* as “a palatial log-cabin-style house at 14400 Sunset Boulevard that had once belonged to humorist Will Rogers.” The expansive home sat on three lushly landscaped acres.

In the summer of 1968, as is fairly well known, Charlie Manson and various members of his entourage moved in with Wilson. Considerably less well known is that Charles “Tex” Watson, for reasons that have never really been explained, was already living there. As many as two-dozen members of Manson’s clan spent the entire summer there, with Wilson picking up the tab for all expenses. The Mansonites, mostly nubile young women, regularly drove Wilson’s expensive cars and demol-

ished at least one of them. Dennis didn't seem to mind; he was busy recording Manson in brother Brian's home studio and inviting fellow musicians, like Neil Young, over to the house to hear Charlie perform. (Young was so impressed that he urged Mo Ostin to sign him.)

Dennis would later claim that he had destroyed all the Manson demo tapes, that he remembered almost nothing of his time with Charlie and the Family, and that he certainly knew nothing about the Tate and LaBianca murders, which were committed in the summer of 1969, about a year after the Family had vacated the Rustic Canyon residence. At some point in time though, Wilson had a change of heart and decided that maybe he did indeed know a little something about the murders. "I know why Charles Manson did what he did," said Dennis. "Someday, I'll tell the world. I'll write a book and explain why he did it." That book, however, was never written and Wilson's story, if indeed he had one, was never told. Instead, Dennis Wilson drowned under questionable circumstances on December 28, 1983, in the marina where his beloved yacht had previously been docked.

But this story isn't really about Dennis Wilson; it's about Charlie Manson and his alleged motive for allegedly ordering the Tate and LaBianca murders. According to the 'Helter Skelter' scenario popularized by lead prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi, who later penned a wildly disinformational book on the JFK assassination, Manson was hoping to spark an apocalyptic race war. It is said that Charlie believed that America's black population would prevail over whitey, but that, having won the war, the victors would be incapable of governing themselves. And that, alas, is when Charlie and his retinue would emerge from the shadows to take command.

According to Barney Hoskyns, Manson began formulating his race war theory during his stay in Rustic Canyon. If true, then Charlie appears to have been following in the footsteps of a long-forgotten former Rustic Canyon guru—one who preceded him by a few decades, and who, like Manson, had a certain fondness for swastikas.

Just to the north of Dennis Wilson's former home is a vast wilderness of undeveloped canyon lands. Lower Rustic Canyon soon gives way to Upper Rustic Canyon, and all signs of human civilization abruptly vanish. The land remains wild and undeveloped save for an old, unpaved fire road that winds along the summit between Rustic Canyon and a

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

neighboring canyon. That road is closed to the public and vehicle traffic is nonexistent. Aside from an occasional hiker wandering in from nearby Will Rogers State Park, there is nary a human to be seen.

The farther in one hikes, the more wild and untamed it becomes. Along with the sights of the city, the sounds and the scents quickly disappear as well. Within a very short time, it is surprisingly easy to forget that one is still within the confines of the city of Los Angeles. And in its fall splendor, the canyon looks nothing like the Los Angeles that most Angelenos know and don't quite love. It is beautiful... serene... pastoral. And yet, filled with mist and heavily overgrown, it is also vaguely ominous.

If one knows where to look, there is a narrow concrete stairway that is accessible from the fire road. That stairway descends down to the floor of the canyon, and it is a very, very long descent. Five hundred and twelve steps long, to be exact. As one makes the descent, this stairway, which seems to go on forever, seems wildly out of place. With time to kill on the way down, one may find oneself pondering how many man-hours it took to set forms for 512 poured concrete steps, and how truckloads of concrete were poured out here in the middle of nowhere.

Reaching the canyon floor, one finds that, though the native flora has struggled mightily to reclaim the land, remnants of a past civilization can be seen everywhere. Some structures remain largely intact—a nearly 400,000 gallon, spring-fed reservoir serving a sophisticated potable water system; a concrete-walled structure that once housed twin electrical generators capable of lighting a small town; more concrete stairways, hundreds of steps long, each snaking its way up the canyon walls; weathered livestock stables; professionally graded and paved roads; countless stone retaining walls; an incinerator; concrete foundations and skeletal remains of former dwellings; the rusting carcass of a Mansonesque VW bus; and, at the former entrance, an imposing set of electronically controlled, wrought iron security gates.

It is the kind of place that seems tailor-made for Charlie and his Family—remote and secluded, yet accessible by the Family's custom-built dune buggies; with just enough crumbling infrastructure to provide rudimentary shelter for the clan; and with elaborate security provisions, including sentry positions and a formerly electrified fence completely encircling the fifty-acre compound (as well as, by some reports, an un-



derground tunnel complex). And it was located just a short hike up the canyon from the place that Charlie Manson called home in the summer of 1968.

While exploring this place, obvious questions begin to come to mind: Who developed this remote portion of the canyon, in what feels like the middle of nowhere? The goal appears to have been to create a hidden and completely self-sustaining community, and an extraordinary amount of money was invested in infrastructure development... but why?

Very few Angelenos know of the curious ruins in Rustic Canyon, and fewer still know the history of those ruins. Every now and then though, a local reporter will pay a visit and the story will make a one-time appearance in a local publication, briefly casting some light on a bit of the hidden history of Los Angeles. In May 1992, Marc Norman of the *Los Angeles Business Journal* was one such reporter. According to Norman, "County records show 'Jessie Murphy, a widow,' purchasing fifty-plus acres north of [Will] Rogers' property in 1933, but the owners were actually named Stephens—Norman, an engineer with silver-mining interests, and Winona, the daughter of an industrialist and a woman given to things supernatural. Local lore has it that Winona fell under the spell of a certain unnamed gentleman."

This trio, along with unnamed others, began "a ten-year construction program costing \$4 million... starting with a water tank holding 375,000 gallons and a concrete diesel-powered generator station with foot-thick walls—both of which are still visible. The hillsides were terraced for orchards, an electrified fence circled the boundaries and a huge refrigerated locker was built into a hillside... The one thing Murphy/Stephens couldn't seem to get right was their main house. The first architect hired was Welton Becket, but there are also sketches by Lloyd Wright, and in 1941, Paul Williams drafted blueprints for a sprawling mansion with twenty-two bedrooms, a children's dining room, a gymnasium, pool and a workshop in the basement."

Thirteen years later, in September 2005, Cecelia Rasmussen of the *Los Angeles Times* added a few details to the story: "Southern California has been the cradle to many odd cults, credos, utopias and dystopias. Among the most mysterious are the ruins of a Rustic Canyon enclave once known as Murphy Ranch... on [Rustic Canyon's] secluded and

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

woodsy floor stand the eerily burned-out and graffiti-scarred remains of concrete and steel structures, underground tunnels and stairways leading from the top of the canyon to the bottom... Behind the locked and rusted wrought iron entrance gates and flagstone wall stand the traces of a small community that had the capacity to grow its own food, generate its own electricity and dam its own water... The hillsides were terraced with 3,000 nut, citrus, fruit and olive trees, and fitted with water pipes, sprinklers and an elaborate greenhouse. A high barbed-wire fence discouraged intruders... research indicates that it could have been home to up to forty local Nazis from about 1933 to 1945... armed guards patrolled the canyon dressed in the uniform worn by Silver Shirts, a paramilitary group modeled after Hitler's brownshirts... A man known through oral histories only as 'Herr Schmidt' supposedly ruled the place and claimed to possess metaphysical powers."

Herr Schmidt, needless to say, was the gentleman whose spell Winona Stephens fell under. According to Marc Norman, Schmidt "convinced her that the coming world war would be won by Germany, that the United States would collapse into years of violent anarchy and that the chosen few (read: the Stephenses, the certain gentleman and other true believers) would need a tight spot in which to hole up, self-sufficient, until the fire storm had passed. Then they could emerge not only intact but, thanks to the superiority of their politics, rulers of the anthill and, not incidentally, the origin of its new population."

Sound familiar?

Murphy Ranch also reportedly featured a 20,000 gallon diesel fuel tank, livestock stables, and dairy and butchering facilities. Along both sides of the compound "rise eight crumbling, narrow stairways of at least 500 steps each," as the *LA Times* noted. Those stairways apparently led to sentry positions high on the canyon walls (for the record, they are not actually crumbling, though most are overgrown with impenetrable vegetation). During Murphy Ranch's years of operation, nearby residents reportedly complained of late-night military exercises and the sounds of live gunfire echoing through the canyons.

To summarize then, it appears that the city of Los Angeles was home to a very secret, militarized Nazi compound that was in operation both before and during WWII. Remnants of that blacked-out chapter of LA history can be seen to this day, though few make the trek. The purpose

of the decaying compound was to ride out an anarchic, apocalyptic war, so that the chosen few could emerge as the rulers of the new world. It was all so very Mansonesque, and, ironically enough, Manson and his crew spent an entire summer camped out at a home that was within a two-mile hike of this curious place.

In the late 1940s, after the close of the war, Murphy Ranch was reportedly converted into an artists' colony. Architect Welton Becket, who designed several of the structures at the ranch, would go on to design two of LA's landmark structures: the Capitol Records building and the Music Center. In 1973, the property once known as Murphy Ranch was purchased by the city of Los Angeles. As far as is known, the city has no plans to reopen the facility.

**“Van Cortlandt and Untermeyer functioned as outdoor meeting sites for the cult.”** Maury Terry, writing in *The Ultimate Evil*, in reference to the cult behind the ‘Son of Sam’ murders

NESTLED IN BETWEEN THE MOUTHS OF LAUREL AND COLDWATER Canyons lies a large estate known as Greystone Park, home of the long-vacant Greystone Mansion. The home, and the grounds it sits on, is said to be, to this day, the most expensive private residence ever built in the city of Los Angeles. Constructed in the 1920s, the home and grounds carried the then-unfathomable price tag of \$4 million. (By way of comparison, the Lookout Inn, built a decade-and-a-half earlier, was projected to cost from \$86,000–\$100,000; in other words, the single-family residence cost at least forty times what the lavish seventy-room inn cost—and the inn required bringing infrastructure and building materials to a remote mountaintop.)

The massive, 46,000 square-foot edifice sits amid twenty-two lavishly landscaped acres of prime Hollywood Hills real estate. This rather ostentatious home was built by uberwealthy oil tycoon Edward L. Doheny as a wedding present for his son, Edward “Ned” Doheny, Jr. If that plotline sounds vaguely familiar, it is probably because Edward Doheny was the inspiration for Upton Sinclair’s *Oil*, and thus for the homicidal

Daniel Plainview character in *There Will Be Blood* (some of the interior shots near the end of that film, of expansive, marble-floored rooms, appear to have been shot in the real Greystone).

Upon the home's completion, in September 1928, young Ned Doheny and his new bride moved into the humble abode. Within months, the home would be bloodstained; soon after, it would be permanently abandoned.

Poor Ned, you see, was found dead in the cavernous home on February 16, 1929. Near him lay the lifeless body of his assistant/personal secretary, Hugh Plunkett. Both men had been shot. Despite an inordinately long delay in reporting the deaths, and an admission that the bodies had been moved prior to the arrival of police, who were called only after the family doctor and numerous relatives, all of whom arrived at the home before the LAPD, no formal inquest was ever conducted and the case was written off in less than forty-eight hours as a murder/suicide arising from a gay lovers' quarrel. Despite an unlikely lack of fingerprints on the gun, Plunkett was said to be the triggerman and the media quickly went into a frenzy playing up the scandalous homosexuality angle and portraying young Plunkett as positively demented.

It is anyone's guess whether or not the two really were gay lovers, but it matters little; the rest of the story was almost certainly a work of fiction. In reality, both men were likely murdered as part of the massive cover-up/damage-control operation that followed the disclosure of the Harding-era Teapot Dome scandal, which the Doheny family, as it turns out, was very deeply immersed in. Both Ned Doheny and Plunkett had been scheduled to testify before a Senate investigating committee, as was Doheny's father, one of the wealthiest men in the world at the time. Due to manufactured public sympathy for the grieving father, however, the congressional investigation was shelved.

News reports of the tragedy contained no mention of the victims' deep involvement in the scandal and the tired murder/suicide scenario was trotted out because, as is seen so often in more modern times, if the alleged perpetrator is already dead, it pretty much eliminates the need for things like an investigation and trial.

Some forty years after those gunshots rang out in the opulent Greystone Mansion, a new Ned Doheny, scion of the very same Doheny oil clan, joined the ranks of the Laurel Canyon singer-songwriters

club. Like fellow Canyonites Terry Melcher and Gram Parsons, Doheny was viewed by many as a pampered 'trust-fund kid.' His closest circle of friends included country-rockers Jackson Browne, J.D. Souther and Glen Frey. In addition to recording his own solo albums (his self-titled debut was released in 1973), Doheny contributed to albums by such Laurel Canyon superstars as Frey, Browne, Don Henley, Linda Ronstadt and Graham Nash.

Strangely enough, New York City once had a large estate known as Greystone as well. That Greystone was donated to the city as parkland, and it thereafter became known as Untermyer Park—the same Untermyer Park identified by Maury Terry as one of the two principal ritual sites used by the Process faction behind the 'Son of Sam' murders. The other site used by the cult was Van Cortlandt Park, named for Jacobus Van Cortlandt, a former Mayor of New York and one of David Van Cortlandt Crosby's forefathers. Another of Crosby's forefathers lent his name to Schuyler Road, which happens to run along the western boundary of the Greystone estate in the Hollywood Hills.

I have no idea what, if anything, any of that means, but I thought it best that I toss it into the mix.

## 12

### RIDERS ON THE STORM THE DOORS

**“By that, I mean, ‘Get me a lead singer. He’s got sort of an androgynous blonde hair, very pretty. We need a guitar player, sort of hatchet-faced, wears a hat, plays very fast, very dramatic. He must be very dramatic. Get me a pound of bass player, pound of drummer’... they’re making little cardboard cutouts. They hire a producer, they hire writers... And in the current stuff now, they don’t even bother getting people to play. Don’t bother with that guitar player, bass player, drummer—nonsense... The people in those bands can’t write, play, or sing.”** David Crosby, describing the synthetic, manufactured nature of today’s rock bands

AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THIS JOURNEY, IT WAS NOTED THAT JIM MORRISON’S story was not “in any way unique.” That, however, is not exactly true. It is certainly true that Morrison’s family background did not differ significantly from that of his musical peers, but in many other significant ways, Jim Morrison was indeed a most unique individual, and quite possibly the unlikeliest rock star to ever stumble across a stage.

Morrison essentially arrived on the scene as a fully developed rock star, complete with a backing band, a stage persona and an impressive collection of songs—enough, in fact, to fill the Doors’ first few albums.



How exactly he reinvented himself in such a radical manner remains something of a mystery, since before his sudden incarnation as singer/songwriter, James Douglas Morrison had never shown the slightest interest in music. None whatsoever. He certainly never studied music and could neither read nor write it. By his own account, he never had much of an interest in even listening to music. He told one interviewer that he “never went to concerts—one or two at most.” And before joining the Doors, he “never did any singing. I never even conceived of it.” Asked near the end of his life if he had ever had any desire to learn to play a musical instrument, Jim responded, “Not really.”

So here we had a guy who had never sang, who had “never even conceived” of the notion that he could open his mouth and make sounds come out, who couldn’t play an instrument and had no interest in learning such a skill, and who had never much listened to music or been anywhere near a band, even just to watch one perform, and yet he somehow emerged, virtually overnight, as a fully formed rock star who would quickly become an icon of his generation. Even more bizarrely, legend holds that he brought with him enough original songs to fill the first few Doors’ albums. Morrison did not, you see, do as other singer/songwriters do and pen the songs over the course of the band’s career; instead, he allegedly wrote them all at once, before the band was even formed. As Jim once acknowledged in an interview, he was “not a very prolific songwriter. Most of the songs I’ve written I wrote in the very beginning, about three years ago. I just had a period when I wrote a lot of songs.”

In fact, all of the good songs that Morrison is credited with writing were written during that period—the period during which, according to rock legend, Jim spent most of his time hanging out on the rooftop of a Venice apartment building consuming copious amounts of LSD. This was just before he hooked up with fellow student Ray Manzarek to form the Doors. Legend also holds, strangely enough, that that chance meeting occurred on the beach, though it seems far more likely that the pair would have actually met at UCLA, where both attended the university’s rather small and close-knit film school.

In any event, the question that naturally arises (though it does not appear to have ever been asked of him) is: How exactly did Jim “The Lizard King” Morrison write that impressive batch of songs? I’m certainly no musician myself, but it is my understanding that just about

every singer/songwriter across the land composes his or her songs in essentially the same manner: on an instrument—usually either a piano or a guitar. Some songwriters, I hear, can compose on paper, but that requires a skill set that Jim did not possess. The problem, of course, is that he also could not play a musical instrument of any kind. How then did he write the songs?

He would have had to have composed them, I'm guessing, in his head. So we are to believe then that a few dozen complete songs, never heard by anyone and never played by any musician, existed only in Jim Morrison's acid-addled brain. Anything is possible, I suppose, but even if we accept that premise, we are still left with some nagging questions, including the question of how those songs got *out of* Jim Morrison's head. As a general rule of thumb, if a songwriter doesn't know how to read and write music, he can play the song for someone who does and thereby create the sheet music (which was the case, for example, with all of the songs that Brian Wilson penned for the Beach Boys). But Jim quite obviously could not play his own songs. So did he, I don't know, maybe hum them?

And these are, it should be clarified, *songs* that we are talking about here, as opposed to just lyrics, which would more accurately be categorized as *poems*. Because Jim, as is fairly well known, was quite a prolific poet, whereas he was a songwriter only for one brief period of his life. But why was that? Why did Morrison, with no previous interest in music, suddenly and inexplicably become a prolific songwriter, only to just as suddenly lose interest after mentally penning an impressive catalog of what would be regarded as rock staples? And how and why did Jim achieve the accompanying physical transformation that changed him from a clean-cut, collegiate, and rather conservative-looking young man into the brooding sex symbol who would take the country by storm? And why, after a few years of adopting that persona, did Jim transform once again, in the last year or so of his life, into an overweight, heavily bearded, reclusive poet who seemed to have lost his interest in music just as suddenly and inexplicably as he had obtained it?

It wasn't just Morrison who was, in retrospect, a bit of an oddity; the entire band differed from other Laurel Canyon bands in a number of significant ways. As *Vanity Fair* once noted, "The Doors were always different." All four members of the group, for example, lacked previous band

experience. Morrison and Manzarek, as noted, were film students, and drummer John Densmore and guitarist Robby Kreiger were recruited by Manzarek from his Transcendental Meditation class—which is, I guess, where one goes to find musicians to fill out one’s band. That class, however, apparently lacked a bass player, so they did without—except for those times when they used session musicians and then claimed that they did without.

Anyway, the point is that none of the four members of the Doors had any real band credentials. Even a band as contrived as the Byrds, as we shall soon see, had members with band credentials. So too did Buffalo Springfield, with Neil Young and Bruce Palmer, for example, having played in the Mynah Birds, backing a young vocalist who would reinvent himself as Rick “Superfreak” James (Goldy McJohn of Steppenwolf, oddly enough, was a Mynah Bird as well). The Mamas and the Papas were put together from elements of the Journeymen and the Mugwumps. And so on with the rest of the Laurel Canyon bands.

The Doors could cite no such band lineage. They were just four guys who happened to come together to play the songs written by the singer who had never sung but who had a sudden calling and a magical gift for songwriting. And as you would expect with four guys who had never actually played in a band before, they didn’t really play very well. And that is kind of an understatement. Don’t take my word for it though; let’s let the band’s producer, Paul Rothchild, weigh in: “The Doors were not great live performers musically. They were exciting theatrically and kinetically, but as musicians they didn’t make it; there was too much inconsistency, there was too much bad music. Robby would be horrendously out of tune with Ray, John would be missing cues, there was bad mic usage too, where you couldn’t hear Jim at all.”

As fate would have it, I have heard some audio of a young and quite inebriated Jim Morrison at the microphone, and I would have to say that not being able to “hear Jim at all” might have, in many cases, actually improved the performance. But performing poorly as a live band, of course, did not really set the Doors apart from its contemporaries. Another thing that *was* unusual about the band, however, is that, from the moment the band was conceived, the lineup never changed. No one was added, no one was replaced, no one dropped out of the band over ‘artistic differences,’ or to pursue a solo career, or to join another band,

or for any of the other reasons that bands routinely change shape.

It would be difficult to identify another Laurel Canyon band of any longevity that could make the same claim. After their first two albums, the Byrds changed lineups with virtually every album release. Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention were in a near-constant state of flux. Love and Steppenwolf changed lineups on a regular basis, with leaders John Kay and Arthur Lee routinely firing band members. Laurel Canyon's country-rock bands were also constantly changing shape, usually by incestuously swapping members amongst themselves.

But not the Doors. Jim Morrison's band arrived on the scene as a fully formed entity, with a name (taken from Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*), a stable lineup, a backlog of soon-to-be hit songs... and no previous experience writing, arranging, playing or performing music. Other than that though, they were just your run-of-the-mill, organic, grass roots, 1960s rock'n'roll band, albeit one with a curious aversion to political advocacy. Jim Morrison was, by virtually all accounts, a voracious reader. Former teachers and college professors expressed amazement at the breadth and depth of his knowledge on various topics, and at the staggering array of literary sources that he could accurately cite. And yet he was known to tell interviewers that he "[had]n't studied politics that much, really." But that was okay, according to drummer John Densmore, since "a lot of people at our concerts at least, they're sort of—it seems like they don't really come to hear us speak politics."

That's the way it was in the 1960s, you see; the young folks of that era just didn't concern themselves much with politics, and certainly didn't want their anti-war icons engaging in anything resembling political discourse.

During the Doors' glory days on the Sunset Strip, Morrison "struck up an intimate friendship" with Whisky-a-Go-Go owner Elmer Valentine, according to a *Vanity Fair* article published in September 2006. At the time, Valentine was also, coincidentally of course, very close to his own secretary/booking agent, Gail Sloatman, whom Jim had known since kindergarten through Naval officers' circles. Valentine was also—by pretty much all accounts, including his own—a 'made man.'

Valentine arrived in LA by way of Chicago, where he had worked as a vice cop—a decidedly corrupt vice cop. By his own account, he worked as a police captain's bagman, "collecting the filthy lucre on behalf of the

captain.” He also boasted that, even while working as a vice cop, his night job was “running nightclubs for the outfit—for gangsters.” One “very close friend” from his days in Chicago was “Felix Alderisio, also known as Milwaukee Phil, who was arguably the most feared hit man in the country in the 1950s and sixties, carrying out at least fourteen murders for Sam Giancana and other Chicago bosses.”

Valentine was ultimately indicted for extortion, though he naturally managed to avoid prosecution and conviction. Venturing out to LA circa 1960, he soon found himself running PJ’s nightclub at the corner of Crescent Heights and Santa Monica Boulevards (which, as you may recall, was co-owned by Eddie Nash and was the favored hangout of early rocker/murder victim Bobby Fuller). It wasn’t long though before Valentine had his very own club to run—the legendary Whisky-a-Go-Go, where numerous Laurel Canyon bands, including the Doors in the summer of 1966, served their residency.

Valentine obviously had considerable financial backing to launch his business empire and it wasn’t much of a secret on the Strip where that backing came from. Frank Zappa once cryptically referred to Valentine’s backers as an “ethnic organization,” while Chris Hillman of the Byrds simply noted that, “whoever financed Elmer, I don’t want to know.”

Valentine received far more than just financial backing to launch the Whisky; he got a generous assist from the media as well. As *Vanity Fair* noted, “Within months of the Whisky’s debut, *Life* magazine had written it up, Jack Paar had broadcast an episode of his post-*Tonight* weekly program from the club, and Steve McQueen and Jayne Mansfield had installed themselves as regulars.” Legendary actor McQueen, it should be noted, was a former US Marine who had served in an elite unit tasked with protecting President Harry Truman’s private yacht.

Turning now to the Byrds, the band that started the folk-rock revolution, we find that they were, by any reasonable assessment, an entirely manufactured phenomenon. As a fledgling band, they had any number of problems. The first and most obvious was that the band’s members did not own any musical instruments. That problem was solved though when Naomi Hirschorn, better known for funding quasi-governmental projects such as the Hirschorn Museum in Washington, DC, stepped up to the plate to provide the band with instruments, amplifiers and the like. But that didn’t solve a bigger problem, which was that the band’s

members, with the notable exception of Jim (later Roger) McGuinn, didn't have a clue as to how to actually play those instruments.

Cast to play the bass player was Chris Hillman, who had never picked up a bass guitar in his life. As he candidly admitted years later, he "was a mandolin player and didn't know how to play bass. But [the other band members] didn't know how to play their instruments either, so I didn't feel too bad about it." On drums was Michael Clarke, who had never before held a set of drumsticks in his hands but who bore a resemblance to Rolling Stone Brian Jones, which was deemed to be of more significance than actual musical ability. As Crosby co-author Carl Gottlieb recalled, "Clarke had played beatnik bongos and conga drum, but had no experience with conventional drumming."

Richie Unterberger noted in *Turn! Turn! Turn!* that the guys in the Byrds "had barely known each other before getting thrown into the studio, were still learning electric instruments, and in a couple cases had never really even played their assigned instruments at all. Actually, Michael Clarke didn't even have an instrument to start with; on his first rehearsals, and even some recording sessions, he kept time on cardboard boxes."

Gene Clark, though by far the most gifted songwriter in the band and a talented vocalist as well, could barely play his guitar and so was relegated to banging the tambourine, which was Jim Morrison's (and various non-musically inclined members of the Partridge Family's) instrument of choice as well. David Crosby, tasked with rhythm guitar duties, wasn't much better. Crosby himself admitted, in his first autobiography (does anyone really need to write more than one autobiography, by the way?), that, "Roger was the only one who could really play."

The band had another problem. With the clear exception of Gene Clark, the group was a bit lacking in songwriting ability. To compensate, they initially played mostly covers. Fully a third of the band's first album consisted of covers of Dylan songs, and nearly another third was made up of covers of songs by other folk singer/songwriters. Clark contributed the five original songs, two of them co-written with McGuinn. As for Crosby, who emerged as the band's biggest star, his only contribution to the Byrds' first album was backing vocals.

Carl Franzoni perhaps summed it up best when he declared rather bluntly that, "the Byrds' records were manufactured." The first album in particular was an entirely engineered affair created by taking a col-



lection of songs by outside songwriters and having them performed by a group of nameless studio musicians (for the record, the actual musicians were Glen Campbell on guitar, Hal Blaine on drums, Larry Knechtel on bass, Leon Russell on electric piano, and Jerry Cole on rhythm guitar), after which the band's trademark vocal harmonies, entirely a studio creation, were added to the mix.

As would be expected, the Byrds' live performances, according to Barney Hoskyns' *Waiting for the Sun*, "weren't terribly good." But that didn't matter much; the band got a lot of assistance from the media, with *Time* being among the first to champion the new band. And they also got a tremendous assist from Vito and the Freaks and from the Young Turks, as previously discussed.

We shall return to the Byrds, and to the ubiquitous Vito Paulekas, in the next chapter. For now, I leave you with this curious little story about Byrd Chris Hillman's initial arrival in Laurel Canyon, as told by Michael Walker in *Laurel Canyon*: "In the autumn of 1964, a nineteen-year-old bluegrass adept and virtuoso mandolin player named Chris Hillman stood at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Kirkwood Drive contemplating a FOR RENT sign on a telephone pole across from the Canyon Country Store... It didn't take him long to find [a place to stay], and, in the canyon's emerging mythos of enchanted serendipity, one presented itself as if by magic. 'This guy drives up and he says you looking for a place to rent?' Hillman recalls. 'I said yeah, and he said, Well, follow me up. It was this young guy who was a dentist. It was his parents' house, a beautiful old wood house down a dirt road—and he lived on the top, and he was renting out the bottom part. I just went, Wow, perfect. The guy ended up being my dentist for a while... It was the top of the world, a beautiful, beautiful place. I had the best place in the canyon.'"

In the Los Angeles of the 1960s, you see, it was quite common for a very wealthy person to offer exquisite living accommodations to a random, scruffy vagrant. We know this to be true because it happened to Charles Manson on more than one occasion. In any event, Chris Hillman's former mountaintop home no longer exists because, as tends to happen in Laurel Canyon, it burned to the ground on what Walker described as a "hot, witchy day in the sixties." According to Hillman, "Crosby was at my house an hour before the blaze. I can't connect it yet—where the Satan factor came into play with David—but I'm working on it."

## 13

# **EIGHT MILES HIGH AND FALLING FAST THE BYRDS**

**“I’d have to say that, personally speaking,  
Crosby was worse for the good feelings  
of [the local] rock’n’roll [scene] than  
Manson was.” Terry Melcher**

ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE LURKING ABOUT THE PERIPHERY OF the Laurel Canyon scene was the Byrds’ first producer, Terry Melcher. It is fairly well known that Melcher was the son of ‘virginal’ actress Doris Day, who was just sixteen when impregnated and seventeen when Terry was born. Melcher’s father was trombonist Al Jorden, who reportedly regularly beat Day, and likely Terry as well. Jorden wasn’t around for long though; his death, when Melcher was just two or three years old, was yet another Hollywood suicide.

After an equally short-lived second marriage, Doris Day married her agent and producer, Marty Melcher, who was universally regarded as one of the biggest assholes in Hollywood—and that’s not an easy title to attain, given the fierce competition. Like Jorden, Melcher was well known for being a tyrannically violent and abusive man. He also reportedly embezzled some \$20 million from his wife/client. On the bright side though, he did adopt and help raise Terry, who took his name.

Terry Melcher, perhaps more so than anyone else, had deep ties to virtually all aspects of the canyon scene, including the Laurel Canyon musicians, the Manson Family, the group of young Hollywood actors

generally referred to as ‘The Young Turks,’ and the Vito Paulekas dance troupe. As it turns out, Melcher first met Vito Paulekas when Terry was still in high school in the late 1950s. As Melcher later recalled, “Vito was an art instructor. When I was in high school, we’d go to his art studio because he had naked models.” A half-decade or so later, Melcher and Paulekas would, each in his own way, become key players in launching not just the career of the Byrds but the entire Laurel Canyon music scene, as well as the accompanying youth countercultural movement.

Also while still in high school, Melcher befriended Bruce Johnston, the adopted son of a top executive with the Rexall drugstore chain. While growing up on the not-so-mean streets of Beverly Hills and Bel Air, the two recorded together as singing duo Bruce and Terry. Johnston also played in a high school band with Phil Spector, who, it will be recalled, shared with Melcher (and various others in this story) the distinction of having lost a parent to an alleged act of suicide.

As has been pointed out already, it was Spector’s crack team of studio musicians, dubbed the Wrecking Crew, who provided the instrumental tracks for countless albums by Laurel Canyon bands. Bruce Johnston, meanwhile, went on to become a Beach Boy, replacing Wrecking Crew member Glen Campbell, who had briefly replaced Brian Wilson after Brian abruptly decided that he no longer wanted to perform live. Brian’s brother Dennis forged a close bond with Terry Melcher, as well as with Gregg Jakobson, a would-be actor and talent scout who was married to famed comedian Lou Costello’s daughter.

The trio of Wilson, Melcher and Jakobson, who dubbed themselves the “Golden Penetrators” (with Wilson referring to himself rather subtly as “The Wood”), infamously forged a close bond with a musician/prophet/penetrator by the name of Charles Manson. In 1966, Melcher, along with Mark Lindsay of the band Paul Revere and the Raiders, leased and moved into the soon-to-be infamous home at 10050 Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon. (Lindsay would later have the dubious distinction of also living for a time in that other infamous canyon death house, on Wonderland Avenue; Lindsay was also a regular visitor to the Log Cabin.) The two were soon joined by Melcher’s girlfriend, actress Candice Bergen. Melcher and Bergen remained in the home until early 1969, frequently entertaining high-profile guests from both the music and film industries.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

During the summer of 1968, when Charlie Manson and numerous members of his entourage, including Charles “Tex” Watson and Dean Moorehouse, were shacking up with Melcher’s sidekick, Dennis Wilson, Watson and Moorehouse were known to regularly visit the Melcher/Bergen home on Cielo Drive. Charlie Manson is known to have visited the Melcher home on several occasions as well, and to have occasionally borrowed Melcher’s Jaguar. Just after Melcher and Bergen vacated the home, Jakobson reportedly arranged for Moorehouse to live there briefly, before Tate and Polanski took possession in February of 1969. During Moorehouse’s stay, Tex, who would later be portrayed as the leader of the Tate and LaBianca hit squads, came calling regularly. His address book would later be found to contain a phone number for a former Polanski residence.

Watson had moved out to LA from Texas in 1966 after opting to drop out of college, which those who knew him viewed as being wildly out of character. By the spring of 1968, when Charles Watson met Charles Manson at Dennis Wilson’s home, Tex was the modish co-owner of Crown Wig Creations on the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. Through that business enterprise, he had developed extensive Hollywood contacts—contacts that came in handy when he began handling large drug transactions and large piles of cash for Charlie Manson. Tex Watson soon grew so close to Manson that, according to Ed Sanders, he was known to complain at times “that he actually thought he was Charlie.”

According to *Vanity Fair*, Tex Watson was also “a regular patron of the Whisky,” which isn’t too surprising given that Elmer Valentine’s club was well known to be a major drug trafficking site during the late 1960s. Watson’s frequent sidekick Dean Moorehouse, by the way, hailed from Minot, North Dakota, identified by Maury Terry as the longtime home of a Process faction with deep ties to Offutt Air Force Base. Though it is purely speculation, it seems entirely possible that Moorehouse served as a handler for both Charlies—Manson and Watson. Perhaps tellingly, Vincent Bugliosi mentioned Moorehouse only once in his nearly 700-page treatment of the Manson case (in much the same way that David Crosby ignored Vito Paulekas in his wordy autobiography).

In the spring of 1969, the trio of Wilson, Melcher and Jakobson got close to Bobby Beausoleil as well. Jakobson made at least two trips to

the Gerard Theatrical Agency to hear demo tapes that Bobby had recorded. The agency, headed by Jack Gerard, specialized in supplying topless dancers to seedy clubs, and actors and actresses for porno film shoots. Beausoleil's primary job with the agency was to deliver carloads of girls to the clubs; more than a few of those girls were members of Charlie's Family. In March of 1969, just months before he was arrested for the torture-murder of Gary Hinman, Bobby signed a songwriting contract with the agency and began recording demos.

Beausoleil also accompanied Melcher and Jakobson on at least two trips out to the Spahn Movie Ranch, once in May of 1969 and then again the next month. Jakobson was a frequent visitor to Spahn and was known to boast of having held over 100 hours of conversations with the all-knowing prophet known as Charles Manson. Gregg also lobbied NBC to shoot a documentary film about the Manson Family's 'hippie commune' and the network was for a time quite interested in the project. Along with Dennis Wilson, Jakobson also arranged for Charlie to record at an unnamed studio in Santa Monica; that session was also attended by Terry Melcher, Bobby Beausoleil and several of the Manson girls.

Lest anyone think otherwise, by the way, the Manson Family certainly had no shortage of talented musicians. Convicted murderer Charles Manson, of course, was widely viewed by his contemporaries in the canyon as a talented singer/songwriter/guitarist. So too was Bobby Beausoleil, who had jammed with Dennis Wilson, played rhythm guitar for the pre-Love lineup known as the Grass Roots, knew Frank Zappa and had visited the Log Cabin, and later composed and recorded the film score for Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising*. Convicted murderer Patricia Krenwinkel was an accomplished guitarist and songwriter. Convicted murderer Steve "Clem" Grogan was a talented musician as well; he later played in the prison band assembled by Beausoleil to record the *Lucifer Rising* soundtrack. In addition, Family members Brooks Poston and Paul Watkins were accomplished musicians, and Catherine "Gypsy" Share was a virtuoso violin player as well as being a singer and occasional actress (see, for example, *Ramrod*, costarring Bobby Beausoleil and filmed partially at—where else?—Spahn Movie Ranch).

Catherine Share is notable in other ways as well, including her unparalleled feat of raising the bar so high on parental suicides that no one else, even in Laurel Canyon, is likely to be able to clear it. Orphaned as

a child when *both* biological parents purportedly committed suicide, Gypsy was adopted by a psychologist and his wife. Her adoptive mother then allegedly committed suicide as well, leaving her to be raised by her adoptive father. Share is also notable for being the oldest of Charlie's girls, nearly twenty-seven at the time of the murders (most of the others were under twenty-one, and many, including Dean Moorehouse's daughter, Ruth Ann "Ouisch" Moorehouse, were minors). Gypsy lived with Bobby Beausoleil before meeting and living with Manson, and she seemed to serve as a recruiter for both of them.

According to Ed Sanders, Gypsy Share also "arranged for Paul Rothchild, the producer of the Doors, to hear the family music." It seems as though just about everyone had an opportunity to hear the Family's music. Some of it was recorded in Beach Boy Brian Wilson's state-of-the-art home recording studio. Some was recorded by Terry Melcher and Gregg Jakobson at Spahn Ranch using a mobile recording studio. Some was recorded in Santa Monica. By some reports, some was recorded by a major Hollywood studio. Other recordings were likely made as well, though nobody really likes to talk about such things. Gregg Jakobson recorded many of his marathon conversations with Charlie, but as with the demo recordings made by Dennis Wilson, everyone likes to pretend that such recordings were lost or destroyed or never existed.

The Family was filmed at Spahn Ranch by Melcher as well. Family members also shot an extensive amount of film making "home movies," which some witnesses have claimed included Family orgies and ritualized snuff films. A vast amount of NBC camera equipment and film was found to be in the possession of Charlie's motley crew, all of which was claimed to be stolen. It seems likely, however, given the network's known involvement with the Family, that the equipment was provided to them so that they could film their exploits.

When not hanging out with Charlie and Tex and Bobby, Terry Melcher also found time to produce the records that first catapulted the Byrds to fame: Mr. Tambourine Man and Turn! Turn! Turn! The first, recorded in January 1965 and released a few months later, was the record that announced to the world the arrival of a new breed of music. Those early hits were created, simply enough, by borrowing from the songbooks of folk legends Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger and then playing those songs on amplified equipment. Dylan himself followed suit not long after, at



the Newport Folk Festival in July 1965, much to the consternation of the gathered crowd of folkies.

In *Hotel California*, Barney Hoskyns writes that the Byrds were, from the very outset, “conceived as an electric rock’n’roll group.” What Hoskyns doesn’t really clarify though is who exactly it was that initially conceived of this hugely influential band in those terms. Surely it wasn’t the band members themselves who decided that they were going to pioneer a new musical genre, since they probably had their hands full with just learning to play their instruments. It would probably be slightly more accurate to say that the Byrds appear to have been initially conceived as an electric *folk-rock* group. By July of 1966, however, when the band released its third album, featuring the Gene Clark-penned *Eight Miles High*, it had morphed into something different and by doing so helped pioneer another genre of music: psychedelic rock. With the later addition of Gram Parsons and the growing influence of Chris Hillman, the Byrds would next morph into a country-rock band, thus helping to spawn that genre of music as well.

According to rock’n’roll legend, the first two Byrds to get together were James Joseph McGuinn III and Harold Eugene Clark. McGuinn hailed from Chicago, the son of best-selling authors James and Dorothy McGuinn. Considered a very talented guitarist, Jim had played with Bobby Darin, the Limelites, and the Chad Mitchell Trio. In 1962, he left the Chad Mitchell Trio and worked for a time in New York City as a studio musician—before hearing the call that so many others seemed to hear and making his way to Los Angeles. Once there, he wasted no time hooking up with Gene Clark.

Clark had been born in Tipton, Missouri, the second-oldest in a family of thirteen siblings. An undeniably talented songwriter and vocalist, Clark cut his first record with a local rock’n’roll combo when he was just thirteen years old. He later joined the New Christy Minstrels, a vocal ensemble known during his tenure primarily for the hit song *Green, Green*. Like so many others, however, Gene soon found himself packing his bags for—where else?—Los Angeles, where he met up with the recently-arrived Jim McGuinn. The newly formed folk duo soon added a third voice to the mix—our old friend David Crosby, who had formerly been a vocalist with Les Baxter’s *Balladeers*.

Crosby brought in manager Jim Dickson, with whom he had done

some solo sessions in 1963. The year before that, Dickson had produced a self-titled album for a band known as the Hillmen, featuring a young mandolin player out of San Diego named Chris Hillman. Hillman had cut his first album, with a band known as the Scottsville Squirrel Barkers, while still in high school. He was a highly regarded young bluegrass musician and was generally considered to be a virtuoso mandolin player, which I guess is why Jim Dickson cast him to play the part of the bass player in the world's first folk-rock band. And as we already know, Hillman lucked out in securing luxurious living accommodations right in the heart of what was to become the music community's epicenter, so he was all set to become a rock star.

Raised on a ranch in San Diego, Hillman had traveled alone to Berkeley when he was just fifteen, ostensibly to take private mandolin lessons. At about that same time, his father had—wait for it—reportedly committed suicide. Those two closely aligned events would, I guess, have had a profound impact on the young musician.

Hillman would ultimately become a skilled bass player and a major figure in the Laurel Canyon-spawned country-rock movement. Like many others of that bent, Hillman had been a huge fan of Spade Cooley during his formative years and he later cited Cooley as a major influence on his own musical direction. Most readers are probably not familiar with the story of the “King of Western Swing,” which is kind of a shame because as stories go, it's a pretty good one, so let's digress here briefly and meet the man who was frequently cited as one of the forefathers of country-rock, and whom Brian Wilson has cited as a major influence as well.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Donnell Clyde “Spade” Cooley was a popular local musician and bandleader. His weekly shows at the Redondo Beach Pier could draw as many as 10,000 appreciative fans, few of whom knew of his alcoholism, violent temper, or prior arrest for attempted rape. His popularity ultimately landed him his own local television show, *The Spade Cooley Hour*. His career, however, came to an abrupt end on April 3, 1961, when he tortured and murdered his young wife, Ella Mae Cooley, while forcing his fourteen-year-old daughter to watch in horror.

According to court transcripts, Ella Mae had been spending a considerable amount of time in the company of two men, identified as Luther

Jackson and Bud Davenport, both of whom worked in the sprawling, CIA-infested medical research facility at UCLA. On the day of her death, Ella Mae had made the rather bold decision to inform Spade that the two men had initiated her into a 'free love' cult and that she had decided to give up her family and all her possessions to join the group, which was in the process of buying land near the ocean to build and operate a private compound.

Spade Cooley's response to his wife's declaration was to brutally beat, stomp and strangle her to death, but only after repeatedly burning her with a lit cigarette. All of this was witnessed by daughter Melody, who had been told by her father that "now you're going to watch me kill this whore." After doing just that, Spade then asked his daughter if she thought that Ella Mae was really dead, adding, "Well, let's see if she is." He then proceeded to burn her lifeless body repeatedly with another lit cigarette, until he apparently was satisfied that she was indeed dead.

Unlike so many other celebrity homicide suspects, Cooley was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to serve a life sentence. He was sent to the rather notorious Vacaville facility where he served eight years before being offered early parole. Just before his scheduled release, he arranged a November 23, 1969, comeback concert in Oakland for which his captors had agreed to release him on a three-day pass. The concert was reportedly a huge success and it looked as though Cooley's star was about to shine once again upon his pending release from prison. But that's not quite how this story ends; instead, Cooley walked back to his dressing room right after the show and promptly dropped dead, thus ending the saga of Spade Cooley and allowing us to return to where we left off... after, that is, taking one more quick detour here to note that not long after Spade Cooley was scheduled for release, another peripheral character in this story decided that it might be a good idea to kill his wife as well. "Humble" Harve Miller was a popular DJ on LA's number one pop music station during that era, KHJ on the AM dial. During the latter half of the 1960s, Miller was yet another of the players who helped launch the careers of the Laurel Canyon bands, by being the first to get their new singles on the radio. But then he, like Cooley, killed his wife and was sent to prison. Also like Cooley, he was granted early release. But unlike Spade, Miller successfully resumed his career. And now, at long last, we can return to the Byrds.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

By mid-1964, the nucleus of what would become the band had formed with the bonding of McGuinn and Clark. Between the two of them, they would provide the band with its signature twelve-string guitar sound, its two lead vocalists, and (in the early years, at least) its best songwriters. Then along came David Crosby, who added little more than harmony vocals, at least on the first two albums, but who seems to have largely hijacked the band with the help of manager Jim Dickson, who added fake bass player (but real musician) Chris Hillman. Crosby then rounded out the band by adding fake drummer Michael Clarke.

Clarke had been born Michael Dick in Spokane, Washington. At seventeen, Dick ran away from home and hitchhiked to the land of enchantment known as California, apparently becoming Michael Clarke along the way. The year was 1963. According to rock history as told by David Crosby, Clarke and Crosby met in Big Sur, which coincidentally happens to be the location of the notorious Esalen Institute (where CSNY would play some years later). A year later, the vagrant teenager with no drumming experience would find himself cast to play the role of the drummer in the band designed to be America's answer to the Beatles. According to Crosby, Clarke's first LA address was the home of Terry Melcher.

The band, now complete, first dubbed themselves the Jet Set and then the Beefeaters, even recording a less-than-memorable single under the latter moniker, before finally settling on the Byrds. Before the end of 1964, Jim Dickson had signed the band to a deal with Columbia Records. As Barney Hoskyns recounts in *Waiting for the Sun*, "The obvious ineptitude of Michael Clarke and shakiness of most of the others was still a problem when Jim Dickson got the band signed to Columbia in November." Columbia assigned the new band to staff producer Terry Melcher.

That assignment, it would seem, was a rather fortuitous one given that the fledgling band's rehearsal space just happened to be in the very same basement studio that Melcher snuck off to while in high school. Just two months after signing with Columbia, the band, or rather its surrogates, were already in the studio recording Mr. Tambourine Man, at the insistence of Jim Dickson. Despite the objections of various band members, Dickson reportedly pushed hard for the song to be the band's first single. On March 26, 1965, just two months after pretending to

lay down the instrumental tracks for *Mr. Tambourine Man*, the Byrds played their first real live show, as the first act at the refurbished and reopened *Ciro's* nightclub.

I wasn't there so I can't say for sure, but I'm going to go out on a limb here and guess that a band whose entire rhythm section was just learning to play their instruments probably did not put on a very compelling performance. The Byrds apparently played one other live show before the *Ciro's* opening, though the nature of that show appears to be in dispute (or perhaps there were two previous shows). According to Jim Dickson, "The Byrds first public gig was booked by Lenny Bruce's mother, Sally Marr. She got them a job at Los Angeles City College, noon assembly, for a half hour." According to Carl Franzoni and various others, however, it was Vito Paulekas who booked the Byrds' first live show, at a rented hall on Melrose Avenue just a day or two before the show at *Ciro's*.

In any event, *Mr. Tambourine Man* was released about a month after the band had its big public debut at *Ciro's*, and the LA music scene would never be the same again. Before long, clubs big and small were popping up all along the fabled Sunset Strip and bands were spilling out of Laurel Canyon to play them. As Terry Melcher recalled, "kids came from everywhere. It just happened. One day you couldn't drive anymore. It was, like, overnight—you couldn't drive on the Strip."

That would soon change. By the summer of 1967, the mythical Summer of Love, the club scene on the Strip was quickly dying. It had been killed, deliberately or not, by some of the key players who had created it: Terry Melcher, producer of the scene's first band; Lou Adler, business partner of club owner Elmer Valentine; and John Phillips, leader of the Mamas and the Papas. It was the show they produced, you see, the fabled Monterey Pop Festival held on June 16–18, 1967, that killed the Sunset Strip scene. The bands that had filled the clubs became, literally overnight, too big to play such intimate venues. Over the course of the next decade, Laurel Canyon bands quickly moved from clubs to concert halls to massive sports arenas. But here we are, I suppose, getting ahead of ourselves.

As for the Byrds, they carried on for a good many years, albeit with numerous personnel changes. First out was the man who many feel was the most talented member of the group, Gene Clark, who dropped out

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in March of 1966, just one year after the band had first taken the stage at Ciro's. Clark was also the first original Byrd to pass away, on May 24, 1991, at just forty-six years of age, reportedly due to a bleeding ulcer. Two-and-a-half-years later, on December 19, 1993, Michael Clarke died as well when his liver failed. Both deaths were attributed to chronic alcoholism.

Jim McGuinn, who remained a Byrd through numerous band line-ups, joined the Subud religious sect in 1965. Two years later, upon the advice of the cult's founder, he changed his name to Roger. A decade later, he became a born-again Christian. In a similar vein, Chris Hillman became an Evangelical Christian in the 1980s, but then later switched to the Greek Orthodox faith. Hillman played in various Byrds lineups, with Gram Parsons' Flying Burrito Brothers, and in David Geffen's failed attempt at creating a second supergroup, one known as Souther, Hillman, Furay. David Crosby, of course, left the Byrds and became one-third of David Geffen's first supergroup, Crosby, Stills & Nash. These days he primarily spends his time inseminating lesbians and occasionally reuniting with former bandmates.

Jim Dickson and Terry Melcher continued to work with some of the Byrds, particularly Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman. Melcher formed a particularly close bond with fellow 'trust-fund kid' Parsons, as did Melcher's sometime sidekick, John Phillips. Both Melcher and Phillips, of course, had ties to Charles Manson (Melcher raved about him to Ned Doheny), whose former prison buddy, Phil Kaufman, was, as already noted, Parsons' road manager. In unrelated news, Bill Siddons, the Doors' road manager, was once a paramour of Mansonite Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme.

The Family's fingerprints, it appears, can be found in nearly every nook and cranny of the Laurel Canyon scene.



## 14

# THE GREAT SERENDIPITY BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD

**“This is going to break your heart, but much of the music you heard in the sixties and early seventies wasn’t recorded by the people you saw on the album covers. It was done by me and the musicians you see on these walls... Many of these kids didn’t have the chops and were little more than garage bands... At concerts, people hear with their eyes. Teens cut groups slack in concert, but not when they bought their records.”** Hal Blaine, longtime drummer for the Wrecking Crew, quoted in the Wall Street Journal on March 23, 2011

THE BYRDS WERE THE VERY FIRST FOLK-ROCK BAND TO TAKE FLIGHT OUT OF Laurel Canyon, and they were also the one that achieved the greatest fame, but to many discerning ears, the Sunset Strip’s other folk-rock powerhouse, Buffalo Springfield, was the more talented band.

In the literature chronicling the 1960s music scene, few stories have been repeated more frequently than the legend surrounding the formation of what would later be regarded as perhaps the first ‘supergroup.’ All such accounts unquestioningly retell the story as though it were the gospel truth, seemingly oblivious to the improbability of virtually every

aspect of the legend. And curiously, virtually every version of the story contains some form of the word “serendipity,” as though everyone has been copying off the same kid’s homework.

As the story goes, Stephen Stills and Richie Furay, both formerly of the Au Go-Go Singers, had recently transplanted themselves to Los Angeles after the breakup of the manufactured folkie group. Stills had been the first to relocate, in August of 1965. Furay flew out to join him in February 1966, after spending a little time working at defense contractor Pratt & Whitney, and the two set their sights on putting together a folk-rock band.

Meanwhile, up in Toronto, Neil Young and Bruce Palmer were playing in a band known as the Mynah Birds—a band fronted by an AWOL Navy man known as Ricky James Matthews, who would later morph into funkmeister/torturer/rapist Rick James, but whose real name was James Ambrose Johnson, Jr. The Mynah Birds broke up in March of 1965, just after authorities came calling on Matthews and tossed him in the Brooklyn Brig. In search of a new band, Young made the curious decision to head out to LA, for no better reason than that he had what Palmer described as “a hunch, a feeling that... Stephen Stills was in LA.”

Of course, Young had no clue if Stills was in fact there, nor did he know anyone else in LA. And you would think that he would have realized that, even if Stills was there, there was virtually no chance of finding some random person in a city of millions, especially when the person doing the searching had no idea how to get around the city. But no matter. Neil had a calling, so he jumped into an old hearse, of all things, recruited Palmer to ride shotgun, and the two set off on the lengthy trek to Los Angeles.

They arrived, the legend tells us, on April 1, 1966—April Fool’s Day, appropriately enough—and began the search for Stills. Several days of searching yielded no results, however, and on the afternoon of April 6, the frustrated pair decided to head off to San Francisco in the hopes that maybe they would have better luck finding Stephen there. Perhaps they were going to go on a tour of all the big cities in America, in the hopes that somewhere along the way they might find Stephen Stills.

But as fate would have it, just as they were about to head out of town, Stephen Stills *found them*. As Barney Hoskyns tells the story in *Hotel California*, “Early in April 1966, Stills and Richie Furay were stuck

in a Sunset Strip traffic jam in Barry Friedman's Bentley. As they sat in the car, Stephen spotted a 1953 Pontiac hearse with Ontario plates on the other side of the street. 'I'll be damned if that ain't Neil Young,' Stills said. Friedman executed an illegal U-turn and pulled up behind the hearse. One of rock's great serendipities had just occurred. Young, a lanky Canadian, had just driven all the way from Detroit in the company of bassist Bruce Palmer. They'd caught the bug that was drawing hundreds of other pop wannabes to the West Coast."

The pair had actually driven out from Toronto, not Detroit, and the hearse was a 1959 model by most accounts, and Stills and Furay were in a van rather than a Bentley, but such inconsistencies are typical of all Hollywood legends. In any event, John Einarson, in *For What It's Worth*, supplies a somewhat longer and more hyperbole-filled version of the legend: "What transpired next is no longer considered simply a chance encounter. Transcending mere fact, the events of the next few minutes have taken on mythic proportions to become, in the annals of popular culture, legendary. More than pure luck, coincidence or serendipity, at that very moment the planets aligned, stars crossed, everyone's karma turned positive, divine intervention interceded, the hand of fate revealed itself—whatever you subscribe to in order to explain the unexplained. Though each of the five participants in that moment in time tell it slightly differently, the fact remains that the occupants of the white van, individually or collectively, depending on who's retelling it, noticed the black hearse with the foreign plate heading the other direction. Once the light of recognition came on, the van hastily pulled an illegal, and likely difficult in rush hour, U-turn, maneuvering its way through the line of northbound cars, horn honking frantically all the while, to pull up behind the hearse. One of the passengers leapt out, ran up and pounded on the driver's side window of the strange vehicle, yelling to the startled travelers inside who had taken no notice of the blaring car horn directly behind them. 'Hey Neil, it's me, Steve Stills! Pull over, man!' The drivers of the two vehicles managed to find curb space or a vacant store parking lot, again depending on whose version is being related, and the five piled out to embrace and introduce one another... On April 6, 1966, in that late afternoon line of traffic, the course of popular music was altered forever."

Anyone who actually lives and drives in LA likely knows that "dif-

ficult" is not really the word to describe the feasibility of making an impromptu U-turn in rush hour traffic on the Sunset Strip; the correct word would be "impossible," which is the same word that accurately describes the likelihood of that van "maneuvering its way through the line of northbound cars," or of it finding "curb space" on Sunset Boulevard. But let's just play along and assume that Neil Young and Stephen Stills, each of whom, for some reason, had been dreaming about forming a band with the other, had a random, chance encounter on Sunset Boulevard. In that brief moment in time, a band was formed—or at least four-fifths of a band.

Retiring to the home of Barry Friedman, who would later legally change his name to Frazier Mohawk, the quartet of musicians quickly decided that their newly formed band would only perform original material, though they didn't yet actually have any original material. They did though have three singer/songwriter/guitarists on board (Furay, Young and Stills), along with a bass player (Bruce Palmer), so all that was needed was a drummer. Three days later, on April 9, 1966, they acquired one, in the form of Dewey Martin, formerly with the Dillards.

The Dillards, in another awesome bit of serendipity, had just decided to go back to their acoustic bluegrass roots, so they no longer needed a drummer. They also decided that they had no further need for a whole bunch of new electric instruments and stacks of amplifiers, so Dewey, according to legend, brought all of that with him. Because the Dillards, you know, were just going to throw it all away anyway. So now, with the stars all properly aligned, the band was not only complete but they each had shiny new electric instruments to play—and it all had magically come together in just seventy-two hours!

There was still much work to be done, of course. For one thing, they all had to familiarize themselves with those shiny new electric instruments. And they all had to learn to play together as a band. And they had to build up a repertoire of original songs. And they had to rehearse and polish those songs. But not to worry; they had, as we'll see, at least a couple of hours to work on each of those things.

Unlike the Byrds, the members of the Buffalo Springfield were, by all accounts, talented musicians from the outset. Stills and Young were both skilled lead guitarists and songwriters, though Young's vocals were, to be sure, an acquired taste. Furay was an accomplished rhythm

guitarist and songwriter, as well as being the group's best lead vocalist. Bruce Palmer was a respected bass player who, shockingly, actually had experience playing the instrument. And Dewey Martin, several years older than the rest of the crew, had drummed for such legendary artists as the Everly Brothers, Charlie Rich, Roy Orbison, Patsy Cline, and Carl Perkins.

None of that, however, explains the absurdly meteoric rise of Buffalo Springfield. On April 11, 1966, just five days after the quartet had purportedly first met and *just two days* after they had added a drummer and acquired instruments, the band played its first club date at one of Hollywood's most prestigious venues, the Troubadour. Four days later, on April 15, they played the first of six dates around the southland opening for the Byrds, the hottest band on the Strip. That mini-tour was followed almost immediately by a six-week stand at the hottest club in town, the Whisky-a-Go-Go. That gig wrapped up on June 20, 1966.

A month later, on July 25, the band landed the opening slot on the most anticipated concert of the year—the Rolling Stones show at the Hollywood Bowl, sponsored by local radio station KHJ. The station, by the way, had just been launched the previous year, in May of 1965, just a few weeks after the Byrds had taken the world by storm with the release of *Mr. Tambourine Man* and sparked a folk-rock revolution. Just as new clubs magically appeared along the Sunset Strip in anticipation of the about-to-explode music scene, so too did a radio station magically appear to promote those new clubs and the artists filling them. Such things tend to happen, as we know, rather, uhmm, serendipitously.

Three days after the Stones concert at the Bowl, Buffalo Springfield released its first single, the Neil Young-penned Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing, which failed to connect with the record-buying public. Several months later though, the band would release what was to be its only hit single and what would become the most recognizable 'protest' song of the 1960s.

Buffalo Springfield had signed with Atlantic Records, which had been founded in 1947 by Ahmet Ertegun and dentist/investor Herb Abramson. Born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1923, the year the Turk Republic was established, Ahmet was both the son and the grandson of career diplomats/civil servants. His father had been named the first Turkish representative to the League of Nations in 1925 and thereafter served as

the Turk Republic's ambassador to Switzerland, France and England. In 1935, he was named the first Turkish ambassador to the United States and he promptly relocated the family to Washington, DC.

From about the age of twelve, Ahmet grew up along DC's Embassy Row, attending elite private schools with the sons and daughters of senators, congressmen, and intelligence operatives. In 1947, three years after his father died, Ertegun founded Atlantic Records. At first the label was home to jazz and R&B artists, including Ray Charles, the company's first big star. In the late 1950s, Ertegun took on his first assistant—a guy by the name of Phil Spector. Atlantic soon shifted focus and rock luminaries like Eric Clapton, Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones would later join the label's stable of talent.

Curiously enough, Columbia Records, the corporate entity that signed the Byrds, was also born in the nation's capitol. The name is derived from the District of Columbia, where the label was founded and first headquartered some 125 years ago. It would appear then that the two record labels that signed and launched Laurel Canyon's first two folk-rock bands were not only major record labels but also happened to be corporate entities that had deep ties to the nation's center of power. With Laurel Canyon's other bands as well, it was the major record labels, not upstart independents, that signed the new artists. It was the major labels that provided them with instruments and amplifiers. It was the major labels that provided them with studio time and session musicians. It was the major labels that recorded, mixed and arranged their albums. And it was the major labels that released and then heavily promoted those albums.

As Unterberger duly notes in his expansive, two-volume review of the folk-rock movement, "much folk-rock was recorded and issued by huge corporations, and broadcast over radio and television stations owned for the most part by the same or similar pillars of the establishment." The corporate titans of all three branches of the mainstream media—print, radio and television—did their part to help out the titans of the record industry. Unterberger notes that, "AM radio (and sometimes primetime network television) would act as a primary conduit for this countercultural expression." Conservative, corporate-controlled AM stations across the country almost immediately began giving serious airplay to the new sounds coming out of Southern California, and



network television gave the rising stars unprecedented coverage and exposure: "primetime variety hours were much more likely to showcase rock acts than they would be in subsequent decades. New releases by the Byrds were often accompanied by large ads in trade magazines that simultaneously plugged the records and upcoming TV appearances."

The boys in Buffalo Springfield, for example, managed to find themselves appearing as guests on an impressive array of network television shows, including *American Bandstand*, *The Smothers Brothers Show*, *Shbang!*, *The Della Reese Show*, *The Go Show*, *The Andy Williams Show*, *Hollywood Palace*, *Where the Action Is*, Joey Bishop's late night show, and a local program known as *Boss City*. They also made guest appearances, curiously enough, on primetime hits like *Mannix* and *The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*

The print media did its part as well to raise awareness of the new music/countercultural scene. In September 1965, the nation's premier newsweeklies, *Time* and *Newsweek*, "ran virtually simultaneous stories on the folk-rock craze," just months after the first folk-rock release had climbed to the top of the charts. The country's biggest daily newspapers chimed in as well, providing an inordinate amount of coverage of the emerging scene. By the end of 1967, the movement had its very own publication, *Rolling Stone*. Initially designed to look as though it were a product of the underground press, it was, without question, very much a corporate mouthpiece. Another avenue of the print media provided the scene with considerable exposure as well; as Einarson notes, many of the Laurel Canyon stars, particularly members of Buffalo Springfield and the Monkees, were "the darlings of the California teen magazines," including *Teenset*, *Teen Screen*, and *Tiger Beat*.

In 1964, just months before the birth of folk-rock, the *LA Free Press*, widely believed to be the first underground newspaper of the 1960s, was launched from offices at the corner of Sunset and Crescent Heights, at the very mouth of Laurel Canyon. The publication, which quickly became the voice of the canyon, was initially financed by comedian Steve Allen. In the late 1970s, it was purchased and killed off by pornographer Larry Flynt.

As the story is usually told, the 1960s countercultural movement posed a rather serious threat to the status quo. But if that were truly the case, then why was it the "pillars of the establishment," to use

Unterberger's words, that initially launched the movement? Why was it 'the man' that signed and recorded these artists? And that heavily promoted them on the radio, on television, and in print? And that set them up with their very own radio station and their very own monthly magazine?

It could be argued, I suppose, that this was simply a case of corporate America doing what it does best: making a profit off of anything and everything. Blinded by greed, a devil's advocate might say, the corporate titans inadvertently created a monster. The question that is begged by that explanation, however, is why, after it had become abundantly clear that a monster had allegedly been created, was nothing done to stop the growth of that monster? Why, for example, did the state not utilize its law enforcement and criminal justice powers to silence some of the most prominent countercultural voices?

It's not as if it would have required resorting to heavy-handed measures. Since many of the Laurel Canyon stars were openly using, dealing, or at least advocating the use of illegal substances, they were practically begging for the powers-that-be to take action. And yet that never happened. As just one example, three members of Buffalo Springfield (Neil Young, Richie Furay and Jim Messina, along with a dozen others, including Eric Clapton) were arrested in a drug bust at a Topanga Canyon home only to then walk away as if nothing had happened. Why wasn't this case, and so many others like it, aggressively prosecuted?

David Crosby has candidly acknowledged that "the DEA could have popped me for interstate transport of dope or dealing lots of times and never did." John Phillips, busted for wholesale trafficking of pharmaceuticals, was, by his own account, "looking at forty-five years and got thirty days." He began serving his sentence on April 20, appropriately enough, and served just twenty-four days in a minimum security prison that offered "residents" such activities as "basketball, aerobics, softball, tennis, archery, and golf," and that featured a "delicious kosher kitchen, an elaborate salad bar, and a tasty brunch on Sundays."

Time and time again, 'the man' was handed golden opportunities to crack down on Laurel Canyon's most prominent voices, and time and time again those 'dangerous dissidents' were handled with kid gloves. Indeed, the LAPD appears to have adopted a hands-off policy towards the Laurel Canyon crowd. As musician-turned-photographer Henry Diltz

acknowledged to writer Harvey Kubernik, “There was not a presence of the heat in Laurel Canyon.” Radio personality Elliot Mintz agreed, noting that he couldn’t “recall a law enforcement presence in Laurel Canyon.” Given the unique geography of the canyon community, it would have been very easy for the police to cut off access and conduct regular sweeps, but nothing like that ever happened. Instead, police seem to have stayed out of the canyon entirely.

The state had another powerful tool at its disposal to silence young critics—involuntary military service. There was, after all, a war going on and hundreds of thousands of draft-age young men across the country were being fed into the war machine. As Richie Unterberger noted in *Turn! Turn! Turn!*, “Most folk rockers (if they were male), like their audience, were of draft age.” But curiously enough, “Very, very few had their careers interrupted by the draft.” Actually, Unterberger appears to have been playing it safe with the “very, very few” wording since the reality is that *none* of the folks living the rock’n’roll life in the canyons, whether folk rockers, country rockers or psychedelic rockers, had their careers interrupted by the Vietnam War.

The literature is littered with mentions of various rock stars receiving their draft notices, but those mentions are invariably followed by amusing anecdotes about how said people fooled the draft board by pretending to be gay, or pretending to be crazy, or pretending to be otherwise unfit for service. Of course, if it had really been that easy to pull the wool over the draft board’s eyes, then Uncle Sam probably wouldn’t have been able to come up with all those bodies to send over to Vietnam. The reality is that thousands of young men across the country tried those very same tricks, but they only ever seemed to work for the Laurel Canyon crowd.

How is it possible that not one of the musical icons of the Woodstock generation, almost all of them draft age males, was shipped off to slog through the rice paddies of Vietnam? Should we just consider that to be another one of those great serendipities? Was it mere luck that kept all the Laurel Canyon stars out of jail and out of the military during the turbulent decade that was the 1960s? Not likely. The reality is that ‘The Establishment,’ as it was known in those days, had the power to prevent the musical icons of the 1960s from ever becoming the megastars that they became. The state, working hand-in-hand with corporate America,

could quite easily have prevented the entire countercultural movement from ever getting off the ground—because then, as now, the state controlled the channels of communication.

A real grass-roots cultural revolution would probably have involved a bunch of starving musicians barely scratching out a living playing tiny coffee shops in the hopes of maybe someday landing a record deal with some tiny, independent label, and then, just maybe, if they got really lucky, getting a little airplay on some obscure college radio stations. But that's not how the sixties folk-rock 'revolution' played out. Not by any stretch of the imagination.

And now, without further adieu, let's circle back around and take a look at the Buffalo Springfield story from the beginning, starting from January 3, 1945, when Stephen Arthur Stills was born to William and Talitha Stills. As John Einarson recounts in *For What It's Worth*, Stephen's roots were "firmly planted in Southern soil. His family traces its history back to the plantations of the rural antebellum South. After the Union armies laid waste to much of the Southern farm economy, the family relocated to Illinois."

Einarson describes William Stills as "somewhat of a soldier of fortune, an engineer, builder, and dreamer who frequently uprooted the family to follow his dreams and schemes." That is, I suppose, as good a definition as any for what he actually appears to have been: a military intelligence operative who was frequently on assignment in various hotspots in Central America. Stephen's childhood was spent in Illinois, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and various parts of Central America, including Costa Rica, El Salvador and the Panama Canal Zone.

At a fairly young age, Stills attended the Admiral Farragut Military Academy in St. Petersburg, Florida. In later years, his authoritarian manner and military bearing would earn him the nickname "the Sarge." He joined his first band, the Radars, as a drummer. In his next band, the Continentals, he played guitar alongside another young guitarist named Don Felder, who would later turn up in Laurel Canyon as a member of the Eagles—because, as we have seen repeatedly, all roads seemed to lead to Laurel Canyon.

According to Einarson, "An unfortunate incident with the administration at his Tampa Bay high school resulted in Stephen's dismissal in 1961, after which he joined his wayward family then settled in Costa

Rica." What that "unfortunate incident" may have been, and why he had been separated from his family at a fairly young age, remains a mystery. In any event, Stephen's next few years are rather murky. Some reports have him graduating from a high school in the Panama Canal Zone. Others have him shuffling back and forth between Florida and Central America. Stills himself has, as previously noted, at times claimed that he served a stint in Vietnam. Whatever the case, circa March of 1964, he surfaced in New Orleans with his sights set on a career in music.

By the summer of 1964, he had drifted to New York's Greenwich Village, where he became fast friends with a young folk singer/songwriter by the name of Peter Torkelson, who, like so many others in this story, hailed from Washington, DC. The two played together briefly as a duo before Torkelson "migrated to Connecticut then Venezuela," which was, I suppose, a typical migratory route for folkies in those days. Torkelson would soon enough make his way to Laurel Canyon, where he would become Monkee Peter Tork. Stills would also audition for the show, but his bad teeth and thinning hair would render him unfit for a leading role on primetime TV.

In July 1964, Stills found work as one of the nine members of the Au Go-Go Singers, the newly formed house band for New York's famed Café Au Go-Go. Singing alongside of Stills was a young folkie named Richie Furay, the son of a pharmacist who had run a family drugstore in Yellow Springs, Ohio. By November 1964, the Au Go-Go Singers already had an album out. But trouble soon arose, due primarily to the fact that the band was under contract to Morris Levy, a known organized crime figure who would soon be indicted on an array of criminal charges. The band soon broke up and Furay headed off to Connecticut where a cousin got him a job at Pratt & Whitney. While working there, he took a little time off to audition for a slot in the Chad Mitchell Trio, but he was beat out by a military brat from Roswell named John Deutschendorf.

Stephen Stills, meanwhile, hung out in New York for a while longer before heeding the call of the Pied Piper and heading out to LA in August of 1965. That was the summer, according to Einarson, that "the epicenter of American rock'n'roll shifted coasts, Los Angeles replacing New York as the power base of the music industry." Richie Furay apparently soon found himself missing Stills but didn't know how to reach his former sidekick, so he sent a letter to Stills' dad in El Salvador, according

to legend, and William Stills forwarded the message to Stephen.

What exactly the elder Stills was doing in El Salvador circa 1965/66 is unknown, but former State Department official William Blum provided some possible clues in his authoritative *Killing Hope*: “Throughout the 1960s, multifarious American experts occupied themselves in El Salvador by enlarging and refining the state’s security and counter-insurgency apparatus: the police, the National Guard, the military, the communications and intelligence networks, the coordination with their counterparts in other Central American countries... as matters turned out, these were the forces and resources which were brought into action to impose widespread repression and wage war.”

Meanwhile, up in Canada, Neil Young and Bruce Palmer were handling guitar and bass duties for the Mynah Birds. Neil Percival Kenneth Ragland Young was born on November 12, 1945, in Toronto to Scott Young, a sportswriter and novelist, and Edna “Rassy” Ragland, a Canadian television personality. Scott Young had spent a considerable amount of time abroad during WWII, first as a journalist and then as a member of the Royal Canadian Navy. Scott’s father (Neil’s grandfather), like Richie Furay’s, had been a pharmacist/drug store owner.

As Einarson recounts, “Neil Young and Stephen Stills had more in common than music. Both had grown up in transient families, Neil’s journalist father Scott uprooting his mother Edna ‘Rassy,’ Neil, and older brother Bob several times during Neil’s first fifteen years.” Novelists, it would appear, need to move around a lot. Just after his seventeenth birthday, Neil formed his first band, the Squires, and began playing local gigs. According to legend, it was during those early years that Young and Stills first briefly crossed paths up in Canada. That meeting would, a couple years later, allegedly send Young and Palmer—also born in Toronto, to a violinist father and artist mother—off on a cross-country quest to find Stephen Stills.

The Mynah Birds also at one time featured Nick St. Nicholas and Goldie McJohn, both of whom would become members of Steppenwolf. And all the intertwined characters in the preceding narrative—Stephen Stills, Richie Furay, Neil Young, Bruce Palmer, John Denver, Don Felder, Nick St. Nicholas, Goldy McJohn, and Peter Tork—would soon find themselves transplanted to Laurel Canyon.



## 15

# BEYOND BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD AND THE MONKEES, TOO

**“He was great, he was unreal—  
really, really good.”**

**“He had this kind of music that nobody else was doing. I thought he really had something crazy, something great. He was like a living poet.”** Neil Young, sharing his thoughts on Charles Manson

AT THE TIME OF THE LEGENDARY ‘SERENDIPITOUS’ ENCOUNTER ON SUNSET Boulevard, Stills was living at the home of Barry Friedman, a former circus clown, fire-eater, TV producer and freelance publicist. To say that his home was a bit odd would probably be an understatement. According to folkie Nurit Wilde, “It had a bathtub in the middle of the living room and a secret room behind the bathroom where people carried on liaisons.” The massive bathtub sat right in front of the equally massive fireplace. As Friedman himself would later acknowledge, “This was a very strange house.”

Not strange by canyon standards, perhaps, but strange nonetheless. Stranger homes can certainly be found, such as in the Holly Mont neighborhood near the base of nearby Beachwood Canyon. One such home

is described in the book *Haunted Hollywood*. The house isn't actually haunted, of course, but it does contain some rather unusual features, as a past owner discovered: "the house's most startling feature—a secret passageway behind a built-in bookshelf he'd discovered during remodeling. It connected to a series of subterranean tunnels linking several houses on the hillside... While exploring the tunnel beneath his house, Grey found a makeshift grave. The headstone read 'Regina 1922.'"

In Friedman's not-quite-as-strange home, he had taken both Stills and Furay under his wing, providing them with a place to live and rehearse, doling out spending money, and introducing them to various music industry contacts. Friedman had been present when the fabled meeting took place, and it was to his home that the group adjourned after stopping on the Strip. It was also Friedman who found them their drummer, Walter Milton Dwayne Midkiff, otherwise known as Dewey Martin. Though Martin was, like Young and Palmer, Canadian, he had served a stint in the US Army.

Friedman was working for Byrds' manager Jim Dickson, who also managed the Dillards. It was Dickson who hooked Friedman up with Martin, and with a full slate of electric instruments, just as he had set the Byrds up with instruments and a bass player. Dickson and Friedman would soon become neighbors when Friedman moved from his odd house on Fountain Avenue to a home in, naturally enough, Laurel Canyon. That home, on 8524 Ridpath, would become a rather notorious party house. As Jackson Browne, who Friedman later took under his wing, recalled, "It was always open house at Paul Rothchild's and Barry Friedman's."

Barney Hoskyns writes in *Hotel California* that, "Friedman... orchestrated scenes of sexual and narcotic depravity that soon spun out of control." Among the regular visitors was "a gaggle of girls who mainly lived at Monkee Peter Tork's house"—which was also in Laurel Canyon, where gaggles of young girls were known to cluster around rock stars, sculptors, and mass murderers. Just a few doors down from Friedman, at 8504 Ridpath, lived Billy James, who also played a behind-the-scenes role in the success of the Byrds. A very young Jackson Browne, fresh from the "imposing Browne family home in the tony, old-money neighborhood of Highland Park," lived with James for a year, during which time Friedman worked to build a band around Browne. Toward that

end, he recruited someone else who came from “old-money,” a kid by the name of Ned Doheny.

Curiously, publicist/talent scout James had moved into his Laurel Canyon home in January 1964, a full year before the Byrds recorded the single that started a cultural revolution. Within no time at all, that home would be surrounded by the homes of numerous rock stars. Just another one of those amazing serendipities, I suppose.

Most members of Buffalo Springfield also took up residence in everyone’s favorite secluded canyon. Richie Furay initially moved in with Mark Volman of the Turtles, who already had a place up on Lookout Mountain. After marrying in March of 1967, Furay got his own place on the main thoroughfare, Laurel Canyon Boulevard. Neil Young, ever the recluse, found himself what has been described as a “shack” at 8451 Utica Drive, which was far from actually being a shack. And Stills eventually moved into Peter Tork’s home, which was also on Laurel Canyon Boulevard and which once belonged to actor/comedian Wally Cox, a onetime roommate and close friend of fellow canyonite Marlon Brando. It is unclear whether Palmer and Martin took up residence in the canyon.

The band would prove to have a difficult time keeping their lineup intact. Bruce Palmer had a habit of getting himself arrested on a regular basis, usually on drug charges. Some of those arrests led to deportations, since both he and Young were in the country illegally. He never seems to have had much trouble getting back into the country, however, and not too surprisingly, none of his crimes seem to have actually been prosecuted in any meaningful way. He did though go missing on a fairly regular basis. During the band’s two-year run, Ken Koblun, Jim Fielder (formerly of Zappa’s Mothers of Invention), and Jim Messina all filled in on bass for varying lengths of time. And Doug Hastings filled in for an occasionally absent Neil Young, who had a habit of quitting the band due to ego clashes with the Sarge.

The Springfield’s second single, recorded and mixed on December 5, 1966, and written just a couple weeks earlier, was released locally in December 1966 and nationally in early January 1967. It was the group’s only hit single and it is remembered today as the quintessential protest song of the 1960s. That song, of course, is For What It’s Worth, the opening lines of which kicked off this book. As a protest song, however,

it doesn't quite measure up. Despite what is commonly believed today, the song was not a commentary on anti-war demonstrations. Far from it. The event under consideration was the so-called Riot on the Sunset Strip, which involved about 1,000 kids who were demonstrating against the imposition of a curfew and the announcement that a popular club (Pandora's Box, at 8118 Sunset Boulevard) was slated to be closed.

Pandora's was a small coffee shop that featured poetry readings, folk music, and, with the birth of folk-rock, Laurel Canyon bands like Love and Buffalo Springfield. The crowds drawn to the club caused a bit of a problem though, as Pandora's sat on a traffic island at the intersection of Sunset and Crescent Heights (the gateway to Laurel Canyon) and overflow crowds would frequently spill out onto the boulevard, blocking traffic and endangering pedestrians. Even before the problems began, the building had been scheduled to be demolished as part of a planned road-widening project. Nevertheless, the announcement of its closing sparked a demonstration and on the night of November 12, 1966, 200 cops squared off against an estimated 1,000 kids. The LAPD, being the LAPD, began cracking heads and arresting everyone in sight. Protestors responded by throwing rocks, setting a car ablaze, and attempting to ignite a bus. Just one month later, a song commemorating the event was blaring from car radios across the city. Eight months after that, Pandora's was bulldozed.

Even if the song had been about anti-war protests, it still would be an odd choice for a protest song. Lyrics such as "Singing songs and carrying signs, mostly say hooray for our side," seem to largely dismiss the concerns of protestors. And the line "nobody's right if everybody's wrong" seems to suggest that protestors are no better than that which they are protesting against. Another curious irony about the song is that it was authored by Stephen Stills, an authoritarian, law-and-order kind of guy if ever there was one. Stills himself later heaped derision on the very notion of writing protest songs: "We didn't want to do another song like For What It's Worth. We didn't want to be a protest group. That's really a cop-out and I hate that. To sit there and say, 'I don't like this and I don't like that' is just stupid."

While For What It's Worth is now the best-remembered 'protest' song of the 1960s, the most successful one at the time was Barry McGuire's recording of P.F. Sloan's The Eve Of Destruction, which was

also a curious choice for a protest song, for reasons best explained by Paul Jones of the band Manfred Mann: "I think that Barry McGuire must have been paid by the State Department. The Eve Of Destruction protests about nothing. It is simply a 'Thy Doom at Hand' song with no point."

It is probably safe to say that, to most music fans, there is a world of difference between a band like Buffalo Springfield and a band like the Monkees. That perception, however, is not necessarily accurate. As Unterberger has written, "there was not nearly as much gauche commercialism separating the Monkees and the bold Sunset Strip vanguard as is commonly believed. The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and Barry McGuire might have been landing hit records with social protest both gentle and incendiary, but they were tethered to a corporate media establishment in order to deliver those messages. On television's *Where the Action Is* you could see the Byrds lip-synching The Bells Of Rhymney in front of vacuous, grinning beach bunnies and muscle men cavorting on diving boards and plastic inner tubes. When Buffalo Springfield mimed to For What It's Worth on *The Smothers Brothers Show*, they suffered the insertion of a shot of Tom Smothers pointing a gun at the camera during the line 'there's a man with a gun over there,' to a burst of uproarious canned laughter."

The parallels between the bands actually ran far deeper than their mutual fondness for cheesy television appearances. Stephen Stills, it will be recalled, auditioned to be a Monkee (as did singer/songwriters Harry Nilsson and Paul Williams). Stills and Tork remained close friends and frequently jammed together at various Laurel Canyon gathering spots. Both Tork and fellow Monkee Mickey Dolenz at times joined the Springfield on stage at various local shows. And Stills, Young and Dewey Martin all sat in on Monkees recording sessions.

On July 2, 1967, guitarist extraordinaire Jimi Hendrix played the Whisky and reportedly blew the roof off the place (figuratively speaking, of course). Shortly thereafter, he moved into Peter Tork's house in Laurel Canyon. By the middle of July, Hendrix had joined the Monkees on tour as their opening act. He was dropped after just a few dates, however, due to the fact that Monkees fans couldn't quite wrap their heads around Jimi's brand of music. Throughout the remainder of the summer of 1967, Stephen and Dewey's Malibu home became the site

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

of informal jam sessions involving Stephen Stills, Jimi Hendrix, Buddy Miles, David Crosby, and Peter Tork. All of them ultimately ended up living at Tork's Laurel Canyon spread, which, as previously mentioned, came complete with a gaggle of young groupies who spent an inordinate amount of time lounging around the pool in various states of undress.

Those jam sessions, both in Malibu and Laurel Canyon, were fueled by massive amounts of LSD. According to an anonymous insider interviewed by John Einarson, LSD guru Augustus Owsley Stanley, "used to give Bruce [Palmer] baggies full of acid, a thousand tabs of purple. Somehow he befriended Bruce so we [the band and various hangers-on] never lacked for LSD."

There was yet one more curious tie between the Monkees and the Springfield: while together in Chicago, unnamed members of both bands were allegedly immortalized by the notorious Cynthia Plaster Caster. Our old friend Frank Zappa soon took Cynthia under his wing and relocated her to LA to continue with her important work, just as he had taken the nubile young women who would become the GTOs under his wing. It could reasonably be argued that Zappa did more than anyone to create one of the more peculiar artifacts of the 1960s: the rock'n'roll supergroupie.

The aforementioned Ahmet Ertegun, by the way, played a key role in launching the career of Mr. Zappa, so much so that Frank named one of his sons after him. Meanwhile, Zappa's shady manager, Herb Cohen, "was involved with the [Buffalo Springfield] financially... Stephen knew Herbie from New York," according to Einarson. The Laurel Canyon crowd, to be sure, was a close-knit group—all the more so because so many of them seem to have known one another before arriving there.

Just a couple of weeks before Jimi's Whisky debut, he had dazzled the crowd at the Monterey Pop Festival, where the band currently under review, Buffalo Springfield, had also played—though by most accounts, not very well. Neil Young was taking one of his leaves-of-absence from the band and Doug Hastings filled in on second lead guitar. In addition, Stills brought his buddy David Crosby out on stage to join the band, which by many accounts was a rather poor decision on Stephen's part. According to bassist Bruce Palmer, "Crosby stunk to high heaven. He didn't know what he was doing... he was all ego. He came on for forty minutes and embarrassed us." Guitarist Hastings agreed, explaining



that Crosby's "problem was that he couldn't play rhythm guitar very well, though he thought he could... that was one of the reasons why we sounded so bad at Monterey."

After spending the Summer of Love jamming with members of both Jimi Hendrix's Band of Gypsies and the Monkees, Buffalo Springfield hit the road in November 1967 as the opening act for the Beach Boys, a pairing nearly as odd as the Monkees and Jimi Hendrix. Bruce Palmer, whom we have already learned was not one to mince words, had this to say about the Beach Boys as a performing band: "They were real lousy musicians but they had terrific harmony and a name. They were a studio group. On stage it was like the Monkees. They would spend weeks and months in the studio with Brian Wilson perfecting harmonies and overdubs, but you put them on stage and they stunk."

That Beach Boys/Buffalo Springfield tour included a stop, curiously enough, at West Point Military Academy, which isn't really a regular stop on most rock tours. While on the road, the members of the Springfield formed a close bond with Dennis Wilson, a bond that would be built upon in April of 1968 when the Springfield again went out on tour with the Beach Boys. That tour was launched on April 5, almost two years to the day from the fabled meeting that allegedly forged the band. It was the last major tour the group would undertake. Just after returning from that 1968 tour, Dennis Wilson bonded with another local musician, a guy by the name of Charles Manson. When Dennis introduced his new friend Charlie to his buddies in Buffalo Springfield, Neil Young in particular was quite smitten.

On April 28, the band began playing its last series of local shows. On May 5, at the Long Beach Arena, Buffalo Springfield played together as a band for the last time. They had been scheduled to play two shows that day, the first at a venue in Torrance, but that earlier show never materialized. The band released its third and final album, *Last Time Around*, some three months later. As with albums released nearly simultaneously by the Byrds (*Sweetheart of the Rodeo*) and the International Submarine Band (*Safe at Home*), the Springfield's final album is often cited as being a pioneering effort in the creation of the country-rock genre.

That was just one curious shift that occurred in the local music scene. The folk-rock movement, as it turns out, didn't really last very long in its original incarnation. To the contrary, it quickly splintered into three

distinct new genres: country-rock, psychedelic rock, and the 'introspective singer-songwriter' school of folk-rock most closely associated with former mental patient James Taylor. None of those musical genres, notably, posed much of a threat to the 'establishment.' The navel-gazers eschewed social concerns in favor of focusing on tales of personal anguish, the acid rockers largely preached the mantra of 'turn on, tune in, drop out,' and the country-rockers largely stuck to traditional—which is to say, quite conservative—country music themes.

Following the breakup of Buffalo Springfield, Richie Furay and sometime bassist Jim Messina went on to form the band Poco. Through various formations, the band was critically acclaimed but never had a great deal of commercial success. Jim Messina ultimately left to become half of Loggins and Messina; his replacement, Randy Meisner, went on to become an Eagle. A guy by the name of Gregg Allman, who played briefly with Poco during its formative days, went on to front the Allman Brothers.

Poco debuted at the Troubadour, which served as the breeding ground for the country-rock movement, in November 1968. The band's first album, *Pickin' Up the Pieces*, hit the shelves six months later, not long after the release of the debut album by country-rock rivals the Flying Burrito Brothers, formed by former Byrds Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman. Byrd David Crosby, meanwhile, teamed up with Springfield's Stephen Stills and ex-Hollie Graham Nash (who had arrived in Laurel Canyon in December 1968 and quickly found lodging in Joni Mitchell's canyon home) to form a band first known as the Frozen Noses, a name inspired by the trio's fondness for cocaine.

By the late 1960s, the drug that would eventually become the drug of choice of the disco crowd had already begun pouring into Laurel Canyon. As glam-rocker Michael Des Barres recalled, "Every drug dealer was in Laurel Canyon." Along with the drugs came lots of guns and huge piles of cash. Before long, according to Laurel Canyon chronicler Michael Walker, "cocaine became a pseudo-currency, like cigarettes in prison." A decade later, the world would catch a glimpse of that dark canyon undercurrent when four battered bodies were bagged and removed from a house on Wonderland Avenue... but we've already covered that.

The newest Laurel Canyon band was quickly renamed Crosby, Stills & Nash, and by the summer of 1969 they had the top-selling album in the

country. That disc would remain on the charts for an unprecedented two years. When the band got ready to hit the road though, there was a little problem; given that Stills was the only serious musician in the band, and it was he who had played virtually all the instruments on that debut album, it was going to be difficult, as Barney Hoskyns noted, “to translate their layered studio sound to the stage.” The solution was, as Einarson has written, to bring Neil Young on board, “to provide more umph to their live sets.” And so it was that by the end of the year, CSN had become CSNY.

Now the band just needed a rhythm section. Dallas Taylor, who had played on sessions for the first album, was recruited as a drummer. Stills and Young summoned Bruce Palmer to come down from Canada to handle bass duties. According to Palmer, however, that didn’t work out, primarily because once he got to LA and “started rehearsing at Stephen’s house with Crosby and Nash, it became real evident that they were nothing but backup singers. They didn’t like it and decided to change it. They couldn’t take that; they thought they were too big, too famous, too talented. They weren’t talented, they were backup singers... It looked to them as if it was Crosby and Nash backing up Buffalo Springfield, being nothing more than harmony singers for Stephen, Neil, myself, and Dallas Taylor.”

According to Palmer, the first CSN album was “ninety-five percent Stephen doing everything and he’s got his backup singer boys with him.” Considering that Stills composed the majority of the material, played most of the instruments, and produced and arranged the album, Palmer’s assessment seems a reasonable one. In any event, CSNY didn’t last too long, dissolving after their 1970 tour. Stills next recruited the ubiquitous Chris Hillman to form Manassas, which also proved to be short-lived. Not long after, David Geffen teamed Hillman with Richie Furay and J.D. Souther to create a failed clone of Crosby, Stills & Nash.

The real CSN was not the only new Laurel Canyon band to release a debut album in 1969. Three Dog Night, mentored and first recorded by Beach Boy Brian Wilson, released their self-titled debut in January, and in June, a psychedelic rock band from the LC issued its first LP. Throughout 1968, the band, then known as Nazz, had been a regular presence on the Sunset Strip, where they gained a reputation for being heavy on the theatrics but light on the musicianship. The band was fronted

by Vincent Furnier, the boyfriend of Miss Christine of the GTOs. Miss Pamela, aka Pamela Des Barres, described Furnier as “a rich kid from Phoenix.” A staunch supporter of the war in Vietnam, Vince would later become a golf partner of notoriously conservative Senator Barry Goldwater.

Furnier would soon change his own name and the name of his band to Alice Cooper, after deciding that he was the reincarnation of a witch who purportedly lived in the seventeenth century. Frank Zappa signed the band, whose debut album, *Pretties For You*, was the first release on Zappa’s Straight label. After transforming into a shock-rock band, the group would hit it big a few years later with the release of *School’s Out*.

Cooper had a curious connection to another rather eccentric canyon character, Mr. Brian Wilson. In later years, both Cooper and Wilson would receive wildly controversial psychiatric treatment from a certain Eugene Landy, who took complete control of Wilson’s life for an entire decade. Another star client of Landy’s was Academy Award winning actor Gig Young. On October 19, 1978, Young and his fifth wife, Kim Schmidt, were found shot through the head in their New York City apartment. The sixty-four-year-old Young—raised, as would be expected, in Washington, DC—had just married the young art gallery worker three weeks earlier. There was no note found and no one close to the pair could come up with a motive for either to commit suicide, so the incident naturally was written off as a murder/suicide. Young had just taped an episode of the Joe Franklin television show that day and he presumably had given no indication that anything was amiss. The show never aired.

As for the original members of Buffalo Springfield, Stephen Stills and Neil Young are still known to perform at times. Richie Furay founded the Cavalry Chapel near Boulder, Colorado, and for quite some time served there as senior pastor. Bruce Palmer died of a heart attack on October 1, 2004. And Dewey Martin was found dead by his roommate on February 1, 2009. He had been living in a nondescript apartment in Van Nuys, California.

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### **ALTAMONT PIE GRAM PARSONS**

**“No one could recall ever seeing or hearing about Gram being involved in a protest of any sort.”** Author Ben Fong Torres, who interviewed scores of people close to Gram Parsons while researching Hickory Wind

LET’S BEGIN WITH THE OBVIOUS: GRAM PARSONS WAS FAR FROM BEING THE biggest star to emerge from the Laurel Canyon scene. In his short lifetime, he failed to achieve any significant level of commercial success. None of his albums, whether recorded solo or with the International Submarine Band, the Byrds, or the Flying Burrito Brothers, climbed very high on the sales charts. But to many fans and musicians alike, he is considered a hugely influential and tragically overlooked figure.

It is safe to say that Parsons does not have nearly the number of fans that David Crosby or Frank Zappa have, and compared to contemporaries who died during the same era and at roughly the same age—legendary artists like Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix—Parsons is all but unknown. His life story, nevertheless, is a fascinating one, primarily because it contains all the classic Laurel Canyon elements: the royal bloodlines, the not-so-well-hidden intelligence connections, the occult overtones, the extravagantly wealthy family background, an incinerated

house or two, and, of course, a whole lot of curious deaths.

We begin back about 1,000 years ago, with Ferdinand the Great, the first King of Castille on the Iberian Peninsula. It is to him that the wealthy Connor family claims their family lineage can be traced. Also in the family tree was King Edward II of England, son of Edward I and Eleanor of Castille. According to some sources, Eddie II was murdered by having a red-hot iron rod shoved up his rectum, though most of his loyal subjects probably didn't shed many tears for the hated ruler. Bringing the royal bloodline to America was one Colonel George Reade, born in the UK in 1608 and married in Yorktown, Pennsylvania, sometime thereafter.

Reade's offspring would ultimately spawn Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr., a well-to-do gent who settled in Columbia, Tennessee. Like his father before him, Cecil attended Columbia Military Academy. In May 1940, at the outset of WWII, he enlisted in the US Army Air Force as a Second Lieutenant. In March of 1941, Cecil, who during the war would become known as "Coon Dog" (though no one seems to remember why), was shipped off to Hawaii. Nine months later, Pearl Harbor came under attack by Japanese bombers.

Not to worry though—Cecil was never in harm's way, having opted to forgo living in officer's quarters on the military base in favor of staying at a luxurious, massive estate near Diamond Head owned by wealthy heiress Barbara Hutton. Hutton, for the record, was the granddaughter of Frank Woolworth, the founder of the Woolworth's five-and-dime store chain. She was also the daughter of Franklyn Laws Hutton, co-founder of E.F. Hutton, one of the nation's most prestigious brokerage firms until it ran afoul of the law for such crimes as check kiting, money laundering and mail fraud. Barbara was also the niece of Marjory Post Hutton, the daughter of C.W. Post, founder of what would become General Foods.

Like so many of the other characters who have populated this story, Barbara was traumatized in childhood by the alleged suicide of a parent. According to news reports, it was five-year-old Barbara who discovered her mother Edna's lifeless body in May of 1917. An empty bottle of strychnine was reportedly recovered by police from a nearby bathroom. There was no autopsy performed and no official inquest was ever conducted, as would be expected when an extremely wealthy person dies under questionable circumstances (see, for example, the Ned Doheny story).



In 1930, just after the onset of the Great Depression, Barbara was thrown a lavish debutante ball attended by those at the very top of the food chain, including members of the Astor and Rockefeller families. The next year, she inherited a fortune estimated to be worth the equivalent of \$1 billion today. She was just nineteen at the time. Two years later, she received further inheritance that raised her net worth to an estimated \$2–2.5 billion in today's money. Much of the rest of the country was busily wallowing in abject poverty.

Ms. Hutton lived a very troubled life, with numerous failed marriages and relationships. One of her many paramours was a gentleman by the name of Phillip van Rensselaer, who later penned a book about her life which he entitled *Million Dollar Baby*. Van Rensselaer, it will be recalled, was an ancestor of Laurel Canyon's own David Crosby—the man whom Gram Parsons would briefly replace in the Byrds. And that, conveniently enough, brings us back to the subject of this chapter.

As WWII dragged on, Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr. worked his way up the chain of command to the rank of Major. Deployed in the Pacific theater of operations, he was a decorated hero and a squadron commander who flew numerous combat missions. After the war, he continued to serve in the Air Force at a base in Bartow, Florida, very near the Snively family home in Winter Haven. The Snively clan had first come to America circa 1700, about a century after the arrival of the guy who spawned the Connor clan. According to historical records and genealogical charts, Johann Jacob Schnebele, a Swiss Mennonite, was born in 1659. When in his late fifties, around 1715 or shortly thereafter, he ventured across the Atlantic and settled near Cornwall, Pennsylvania. Johann died and was buried in 1743 near Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Brought over with him to America was his son Jacob, born on the winter solstice of 1694, and his daughter Maria, born in 1702. In 1724, in Mannheim, Pennsylvania, Maria Schnebele married the son of immigrants Hans Hersche and Anna Geunder. That son had Americanized his name and become known as Andrew Hershey. The Schnebele name was likewise Americanized to Snavelly (or Snively). The Hershey and Snavelly clans would continue to happily intermarry, ultimately producing, in 1857, Milton Snavelly Hershey, the son of Henry Hershey and Fanny Snavelly.

Milton S. Hershey, of course, would go on to found the world's larg-

est producer of chocolate confections. Less well known is that Hershey failed miserably in his first several attempts to launch a candy company, first in Philadelphia, then in Chicago, and finally in New York City. All of those ventures were financed with Snively/Snavely family money. Hershey ultimately succeeded in launching the successful Lancaster Caramel Company in 1883. In 1900, he sold the caramel company to focus exclusively on chocolate confections. With proceeds from that sale, he purchased 40,000 acres of undeveloped land and built not only the world's largest chocolate facility, but an entire company town as well.

As for Maria's brother, Jacob Schnebele, he died in August of 1766 in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, but not before fathering an astounding nineteen children. One of those was son Andrew, who himself fathered fourteen kids. From that branch of the family tree would emerge John Andrew "Papa John" Snively, who headed off to Florida in the early 1900s to seek his fortune. By the 1950s, Snively Groves was the largest shipper of fresh fruit in the state of Florida.

Avis Snively, who exchanged vows with Ingram Cecil Connor, Jr. on March 22, 1945, was the daughter of Papa John. On November 5, 1946, Coon Dog and Avis gave birth to their first child and only son, Ingram Cecil Connor III, later known as Gram Parsons. Soon after, the family relocated to Waycross, Georgia, where, as with Winter Haven, the Snively family owned a massive amount of land devoted to citrus fruit production. It was there that young Ingram "Gram" Connor was raised.

The Connor family home in Waycross, as would be expected, was large and luxurious and there were numerous servants in attendance, all of whom had considerably more skin pigmentation than did the Connors. Coon Dog and Avis entertained frequently and both were well known to be heavy drinkers; there were hushed rumors that they were 'swingers' as well. As Gram's younger sister, known as Little Avis, would later recall, "Things were mighty strange around the house."

In September of 1957, when Gram was not yet eleven, he was sent off to attend the Bowles School, a combination prep school and military academy in Jacksonville, Florida. While attending Bowles, he became a member of the Centurions, the school's version of an elite fraternity. The following year, just before Christmas 1958, Ingram Cecil "Coon Dog" Connor, Jr. was found sprawled across his bed in the family home, a bullet hole in his right temple. A .38-caliber handgun was found near-

by. There was no note to be found. Cecil's brother Tom had visited just the month before, around Thanksgiving, and Coon Dog had told him that he'd never been happier and that life with Avis was wonderful. Curiously, his death was initially ruled to be accidental but the cause of death was later changed to suicide.

Just ten months before Cecil's death, Papa John Snively, Avis' dad, had also died, so she suddenly found herself with both of the men in her life gone. And yet, according to a family member, she never appeared to grieve and she displayed a "total lack of remorse" over anything she may have done to drive Coon Dog to allegedly commit suicide (by some reports, she had been having an affair). Some six months after Cecil's death, Avis, Gram and Little Avis boarded a train for a cross-country trip. They were gone the entire summer. Not long after returning, the family moved from the house that Cecil had died in and Avis soon met Robert Ellis Parsons, who owned a business that ostensibly specialized in leasing heavy construction equipment. Parsons' clients, curiously enough, happened to be in Cuba, then under the brutal hand of Batista, and in various South American countries that were also under the thumb of US-installed dictators

The Snively clan took an immediate dislike to Parsons, who was described by one family member as a "greedy son of a bitch." Nevertheless, Avis quickly married him and Bob Parsons quickly took control of her life. One of his first moves was to adopt Gram and Avis, even going so far as to have new birth certificates drawn up listing him as their biological father (though it remains unclear exactly how he could have done that). He also promptly impregnated Avis and convinced her to file a \$1.5 million lawsuit against her brother, John, Jr., and her sister, Evalyn. The suit was settled out of court with Avis receiving an unspecified number of citrus groves, but the real repercussions would be felt some fifteen years later with the bankruptcy of much of the family business in 1974.

In 1960, just a year after marrying, Bob and Avis added daughter Diane to the family. Also added was eighteen-year-old babysitter Bonnie, whom Bob immediately began an affair with, which apparently was not a very well-kept secret. What was a somewhat better kept secret is that, in the early 1960s, following the Cuban revolution, Robert Ellis Parsons became involved in what was referred to as the 'Cuban cause,' which

is to say that he had very close ties to the leaders of an exile group that was being trained in Polk County, Florida, to overthrow the Cuban government. On at least one occasion, he brought young Gram along to visit the group's training camp. As luck would have it, a team from *Life* magazine happened to also be there that day and Gram was photographed at the camp. When Avis was informed of that development, she worked quickly to insure that those photos were never published. To this day, they have never surfaced.

During that same era, Bob Parsons converted a downtown warehouse that he owned into a teen nightclub to showcase the talents of his 'son,' Ingram "Gram" Parsons, who sang and played keyboards and the guitar. Circa 1963, Gram got a folk combo together that was known as the Shilos. During the summer of 1964, the summer before Gram's senior year of high school, the band spent a month in New York. During that brief time, Parsons, as fate would have it, met and bonded with Brandon DeWilde, Richie Furay, and John Phillips. He would meet up with all three again a couple years later in Laurel Canyon.

Despite having expressed an early preference for Annapolis or West Point, Gram applied to Harvard and Johns Hopkins. And despite decidedly unimpressive grades and test scores, he was accepted by Harvard, purportedly due to an essay he submitted that he likely didn't actually write. During his last year of high school, Gram and the Shilos booked an hour-long gig at the campus radio station at, of all places, Bob Jones University. At his high school graduation in June of 1965, Gram was in his cap and gown and all set to proceed with the ceremonies when he was pulled aside and informed that his mother Avis had suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. Seemingly unaffected by the news, he chose to participate in the ceremonies. A classmate and friend has said that there was no sign that anything was troubling Gram that day as he went through the graduation rituals.

Avis had died in the hospital, reportedly of alcohol poisoning, right after Bob Parsons had smuggled her in a bottle of scotch. Gram's mother was just forty-two at the time of her death. His father, Coon Dog, had only made it to the age of forty-one. Neither of their kids, Gram or Little Avis, would make it even that far.

Soon after his mother's death, Gram received a draft notice from the Selective Service. Not to worry though—Bob quickly got him a 4-F

deferment and Gram happily went off to Harvard, enrolling in September of 1965. By February of 1966, just five months later, Gram had had enough of Harvard and he withdrew. According to some sources, he never really attended school at all, but rather spent all his time taking in the folk music scene in Cambridge and putting his own band together. Gram arrived at Harvard a few years too late to catch that scene at its peak. In the early 1960s, the college town had been one of the cradles of the resurgent folk movement, hosting such luminaries as Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Bob Neuwirth, Tom Rush, Pete Seeger, Richard and Mimi Fariña, Geoff and Maria Muldaur, Eric Andersen and Joni Mitchell.

The epicenter of the Cambridge folk scene was the legendary Club 47, opened in 1958 as a jazz and blues venue. A very young Joan Baez, whose reputedly CIA-connected father worked at nearby MIT, was the first folkie to take the stage, not long after the club opened. Dylan reportedly first performed there in 1961, taking the stage between the billed acts. The scene hit its peak in the summer of 1962, which was the Cambridge equivalent of the Haight's Summer of Love. The Cambridge scene, and others in Greenwich Village and elsewhere, were necessary precursors to the Laurel Canyon scene, which was essentially created by taking the music of that earlier scene, particularly the work of Dylan and Seeger, and mixing it with the instrumentation being utilized across the pond by a band known as the Beatles. It is entirely fitting then that, as with Laurel Canyon, the Cambridge scene came complete with its own resident psycho killer.

In addition to the folk scene hitting its peak in the summer of 1962, something else newsworthy happened in Cambridge that summer: a lot of women started turning up dead—six of them in that first summer alone, and seven more over the next couple of years. And as Susan Kelly noted in *The Boston Stranglers*, one of those victims was killed right across the street from Club 47: “Just across the street from [victim Beverly Samans'] apartment, a very young and not yet famous Joan Baez and an equally youthful and unknown Bob Dylan were playing to reverently hushed audiences at the Club 47.”

As the title of Kelly's book implies, there actually was no such person as the Boston Strangler, but that didn't stop authorities and the media from pinning all the murders on one Albert DeSalvo, far better known as the Boston Strangler. Just as Laurel Canyon would have Charles Man-

son as its unofficial mascot, the earlier scene in Cambridge had Albert DeSalvo. Cambridge had something else that Laurel Canyon would later have—Paul Rothchild, who worked at Club 47 and went on to produce the Doors.

Folkie Richard Fariña, by the way, was the husband of Mimi Baez, Joan's younger sister. Fariña had attended Cornell University as an engineering major. Cornell also happened to be where Joan and Mimi's dad, Albert Baez, conducted classified research. Albert Baez tended to move around a lot, popping up for varying periods of time at Stanford, UC Berkeley, Cornell, and MIT, all of which have been revealed through declassified documents as hotbeds of MK-ULTRA research. Albert Baez also traveled abroad, to France, Switzerland, and, in 1951, to Baghdad, Iraq, where he spent a year purportedly teaching physics and building a physics laboratory at the University of Baghdad. Nineteen-fifty-one also happened to be the year that Mossadegh was duly elected in neighboring Iran and the CIA immediately began planning a coup to oust him, but I'm sure that that is just a coincidence.

Anyway, Fariña married Mimi when he was twenty-six and she was just seventeen. The two of them, along with Joan, became stars of the Cambridge folk music scene, which they were introduced to when Albert Baez moved the family to Boston in 1958 when he went to work at MIT. Richard and Mimi's marriage was a short one, alas, as Richard Fariña was killed in a motorcycle accident in Carmel, California, on, of all days, April 30, 1966. On that very same day, in nearby San Francisco, Anton Szandor LaVey declared it to be the dawn of the Age of Satan.

But perhaps I've gotten sidetracked here...

During Gram's brief time at Harvard, he began gathering together what would become the International Submarine Band. When he dropped out in early 1966, he and his new bandmates moved to the Bronx in New York, where Gram rented an eleven-room party house where marijuana and LSD flowed freely. One unofficial member of his band was child-actor-turned-aspiring-musician Brandon DeWilde, known in the 1950s as "the king of child actors." Parsons and DeWilde worked together on demo tapes during their time in New York.

In November/December 1966, nine months after leaving Harvard for New York, Gram ventured out to California. While there he met a certain Nancy Ross, who at the time was living with David Crosby. In Ben



Fong-Torres' *Hickory Wind*, Ross provides some interesting biographical details: "I grew up with David Crosby here in town... I was thirteen when we met. David and I were part of the debutante set... My father was a captain in the Royal Air Force of England... I married Eleanor Roosevelt's grandson, Rex, at sixteen, seventeen. I was still married to Rex when I was with David... The marriage lasted a couple of years. I got an apartment and started designing restaurants for Elmer Valentine of Whiskya-Go-Go."

At age nineteen, Ross went with Crosby "up to his little bachelor apartment, where I drew pentagrams on the wall." Soon after, Crosby bought a house on Beverly Glen and Ross moved in with him. That is where Gram Parsons found Nancy Ross and stole her away from David Crosby: "Brandon DeWilde, who was a good friend of David's and Peter Fonda's, brought Gram up to our Beverly Glen house one Christmas time." According to Nancy, Gram quickly stole her heart. Shortly after, in early 1967, Parsons permanently relocated to Los Angeles with his band in tow. According to Fong-Torres, Gram—who received up to \$100,000 a year from his trust fund, a considerable amount of money in the mid-1960s—"found a house for the rest of the band on Willow Glen Avenue, off Laurel Canyon Boulevard and just north of Sunset." He and Nancy found an apartment together nearby.

Meanwhile, back home, Bob Parsons had married Bonnie shortly after the death of Avis, and the newlywed couple had then moved with Little Avis and Diane to New Orleans. Back in Waycross, the Connor family home that had been abandoned after Coon Dog's alleged suicide had been occupied since 1960 by the family of Sheriff Robert E. Lee (and no, I'm not making that up). In late 1968, on the eve of the election that put Richard Nixon in the White House, the stately home exploded from within and caught fire. The cause of the explosion was never determined.

Once ensconced in the hills above Los Angeles, Gram Parsons and his band began recording what would prove to be their only album, *Safe at Home*, which some pop music historians regard as the first country-rock album, but others regard as a straight country album performed by guys who look like they should be playing in a rock band. Whatever the case, by the time the album was released, in 1968, Gram had disbanded the International Submarine Band and unofficially joined the Byrds, replac-

ing the recently departed David Crosby, who had determined that there just wasn't quite room in the band for both he and his ego.

Parsons' time with the Byrds was rather brief, just four to five months, after which he was replaced by virtuoso guitarist Clarence White, who had been part of the Cambridge folk scene. Despite his brief tenure, Parsons is credited with having a major influence on the album that the band produced during that period, *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. Soon after leaving the Byrds, Parsons ran into Richie Furay, who was casting about for a new band after the breakup of Buffalo Springfield. Gram and Furay considered working together but quickly realized that they wanted to go in different musical directions, so Furay went to work putting Poco together while Parsons assembled the Flying Burrito Brothers. By 1969, Gram's new band had taken shape, with Gram supplying lead vocals and guitar, Chris Hillman also on guitar, Chris Etheridge on bass, and "Sneaky Pete" Kleinow on pedal steel guitar. With various other local musicians sitting in, the band recorded and released *The Gilded Palace of Sin*. Byrd Michael Clarke would later join the band, as would soon-to-be-Eagle Bernie Leadon.

Also in 1969, late in the year, twenty-three-year-old Gram hooked up with sixteen-year-old Gretchen Burrell. His new love interest was the daughter of high-profile news anchor Larry Burrell, who was very well-connected in Hollywood. Before long, Gretchen had moved into Parsons' place at the notorious Chateau Marmont Hotel, with her parents' blessings—because most wealthy parents, I would think, want their teenage daughter living in a debauched rock star's drug den. Another guest at the hotel at that same time, incidentally, was Rod Stewart, at whose home one of the victims of the so-called Sunset Strip Killers would later be last seen.

At the tail end of 1969, Parsons and his fellow Burrito Brothers had the dubious distinction of playing as one of the opening acts at the Rolling Stones' infamous free show at Altamont Speedway. Gram had become a very close confidant of the Stones, particularly Keith Richards, and he would later be credited with being the inspiration for the country flavor evident on the Stones' *Let it Bleed* album.

Parsons had first met up with the Stones when they were in Los Angeles in the summer of 1968 to mix their *Beggar's Banquet* album. Also hooking up with the Stones around that same time was Phil Kaufman,

who once boasted that he had slept with every one of the convicted murderesses in the Manson Family. Kaufman initially lived with Charlie and his girls after being released from prison in March of 1968, and he thereafter remained what Kaufman himself described as a “sympathetic cousin” to Manson. He also went to work as the Rolling Stones’ road manager for their 1969 American tour, which is the type of job apparently best filled by ex-convict friends of Charles Manson.

In late summer of 1969, following the curious death of Brian Jones in July, the Stones were back in LA to complete their *Let It Bleed* album and prepare for yet another tour. According to Ben Fong-Torres, writing in *Hickory Wind*, “Mick and Keith stayed at Stephen Stills’ house near Laurel Canyon... Before Stills, the house had been occupied by Peter Tork of the Monkees.” For the record, other reports hold that that house was in, not near, Laurel Canyon.

On December 6, 1969, temporary Laurel Canyon residents Mick and Keith, along with permanent Laurel Canyon residents Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and the Flying Burrito Brothers, all gathered at a desolate speedway known as Altamont to stage a free concert. By the time it was over, four people were dead and another 850 concertgoers were injured to varying degrees, mostly by members of the Hell’s Angels swinging leaded pool cues. The Angels had, of course, been hired by the Stones to ostensibly provide security. That decision is almost universally cast as an innocent mistake on the part of the band, though such a claim is difficult to believe. It was certainly no secret that the reactionary motorcycle clubs, formed by former military men, were openly hostile to hippies and anti-war activists; as early as 1965, they had brutally attacked peaceful anti-war demonstrators while police, who had courteously allowed the Angels to pass through their line, looked on. It was also known that the Angels were heavily involved in trafficking meth, a drug that was widely blamed for the ugliness that had descended over the Haight.

Perhaps less well known was that more than a few of the biker gangs of the 1960s had uncomfortably close ties to Charlie Manson, particularly a club known as the Straight Satans, one of whose members, Danny DeCarlo, served as the Family’s sergeant-at-arms, watching over Charlie’s arsenal of weapons. DeCarlo also, by some reports, had close ties to the Process. At least one of the performers taking the stage at

Altamont, curiously enough, also had close ties to some of the outlaw biker gangs; as was revealed in his autobiography, Crosby “had friends in every Bay Area chapter of the Hell’s Angels.”

The death that the concert at Altamont will always be remembered for is that of Meredith Hunter, the young man who was stabbed to death by members of the Hell’s Angels right in front of the stage while the band (in this case, the Rolling Stones) played on. The song they were playing, contrary to most accounts of the incident, was the Process-inspired Sympathy For The Devil, as was initially reported in *Rolling Stone* based on the accounts of several reporters on the scene and a review of the unedited film stock.

Most accounts claim that Hunter was killed while the band performed Under My Thumb, but all such claims appear to be based on the mainstream snuff film *Gimme Shelter*, in which the killing was deliberately presented out of sequence. In the absence of any alternative filmic versions of Hunter’s death, the Maysles brothers’ film became the default official orthodoxy. Not well known is that someone went to great lengths to insure that there would be only one available version of events; as *Rolling Stone* reported, shortly after the concert, “One weird Altamont story has to do with a young Berkeley filmmaker who claims to have gotten 8MM footage of the killing. He got home from the affair Saturday and began telling his friends about his amazing film. His house was knocked over the next night, completely rifled. The thief took only his film, nothing else.”

Contrary to the impression created by *Gimme Shelter*, Hunter was killed not long into the Stones’ set. But as the film’s editor, Charlotte Zwerin, explained to Salon.com some thirty years later, the climax of the movie always has to come at the end: “We’re talking about the structure of a film. And what kind of concert film are you going to be able to have after somebody has been murdered in front of the stage? Hanging around for another hour would have been really wrong in terms of the film.” What wasn’t wrong, apparently, was deliberately altering the sequence of events in what was ostensibly a documentary film.

One of the young cameramen working for the Maysles brothers that day, as it turns out, was a guy by the name of George Lucas. (It is unclear whether it was Lucas who captured the conveniently unobstructed footage of the murder.) Not long after, Lucas would begin a meteoric rise to

the very top of the Hollywood food chain. He would be joined there by another film director by the name of Steven Spielberg; the two of them would emerge as arguably the most critically acclaimed and influential filmmakers of their generation. Just as the second wave of Laurel Canyon bands, with names like the Eagles and CSN, would transform the music industry from a community of artists into a vast money-making machine—ushering in the era of stadium concerts, multi-million selling albums and unprecedented profits—Spielberg and Lucas would perform a similar trick with the film business, producing blockbusters like *ET*, *Raiders of the Lost Arc*, *Jaws* and *Star Wars*. It seems perfectly natural then that in the mid- to late-1960s, USC film student Spielberg was living on Lookout Mountain in Laurel Canyon.

Many of the accounts of the tragedy at Altamont include the dubious claim that Hunter can unmistakably be seen drawing a gun just before being jumped and killed by the Angels. Some accounts even have Hunter firing the alleged gun. What can certainly be fairly clearly seen is the large knife being brought down into Hunter's back, but the footage is ambiguous at best as far as Hunter allegedly brandishing a gun. The Angel who was charged with the murder and then ultimately acquitted, Alan David Passaro, was found floating facedown in a reservoir in March of 1985 with \$10,000 in his pocket. Despite a widespread belief to the contrary, Passaro's acquittal was not based on the jury having been convinced that Hunter had drawn a gun, but rather on the fact that the knife wounds that killed Hunter were apparently upstrokes, which meant that they were not the wounds inflicted on-camera by Passaro; someone else continued to stab Hunter after he was down, and it was those wounds, which the cameras didn't clearly record, that killed him.

About one year after Altamont, otherwise obscure singer/songwriter Don McLean penned the lyrics to what was destined to become one of the most iconic songs in the annals of popular music: American Pie. Those lyrics are essentially a chronological recitation of various tragedies that shaped the world of popular music. Not long after a reference to the August 1969 Manson murders and their connection to the Laurel Canyon music scene, and just before a reference to the October 1970 death of Janis Joplin, can be found the following verse in which McLean characterized the death of Hunter as a ritualized murder, with Mick Jagger in the role of Satan:

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

“And there we were, all in one place, a generation Lost in Space / With no time left to start again / So, come on, Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack Flash sat on a Candlestick, 'cause... / Fire is the Devil's only friend / Oh, and as I watched him on the stage, my hands were clenched in fists of rage / No angel born in hell, could break that Satan's spell / And as the flames climbed high into the night, to light the sacrificial rite / I saw Satan laughing with delight, the day the music died.”

As was the custom with big events in the mid- to late-1960s, particularly in the northern California area, Altamont was drenched in acid. And as was also the custom at that time, that acid was provided free-of-charge by Mr. Augustus Owsley Stanley III, also known as The Bear. At the so-called “Human Be-In” staged in January of 1967, for example, Owsley had kindly distributed 10,000 tabs of potent LSD. For the Monterey Pop Festival just five months later, he had cooked up and distributed 14,000 tabs. For Altamont, he did likewise. Also present that day, and featured in the Maysles brothers' film gyrating atop a raised platform near the stage, was the King of the Freaks himself, Vito Paulekas.

Along with Mick and the boys, Gram Parsons made a hasty exit from the chaos at Altamont via the Stones' private helicopter. The next year, his Flying Burrito Brothers released their second album, *Burrito Deluxe*, which was produced by Jim Dickson, the man who had played such a pivotal role in shaping Laurel Canyon's first band, the Byrds. By June, Parsons had been booted out of the band, reportedly due to chronic alcohol and drug abuse. He quickly signed with A&M Records and was partnered with Terry Melcher. Gram soon became a regular visitor to Melcher's Benedict Canyon home, where the self-destructive pair worked on songs together, with Gram on guitar and Melcher on piano. John Phillips became a close associate of Parsons at that time as well.

Meanwhile, sister Avis had been institutionalized back in New Orleans. She had gotten pregnant, after which Bob Parsons had moved quickly to have her committed and to have her marriage annulled. Little Avis reached out repeatedly to big brother Gram for help, but got none.

In late October of 1970, Gram went to A&M and signed out the master tapes of ten songs that he had recorded with Melcher; those tapes were never seen or heard again, as seems to happen from time-to-time



with recordings made with Melcher. During roughly that same period of time, Parsons was busted with a briefcase full of prescription drugs. As would be expected, however, the charges were quietly dropped and Gram walked away unscathed.

In 1971, Gram married Gretchen Burrell. The lavish affair was held, curiously enough, at the New Orleans home of step-dad Bob Parsons, a fact that has left Gram's chroniclers somewhat puzzled. Bob Parsons was, after all, the man who had—at least in the eyes of many family members—terrorized and institutionalized Gram's younger sister, carried on a scandalous affair with the family's babysitter, murdered Gram's mother and subsequently married that babysitter, and repeatedly looted the family coffers. And yet it was Bob Parsons, of all people, who Gram trusted to host his wedding, suggesting a bond between the two that would seem to defy conventional explanations.

That same year, Gram spent some time in France, hanging out once again with the Rolling Stones. The following year he was signed to Reprise Records by Mo Ostin and he and Gretchen moved back into the Chateau Marmont, where Gram and Emmylou Harris, who had been raised on various military bases in Virginia, began working on the songs that would make up his first solo album. In 1973, with that first solo album, entitled simply *GP*, due for release, "Gram and Gretchen finally moved out of the Chateau Marmont and found a cozy brown wood-shingled house on Laurel Canyon Boulevard, which wound its way north from Hollywood through the stars' favorite canyon," as recounted by Fong-Torres.

Together again with Emmylou, Gram began working on tracks for what would be his posthumously released second solo album, *Grievous Angel*. But as July of 1973 rolled around, a series of tragedies befell Parsons and the people around him. In July of the previous year, Gram's friend Brandon DeWilde—who had introduced Gram to Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, Bruce Dern and Jack Nicholson, resulting in Gram's involvement in *The Trip*—had been killed in a traffic accident. A year later, on July 15, 1973, Gram's friend and fellow musician, Clarence White, was hit by a car and killed. According to Fong-Torres, "Around the same time that Clarence White was killed, Sid Kaiser, a familiar face in the Los Angeles rock scene, a close friend of Gram's and, not so incidentally, a source of high-quality drugs, died of a heart attack." Just

after those two deaths, “In late July 1973... [Gram’s] house in Laurel Canyon burned down.”

Other sources, for the record, have placed that house in Topanga Canyon rather than Laurel Canyon. Whatever the case, Gram was home when the house caught fire and he was briefly hospitalized for smoke inhalation. Having lost their home and all their possessions, Gram and Gretchen “moved into Gretchen’s father’s spacious home on Mulholland Drive in Laurel Canyon.” Gram wouldn’t live in the Burrell estate long though; on September 19, 1973, Ingram Cecil Connor III died in a nondescript room at the Joshua Tree Inn. His death is usually attributed to a drug overdose, but toxicology reports suggest otherwise. Parsons’ death received minimal press coverage, partly because, as fate would have it, singer/songwriter Jim Croce went down in a blaze of glory the very next day, on September 20, 1973. But though the media had moved on, the Gram Parsons story wasn’t quite over yet.

Parsons had been a regular visitor to Joshua Tree National Park, where one of his favorite pastimes was said to be ingesting hallucinogenic drugs and then searching for UFOs. Sometimes he would take friends like Keith Richards along with him to help with the search. In September of 1973, Gram was accompanied to Joshua Tree by his personal assistant, Michael Martin, Martin’s girlfriend, Dale McElroy, and Parsons’ former high school sweetheart, Margaret Fisher. As the story goes, the group soon ran out of pot and quickly dispatched Martin back to LA to pick up a fresh supply. He was, therefore, officially not there at the time of Gram’s death, though why he hadn’t returned has never been explained, especially given that his job was, specifically, to keep an eye on Gram and monitor his drug intake.

How Gram Parsons died is anyone’s guess. There are as many versions of the event as there were witnesses to it. Actually, that’s not quite true—there are *more* versions than there were witnesses, because some of those witnesses have told more than one story. Officially, Parsons died of an overdose, but forensic testing revealed no morphine or barbiturates in his blood. Morphine showed up in his liver and urine, but as experts have noted, those toxicology results indicate chronic, but not recent, use. Police seem to have had little interest in getting at the truth and made no apparent effort to reconcile the various conflicting accounts. Details of the incident—such as how long Gram had

been left alone, whether he was still alive when discovered, who made that discovery, etc.—were wildly inconsistent in the accounts of Fisher, McElroy, and Frank and Alan Barbary (the Inn’s owner and his son). The Barbarys’ accounts conflicted both with each other and with the girls’ accounts.

At the hospital, police spoke briefly with the two girls and then released them. Within two hours, Phil Kaufman was on the scene to pick up Fisher and McElroy. Bypassing the police and the hospital, Kaufman went directly to the Inn, which the girls had returned to, and quickly hustled them straight back to LA. Police never spoke to either of the women again, despite the conflicting accounts and the open question of what exactly it was that killed Gram.

On the autumnal equinox of 1973, Kaufman and Martin, driving a dilapidated hearse provided by McElroy, arrived at LAX to claim the body of Gram Parsons. If this story is to be believed, then nobody, including the police officer who was nearby, found it at all unusual that two drunken, disheveled men in an obviously out-of-service hearse (it had no license plates and several broken windows) had arrived without any paperwork to claim the body of a deceased celebrity. In fact, according to Kaufman’s dubious account, the cop even helped the pair load the casket into the hearse—and then looked the other way when Martin slammed the hearse into a wall on the way out of the hangar.

Kaufman and Martin then drove the body back out to Joshua Tree, doused it with gasoline and set it ablaze. Local police initially speculated that the cremation was “ritualistic,” which indeed it was, but such reports were, and continue to be, scoffed at.

On September 26, LAPD detectives, led by anchorman Larry Burrell, came knocking on Kaufman’s door with warrants to serve. Bizarrely enough, director Arthur Penn was there with a full crew shooting scenes for the film *Night Moves* with star Gene Hackman. When you are a friend of Charlie Manson’s, it would appear, everyone in Hollywood wants to hang out with you. While the crew continued working, Kaufman was taken in by police but he was back just a few hours later. In the end, he and Martin were fined \$300 each plus reimbursement for the cost of the coffin.

In January 1974, four months after Parsons’ death, *Grievous Angel* was released to critical acclaim and public indifference. Later that year,

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

Gram's adoptive father, Bob Parsons, died from complications of an alcohol-related illness. He had apparently been making moves aimed at gaining control of the deceased musician's estate. By sheer coincidence, no doubt, the deaths of Gram and Bob Parsons were followed by the 1974 bankruptcy of much of the Snively family business. Around that same time, Little Avis gave birth to daughter Flora. Sixteen years later, both were killed in a boating accident in Virginia. Avis had made it all the way to age forty.

## 17

# THE LOST EXPEDITION OF GENE CLARK

**“In later years, toward the end, he would have really bad nightmares. He would wake up in the middle of the night screaming...”** Kai Clark, Gene Clark’s son

IN MANY WAYS, THE GENE CLARK STORY READS A LOT LIKE THE GRAM Parsons story. Both were considered by their peers to be among Laurel Canyon’s brightest stars, yet both are now largely forgotten. Both of their lives were cut tragically short (though Clark lived considerably longer than Parsons). Both of their deaths were overshadowed to some extent by unusual events that occurred just after their passing. Both were considered pioneers of the country-rock genre. Both played for a time with the Byrds. Both recorded duets with Emmylou Harris, and both employed many of the same musicians on their various solo projects. Both had legions of female admirers. Both had a keen interest in UFOs and believed in alien visitations. And both were notorious drug and alcohol abusers.

Harold Eugene Clark was born on November 17, 1944, in Tipton, Missouri, though the year of his birth was frequently reported as 1941. It seems quite likely that Gene Clark himself was the source of that erroneous biographical detail, to avoid questions about the fact that his alleged father was actually overseas for all of 1944.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

Tipton is a small town—the kind of town where everyone knows one another by name. In fact, Tipton is kind of like a big park where the same oversized family reunion is held every day of the year. As Bonnie Clark Laible told author John Einarson, “When I was in Tipton, Missouri, the year my grandfather died, in 1954, I found out I was related to almost everyone in the community. Everyone had married people they knew through the various families like Faherty and Sommerhauser. I couldn’t throw a stone without hitting a family member!”

Tipton was founded by Mr. William Tipton Seely, a rather wealthy and influential gent who opened a general store circa 1830. A community soon sprang up around his store, as tended to happen in those days, and Seely named his new little fiefdom Round Hill. A decade or so later, in the 1840s, a group of German immigrant families arrived in the area—the Nieuffers, the Lutzs, the Kammerichs, the Schmidts, the Hoens, the Shrecks and the Sommerhausers. Those families proceeded to intermarry to a rather extreme degree.

In the 1850s, Seely lobbied hard to have both the Pacific Railroad and the Butterfield Overland Mail route pass through his little kingdom. Those efforts proved successful, though the railroad was routed a few miles north of Round Hill. Around that new railroad station was born Seely’s second town, tiny Tipton, where Gene Clark would spend the early years of his life.

Meanwhile, just before 1800, a group of Irish families led by a Mr. Edmund Faherty settled in southwestern Illinois. In addition to the Fahertys, the group included the Whelans, the O’Haras and the O’Neills. These families also proceeded to intermarry. Some factions of the family eventually crossed over the border into Perryville, Missouri, where they became slave owners. James and Helena Faherty split from the rest of the Missouri herd and moved to Cole Camp, not too far southwest of Tipton. According to chronicler Einarson, the move was recommended by a “priest who feared too much inbreeding among the families.”

Oscar Faherty, Gene Clark’s maternal grandfather, was born and raised near Tipton, as was the woman who was to be his wife and Gene’s grandmother, Rosemary Sommerhauser. Before long, the Fahertys and the Sommerhausers were intermarrying at a furious pace. According to Bonnie Clark, “The Faherty and Sommerhauser families had double cousins going on.” On the summer solstice of 1920, Rosemary Sommer-



hauser Faherty gave birth to Mary Jeanne Faherty, Gene Clark's mother. After completing elementary school, Mary Jeanne was sent away to work as a "domestic servant" for an unnamed wealthy family living near Kansas City, Kansas. The Depression years were pretty rough, from what I hear, but selling off your barely teenage daughter seems a bit harsh.

The other half of Gene Clark's family tree is, curiously enough, shrouded in mystery and secrecy. As chronicler Einarson notes, "Unlike Jeanne Faherty Clark's well-documented family history, the lineage of Gene's father, Kelly George Clark, is far more murky and mysterious." Indeed, Einarson's extensive research turned up little more than the fact that Kelly Clark was born on November 11, 1918, in Lenexa, Kansas, and that, according to family lore, there might be Native American blood in the family tree that has been concealed. Or maybe Pop Clark's history is murky for other reasons.

What is known is that Kelly Clark apparently quit high school and went to work for the parks department as a groundskeeper. While tending the grounds at the Milburn Country Club, he met young Jeanne Faherty, who apparently was taken there fairly frequently by her employers—because most wealthy people, it seems reasonable to conclude, take their young servants with them to the country club. After a relatively brief courtship, the two married on May 29, 1941, and promptly started a family.

Bonnie Clark was born on March 13, 1942, just over nine months after the couple exchanged vows. Kelly Katherine was to be the couple's second child, but she was, alas, reportedly stillborn on the summer solstice of 1943. Nothing suspicious about that. Nor about the peculiar fact that, while Gene and other members of the family would be laid to rest in the Sommerhauser family plot at St. Andrews cemetery in Tipton, "Kelly Katherine's is a solitary stone at the far south end of the cemetery," as recounted by John Einarson in *Mr. Tambourine Man*.

A few months after Kelly Katherine Clark's curious death, Kelly George Clark was called up for radio and gunnery school. Following training, he was assigned to a unit that served as General George Patton's mop-up crew. Clark's team landed at LeHavre, France, and steadily made their way towards Germany. By May of 1945, immediately following the fall of the Third Reich, Clark was in Berlin. Meanwhile, the third Clark child, Gene, was born in November 1944. Officially, Jeanne Clark was impreg-

nated while her husband was briefly home on leave, presumably in February 1944, though it seems very unlikely that he would have been at home at that time. In any event, Gene spent the first years of his life in a house at 304 Morgan Street, directly across the street from a funeral home.

Kelly Clark returned home at the end of WWII and promptly impregnated his wife once again; Nancy Patricia Clark was born on July 19, 1946. The family would continue to grow until there were no fewer than ten Clark siblings, all living in a tiny house far off the beaten path. As a former classmate and friend told Einarson, “You had to take a dirt road up and it was the only house back in the woods, way up high. I couldn’t believe the first time Gene took me there... It was kind of spooky in a way.” As sister Bonnie has acknowledged, the Clarks “were known as a very strange family in the community.” That may have had something to do with the family’s rather unusual choice of recreational activities, such as throwing knives at laundry detergent boxes: “Gene was very good at it. We both were. This was one of the things we did as a family function,” noted Bonnie.

Gene would have a lifelong fascination with knives—and guns. According to friend Joe Larson, after Clark began making money with the Byrds, he “started buying guns.” In the cover photo for one of Gene’s solo albums, he is sitting on a picnic table. As brother Rick Clark has noted, “there are bullet holes in the table where we would shoot at cans and bottles from the back porch with Gene’s guns.” One of those guns was an antique rifle given to Gene by fellow gun aficionado David Crosby. Apparently a lot of those peacenik hippie types in Laurel Canyon were packing heat.

Shockingly enough, most of the members of that “strange family” living in the backwoods did not fare so well as they grew into adulthood. As of the time of the writing of Einarson’s *Mr. Tambourine Man* (2005), one Clark sibling had been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic, another suffered from severe bouts of clinical depression, another was homeless due to untreated mental illness, another was on psychiatric meds most of her life before dying suddenly in 1987, another was bipolar, and yet another was diagnosed with severe mental retardation. Even more shockingly, mysterious father Kelly Clark was said to be a raging alcoholic who suffered from severe mood swings.

Gene's formal education began in 1949 at a strict Catholic school in Raytown. According to big sister Bonnie, quoted by Einarson, "there were truly some abusive people [there]. I can remember some of those nuns being real nightmares." By 1960, the family had moved to Bonner Springs, Kansas, where Gene attended high school. He was known to hang with a rough crowd during his high school days, and a few of his buddies from those years ended up serving prison time.

On August 12, 1963, Gene Clark, still a few months shy of his nineteenth birthday, was inexplicably offered a spot in the New Christy Minstrels vocal group; he was on a plane to California the very next day. The Minstrels were a very busy touring group, averaging some 300 dates a year, so Gene would spend a lot of time on airplanes during his six-month tenure as a Minstrel. Curiously though, fear of flying would be cited a couple years later as Gene's reason for leaving the Byrds.

One of the gigs the group played, on January 14, 1964, was at the White House as special guests of Lyndon Johnson, who had taken office less than two months earlier following the assassination of John Kennedy. After the performance, Gene and other Minstrels (including Barry McGuire, who, as was discussed previously, released *Eve Of Destruction* a couple years later) went out on the town and partied with Johnson's two daughters, Lynda Bird and Luci Baines, who were just nineteen and sixteen at the time.

As the story goes, Gene quit the New Christy Minstrels a couple of weeks later, in February of 1964, after hearing the first album released by an upstart British band known as the Beatles. Clark immediately headed out to Los Angeles, as would so many others, where he regularly hung out at the Troubadour, just off the Sunset Strip. It was there that he met one James Joseph McGuinn III, who had, curiously enough, once been in the New Christy Minstrels himself, for exactly one day. The two quickly formed a folk duo and began writing songs, hoping to soon get bookings at the Troubadour and other local clubs. But according to McGuinn, the pair "never got to the stage of performing as a duo... Crosby came along quite quickly."

McGuinn was initially quite wary of the interloper, but the three nevertheless became a trio known at first as the Jet Set. With Crosby, of course, came Jim Dickson, who would transform the trio into the Byrds. According to Vern Gosdin—who, along with his brother, Rex, played

with many of the Laurel Canyon musicians—it was Jim Dickson who “put the Byrds together, you might say. If I’m telling the truth, this is what I think: I don’t think the Byrds had any ideas whatsoever, and Jim Dickson put it all together for them.” Dickson originally envisioned the band as a Beatlesque quartet, with Gene as John (lead vocalist/rhythm guitarist), Roger as George (lead guitar and vocals), and Crosby as Paul (bass and vocals).

This arrangement proved unworkable, however, since Crosby was reportedly unable to sing and play bass at the same time. This then led Dickson to recruit mandolin player Chris Hillman to take over bass duties, leaving Crosby with little to do other than provide harmony vocals. That didn’t sit well though with Lord Crosby, so he began a relentless campaign aimed at eroding Gene’s confidence in his own guitar playing ability. Crosby’s constant ridicule paid off and he soon enough took over rhythm guitar duties. The five-man band was then complete: Gene would provide most lead vocals and bang the tambourine, Jim/Roger McGuinn would provide the band’s signature twelve-string guitar sound and harmony vocals, Crosby would provide serviceable (at best) rhythm guitar work and harmony vocals, and Chris Hillman and Michael Clarke would pretend (initially at least) to play the bass guitar and the drums.

The band released its first single as the Beefeaters. The record was produced by Jim Dickson, who would go on to guide the Byrds’ career, and Paul Rothchild, who would go on to guide the Doors’ career. The single, released by Elektra Records, went nowhere. By November of 1964 though, the band, renamed the Byrds, was signed with Columbia Records. Just two months later they would record *Mr. Tambourine Man* and become huge stars. But there was a hurdle to overcome first; as Einarson notes, “[Gene] had received his draft notice. Roger and Michael had already dodged that bullet; now it was Gene’s turn.” Not to worry though; Gene was able to dodge that bullet as well. According to Einarson, Gene was deemed unfit for military service due to an “old football disease,” identified as “Osgood Schlatter’s Disease.” Luckily for Gene, it apparently didn’t prevent him from playing football but it did keep him out of the service.

Gene Clark was, without question, an astoundingly prolific songwriter. Relatively few of his compositions, however, appeared on Byrds’

albums, which instead featured a lot of covers. The truth is that Gene had more than enough songs—and reportedly good songs—to fill the early Byrds’ albums. Even Crosby has acknowledged that Clark “was prolific. He would show up every week with new songs and they were great songs.” Crosby wasn’t so generous though with his assessments of Gene’s talents back in the day. According to most accounts, it was the jealousy of Crosby and McGuinn that kept Gene’s tracks off the records.

In those days, there wasn’t a lot of money to be made by performing and recording music. The real money was in song royalties, so Clark was paid considerably more than the rest of the band. As McGuinn put it, “Gene was into Ferraris and we were still starving.” That disproportionate compensation quickly drove a wedge between Clark and the other two thirds of the original trio. At times, Gene even shared writing credits on his songs just to get them onto albums. The classic *Eight Miles High*, for example, was written by Gene but credited to Crosby and McGuinn as well.

As has been noted previously, Vito Paulekas played a key role in launching the careers of the Byrds. And so it is that we find references to Vito and his entourage in Einarson’s telling of the Gene Clark story: “Vito and Carl were legendary hipsters on the LA scene and were into LSD long before anyone else. It was at their studio that Gene believed the Byrds truly found their magic as a group.” According to Morgan Cavett, the son of Oscar-winning screenwriter Frank Cavett, “They had this group of hippies before that term came into use. Somehow they had hooked up with the Byrds.”

When the band launched its very first national tour in July 1965, “Along for the trip were LA scene-makers Vito and Carl and their entourage of crazed hippie dancers whose uninhibited gyrations caused quite a stir in the heartlands of America.” Einarson’s account though is not quite accurate; Vito stayed home while first lieutenant Carl Franzoni led the faction of the troupe that hit the road with the Byrds. Assisting Franzoni was Byrds’ roadie Brian McLean, who shortly thereafter would beat out Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil for the rhythm guitarist position in Love. As troupe dancer Lizzie Donohue would later recall, many of those in America’s hinterlands “thought we were from outer space. In Paris, Illinois, they actually threw us off the dance floor.” Gene Clark would later remember that the band “could have played out of tune all

day. Nobody ever heard us anyway.” According to many accounts, the band oftentimes did play out of tune all day. And all night as well.

When the band followed up its first national tour with a tour of the UK, the Byrds were not well received. Often the band would spend more time tuning their instruments between songs than they did actually playing those songs. And by most accounts, the boys made virtually no attempt to forge a connection with the audience. Gene did though forge a bond with the Rolling Stones’ Brian Jones, whose life would be tragically cut short a couple years later.

Sometime after that tour, members of the Byrds famously met with members of the Beatles and they all dropped acid together. Some accounts hold that that meeting took place in the Cielo Drive home where Sharon Tate would later be butchered, but it appears to have actually taken place at another home in Benedict Canyon, one that may have been formerly owned by Zsa Zsa Gabor. Laurel Canyon stalwart Peter Fonda was reportedly in attendance, and legend holds that it was he who supplied a very high John Lennon with the line, “I know what it’s like to be dead.”

In March of 1966, a press release announced Gene Clark’s departure from the Byrds. McGuinn has alleged that Dickson and co-manager Eddie Ticknor encouraged Gene to split from the band so that they could exploit his solo potential. If so, then they must have been greatly disappointed since Clark never came close to living up to that potential.

One of the first offers Gene received upon his departure from the Byrds was from drummer Dewey Martin, who invited Clark to join the newly formed Buffalo Springfield. Clark declined, choosing to form his own band, the first of which was dubbed the Group. As Einarson explains, “Six weeks after rehearsals began, Gene Clark and the Group debuted at the Whisky-A-Go-Go on June 22 for a two-week stand, on the heels of a dazzling six-week stint by new group Buffalo Springfield.” Around that same time, Clark began having an affair with Michelle Phillips, who lived with hubby John Phillips just a couple of blocks down the canyon.

Following what were reportedly unproductive recording sessions, Gene’s first post-Byrds formation broke up. On July 10, he was signed as a solo artist and he entered the studio the next month accompanied by doomed guitarist Clarence White, Brian Wilson collaborator Van Dyke



Parks, our old friend Glen Campbell, the ubiquitous Chris Hillman, and Vern and Rex Gosdin, who had gotten their start alongside Chris Hillman in the formation known as the Hillmen. In January of 1967, Clark's first solo album was released as *Gene Clark with the Gosdin Brothers*.

Like many of the other records we have stumbled upon while on this journey, some fans and critics regard the record as the first country-rock album (released a year-and-a-half before the country-rock forays by the Byrds and Buffalo Springfield). The album, unfortunately, was quickly overshadowed by the Byrds' own *Younger than Yesterday*, which Columbia released just two weeks after releasing Gene's solo effort.

By March of 1967, Clark had put together a new version of the Group, which debuted at the Whisky with Clark, Clarence White and two members of the Mamas and the Papas' touring group, whom Gene had met through his paramour, Michelle Phillips. At the tail end of 1967, Gene briefly rejoined the Byrds, replacing the fired David Crosby. The reunion lasted only a few weeks but it was long enough for Gene to contribute to *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, released in January 1968.

When Gene had left the Byrds, it should be noted, he had done so empty handed. Not so with Crosby, who was given a substantial settlement upon his departure. He used that money to purchase a yacht, which he dubbed the Mayan. Crosby thereafter was known to spend extended periods of time aboard the Mayan, sailing to and from various locations. He was not the only canyon musician to own and operate such a vessel; John Phillips had one as well, as did Dennis Wilson. All three of them also had a passion for controlled substances. And guns. Perhaps there is some connection there.

Following his brief reunion with the Byrds, Clark composed the original score for *Marijuana*, a short anti-drug film hosted by Sonny Bono. His next project, dubbed *The Fantastic Expedition of Dillard and Clark*, featured Gene, Doug Dillard (formerly of the Dillards, from whom Buffalo Springfield, it will be recalled, had obtained their instruments), Bernie Leadon (who had been a peripheral member of San Diego's Scottsville Squirrel Barkers, alongside Chris Hillman), and, of course, Chris Hillman.

By that time Gene had married and his wife, Carlie, was an avid reader of occult literature, particularly, as she recalled, "this lady named Madame Blavatsky." Circa 1971, Clark was approached by his friend and fellow Canyonite, Dennis Hopper, to compose songs for the soundtrack

to Hopper's *American Dreamer*. Around that same time, according to Einarson, "Gene's running buddies included David Carradine and John Barrymore." That was, to say the least, a rather curious group of friends. According to authors such as Craig Heimlichner, Martin P. Starr, and John Carter, Dennis Hopper and John Carradine (David's dad) were both members of the infamous Agape Lodge of the OTO, alongside doomed rocket scientist Jack Parsons, actor Dean Stockwell, and doppelgängers L. Ron Hubbard and Robert Heinlein. According to Gregory Mank, writing in *Hollywood's Hellfire Club*, John Carradine and John Barrymore were also members of the so-called "Bundy Drive Boys," a group that engaged in such practices as incest, rape and cannibalism. And according to Ed Sanders, among the upscale homes visited by a Process work group "was the John Barrymore mansion, located at 1301 Summit Ridge Drive."

The year 1972 saw yet another brief Byrds reunion, with another record released, this one in February of 1973. Gene next began recording sessions for a new solo project, financed by his friend Gary Legon, the husband of porn star and Ivory Soap model Marilyn Chambers. Joining Gene on some of the tracks was Emmylou Harris, whose hubby Tom Slocum—a descendant of famed explorer Joshua Slocum—was a member of Gene's inner circle.

After briefly relocating to Albion, California with his wife and kids, Clark moved back to Laurel Canyon, where he moved into a home on Stanley Hills Drive with his new girlfriend, Terri Messina. Born into considerable wealth, Messina was the daughter of a prominent area physician. In 1963, she had enrolled in theater arts at UCLA, which quite likely would have placed her in the company of a couple of other UCLA theater arts students named Jim Morrison and Ray Manzarek. Terri and Gene moved in together in the summer of 1977. According to Einarson, Messina "laterally work[ed] in film editing, [but] she was better known in exclusive circles as a supplier of cocaine." And heroin. As has been previously discussed, during that time period the "entire Laurel Canyon lifestyle revolved around cocaine," and "Gene fell into line, becoming a legendary partier."

Canyon resident Ken Mansfield recalled those dark years: "That particular point in my life, and most of us, was the craziest time of all, when we were all into drugs the most. Tommy's [Kaye] house was one of the

houses we hung out at a lot. David Carradine was my neighbor in Laurel Canyon. Our two properties were side by side. David had a group called Water. I could tell you some wild canyon stories... Looking back it's not a nice memory. Even though we thought we were having a good time, I don't think we really were. Shortly after Tommy Kaye's little girl, Eloise, died in an unfortunate accident, it just seemed like everybody's life got dark and we all kind of lost hope there for a while."

Kids living in Laurel Canyon apparently had to be particularly vigilant about avoiding tragic accidents.

Circa 1978, Clark teamed with former bandmates Hillman and McGuinn for a contrived reunion tour. An album followed in early 1979, with a second released in early 1980. During that time, according to brother David Clark, Gene "was hanging around with these really gross characters who were just a bunch of burnouts and he wasn't much better. Cathy Evelyn Smith was there." Not long after, Smith would attain a certain amount of notoriety for her involvement in the curious death of John Belushi at the Chateau Marmont. We should then, I suppose, add John Belushi to the Laurel Canyon Death List. And Eloise Kaye as well.

Following the release of the second Byrds reunion album, Clark and a close friend, guitarist Jesse Ed Davis, left LA for Oahu, Hawaii, supposedly to get clean. They returned at the end of 1981, with Gene once again settling into his favorite canyon. Among his close friends at that time were former child star Kurt Russell and his then-wife, actress Season Hubley, who had also taken up residence in Laurel Canyon. Gene's solo career sputtered on for another decade, though fewer and fewer people seemed to be paying much attention.

In January 1991, the original members of the Byrds came together for their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Clark died just four months later, reportedly of a heart attack. He was just forty-six at the time. The circumstances of his death remain murky to this day. As Einarson has noted, "What transpired over the last three days of Gene's life remains clouded by controversy... conspiracy theories abound; accusations have been leveled." For the most part though, Gene has now been all but forgotten. His vast stockpile of unreleased material, however—much of which mysteriously disappeared after his death—likely lives on, albeit credited to others.

According to Einarson, Clark had been fighting to stay sober but it

“is agreed that he began drinking again on the evening of Wednesday, May 22... What happened next depends entirely on who is telling the story. [One witness] claims he searched the house for drugs and did not find any—contrary to claims by others that drugs and drug paraphernalia were present in the house... there are those conspiracy theorists who continue to insinuate that drugs and certain characters were, indeed, present that night, and that Gene’s death was a result of misadventure, necessitating a panicked clean-up campaign that morning.”

There were apparently numerous people present at Clark’s home on the morning of May 24, 1991, as Gene lay dead on the living room floor. One of those people was Saul Davis, who “took it upon himself to contact the media with the news, another bone of contention with some, given that Saul was not serving as Gene’s manager at the time.” Another was the manager of the property, identified as Ray Berry, who had served during WWII in Special Ops. While people milled about the house, “arguing over the spoils... Gene’s body continued to lie on the living room floor, face up.”

Days later, David Carradine caused quite a stir at Gene’s open-casket memorial service. Former bandmate Pat Robinson remembered it well: “When Carradine came up, he wasn’t as much drunk as he was on acid, I think, and his girlfriend and business manager at the time was there with him. And we’re standing there and Carradine says, ‘You cocksucker...’ and grabs Gene by the lapels. When you pull somebody up from a coffin and they have nothing inside for guts they bend higher up. It was really shocking to see that. And Carradine goes, ‘You pissed on my daughter when she was thirteen.’ And he said it pretty loud and then he says, ‘I saw him snicker, boys, heh heh.’ Oh, man, that was weird.”

Perhaps weirder still is that many of those who were in attendance remember hearing something a little different: “You *fucked* my daughter when she was thirteen.” Maybe Carradine had mistaken Clark for Roman Polanski. Or maybe that’s just what everyone was doing in Laurel Canyon. In any event, none of the original members of the Byrds bothered to attend the service. Afterwards, Gene was laid to rest in tiny Tipton.

It should be noted here, before concluding this chapter, that there were very clear indications that Gene Clark suffered from a rather severe dissociative disorder throughout his adult life. As far as can be de-

terminated from the literature, he was never diagnosed as such, but comments made by his bandmates and family members are quite revealing. One such bandmate, Pat Robinson, has described how Clark “used to slip into these dream states, which I thought was really amazing. He’d go into these dream states and lay down on the couch and go, ‘I’ll be right back, Patrick.’” Another, John York, has said that Gene “had these multiple personalities.” Yet another, Bernie Leadon, remembered that Clark would often appear to be completely out of it, and he’d “say, ‘Hey, Gene, what are you thinking?’ and he would go, ‘Huh? Oh,’ like he was being brought back to reality.”

Gene’s sister, Bonnie Clark, has also noted that there was more than one version of the troubled singer/songwriter: “There was this persona and the rest of Gene was somewhere in there. He was hard to get to know... He could be very warm and loving, but that could change in a heartbeat.” Chronicler John Einarson offered the following summation: “It is often difficult for those who knew him—even family members—to reconcile the two Gene Clarks: the cheerful, engaging yet shy loner with the vibrant imagination, and the frustrated, moody recluse who was sometimes prone to violence.”

## 18

### **THE WOLF KING OF LA “PAPA” JOHN PHILLIPS**

**“John [Phillips] was the ultimate controller.”** Mamas and the Papas producer/manager Lou Adler

**“She was practically his slave.”** Michelle Phillips, describing John’s relationship with his third wife, Genevieve Waite

THUS FAR ON THIS JOURNEY, WE HAVE SEEN HOW WHAT ARE ARGUABLY THE two most bloody and notorious mass murders in the history of the City of Angels—the murders of the occupants of the home on Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon, and the so-called Four on the Floor bludgeoning murders of four drug dealers on Wonderland Avenue—were directly connected to the Laurel Canyon music scene. But the city of Los Angeles can boast of one other particularly notorious murder, one that stands to this day as both the most gruesome single-victim murder and the most famous unsolved murder in the city’s history.

On January 15, 1947, the mutilated body of aspiring actress Elizabeth Short was found posed in a field. The ritualistically butchered body was nude, sliced cleanly in half, and completely drained of blood. Parts of the body had been removed, after which the corpse had been thor-



oughly sanitized. Bruising clearly indicated that the young girl had been savagely beaten. Forensic evidence suggested that she had been forced to eat feces during her tortuous ordeal. She was quickly dubbed the 'Black Dahlia' and it is by that name that she is known and written about today.

Much of what has been written about the brief life of Ms. Short is contradictory. Among the facts that seem to be agreed upon are that she had recently worked at a military facility that is now known as Vandenberg Air Force Base, and that she had some kind of close connection to a US Naval hospital in San Diego, where she may have also worked. That is, in any event, what she had indicated in a letter to her mother.

Unlike the Manson and Wonderland murders, the mutilation of the Black Dahlia occurred some twenty years before Laurel Canyon's glory days. There is, nevertheless, a possible connection.

This story begins on August 30, 1935, with the birth of John Edmund Andrew Phillips to parents Claude and Edna Phillips. Claude was a retired Marine Corps officer and engineer. His father, John Andrew Phillips, who had been a prominent and influential architect, one day "mysteriously fell to his death" on a construction site, according to John Phillips' autobiography.

John's mother, Edna, had what most people would consider a decidedly unconventional upbringing. Her mother was a psychic and faith healer, and many of her eleven siblings were well known locally as gun-fighters and bandits. When Edna was just a year old, she was purportedly kidnapped by Gypsies! Not to worry though—her father allegedly found her a year later down in Mexico, though how he would have done so will doubtless forever remain a mystery.

Edna was just fifteen when she met and began a relationship with Claude Phillips, who according to legend had supposedly won an Oklahoma bar from a fellow serviceman in a poker game on the way home from France at the close of WWI—which seems, in retrospect, about as credible as various other aspects of Phillips family history as told by John. By eighteen, Edna had given birth to the couple's first child, Rosie Phillips, born on New Year's Eve, 1922. Rosie would later become a career employee of the Pentagon, where John's first wife would also find work. Years later, according to John, Rosie's daughter Patty would be "found dead of an overdose in a girlfriend's apartment in North Holly-

wood... There were mysterious questions surrounding her death.” This kind of thing tends to happen to families in Laurel Canyon.

In the late 1920s, Claude Phillips was commissioned to Haiti, where he remained for four years. He was then sent back to Quantico, then shipped off to Managua, Nicaragua, before finally returning to Alexandria, Virginia, where John Phillips, who would become arguably the most important music figure in the canyon, grew up and went to school. John attended a series of strict Catholic and military schools. He also served as an altar boy, though according to his own account, he also had a darker side which included forays into vandalism, auto theft, breaking and entering, fighting, and other assorted mischief. His mother, meanwhile, routinely cruised for men, when not spending time with a US Army Colonel named George Lacy. John would later be told that his real father was a US Marine Corps doctor named Roland Meeks, who died in a Japanese POW camp during WWII.

Phillips played basketball at George Washington High School, graduating in 1953. He then scored an appointment to Annapolis Naval Academy, but soon dropped out. One of his first paying jobs was working on a fishing charter boat. As John later recalled it, the crew consisted of him, a retired Navy officer, and four retired Army generals. Seems like a perfect fit for one of the future guiding lights of the hippie movement. Phillips also, for a brief time, tried his hand at selling cemetery plots.

As noted at the beginning of this odyssey, John’s first wife was the aristocratic Susie Adams, a direct descendent of President John Adams and an occasional practitioner of voodoo. The couple’s first son, Jeffrey, was born on Friday the 13th in December of 1957. Shortly after that, John found himself in, of all places, Havana, Cuba, just as the Batista regime was about to fall to the revolutionary forces of Fidel Castro. According to Phillips, he and his traveling companions “were once whisked off the street by a director, straight into a TV studio to appear on a live Havana variety show.” Many of you, I’m sure, have had a similar experience.

Some months later, in 1958, Phillips flew to Los Angeles and began performing on amateur nights at Pandora’s Box on the legendary Sunset Strip. His first band, the Journeymen, featured Phillips, Scott McKenzie and Dick Weismann. It was while touring with this formation that John Phillips met a very young Holly Michelle Gilliam. Michelle was

born November 10, 1944, in Long Beach, California, to a father variously described as a merchant marine, a movie production assistant, and a self-taught intellectual. When Michelle's mother, a Baptist minister's daughter, reportedly died of a brain aneurysm when Michelle was just five, Gardner "Gil" Gilliam took his daughters and promptly relocated to Mexico, ostensibly to attend college on the GI Bill. They remained there for several years. Upon their return to Southern California, Gil found work as an LA County probation officer. According to John, Gil's work "often required him to go out of town," though one would think that that would make it rather difficult for him to keep tabs on his charges.

In 1958, while future husband John was vacationing in war-torn Cuba, Michelle found a new mother figure in twenty-three-year-old Tamar Hodel. Tamar's father, Dr. George Hodel, was described by *Van-ity Fair* in December 2007 as "the most pathologically decadent man in Los Angeles" and "the city's venereal-disease czar and a fixture in its A-list demimonde." Also noted in the article was that "George Hodel shared with Man Ray a love for the work of the Marquis de Sade and the belief that the pursuit of personal liberty was worth everything." In other words, Hodel embraced that all-purpose Luciferian creed, "Do what thou wilt."

According to the same article, Tamar and her siblings had "grown up in her father's Hollywood house, which resembled a Mayan temple, was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright's son, and was the site of wild parties, in which Hodel was sometimes joined by director John Huston and photographer Man Ray." The luxurious home reportedly features, among other amenities, a subterranean walk-in vault, which is always a nice thing to have around. Within the walls of that singularly odd Hollywood Hills home, which lies about three miles due east of the mouth of Laurel Canyon, Tamar has talked of how she "often 'uncomfortably' posed nude... for 'dirty-old-man' Man Ray and had once wriggled free from a predatory John Huston." Her own father, not so shockingly, "had committed incest with her. 'When I was eleven, my father taught me to perform oral sex on him.'" Her father also "plied her with erotic books, grooming her for what he touted as their transcendent union," and freely shared her with his wealthy and influential friends.

"To the girl's horror, she became pregnant" at the tender age of fourteen—with her father's child. "To her greater horror, she says, 'my fa-

ther wanted me to *have* his baby.” A friend, nevertheless, took her to get an abortion. Dr. George was so incensed that, according to Tamar, he “struck her on the head with his pistol,” prompting her stepmother (who also happened to be John Huston’s ex-wife) to assist her in going into hiding. Dr. George Hodel was arrested and charged with, among other things, offering his young daughter to several friends at an orgy. The sensational 1949 incest trial featured a witness who took the stand to describe being hypnotized by Hodel at a party.

Allegations that the rich and powerful were dabbling in incest, hypnosis, pedophilic orgies and Luciferian philosophies must surely have been shocking to Angelenos in the 1940s, as they would still be to most Americans today. Perhaps that is why the jury chose not to believe Tamar and instead acquitted Dr. Hodel. Of course, it should probably be factored in that Tamar was roundly vilified by both the Jerry Giesler-led defense team and the local press.

Far more shocking than the allegations aired at trial was the then-unknown fact that, even while Hodel was standing trial on the sensational charges, he was, and still is today, a prime suspect in the Black Dahlia murder case! There have been, to be sure, numerous suspects identified in the case, including actor/director Orson Welles. But George Hodel does seem to be a much more likely suspect than most of those who have been identified. And his possible guilt, it should be noted, does not exclude others from likely complicity as well. The mistake that virtually all investigators of this case have made is assuming that there was only *one* culprit. It is entirely possible that Hodel committed the crime in conjunction with various others in his Luciferian social circle. Photographer Man Ray, for example, is a compelling suspect given that the posing of Ms. Short’s body appeared to mimic the Minotaur, one of his better-known photographs.

It seems unlikely that the fourteen-year-old daughter of a lowly probation officer would fall into the orbit of the daughter of the very wealthy and well-connected George Hodel, but not any more unlikely, I suppose, than numerous other aspects of the Laurel Canyon saga. Tamar, who has been described by Michelle as “the epitome of glamour,” quickly took the youngster under her wing, buying her clothes, enrolling her in modeling school, teaching her to drive, and providing her with a fake ID and a steady stream of prescription drugs—obtained, one

would presume, from her father. According to Michelle, “Tamar put on perfect airs around my dad and when it became necessary she would sleep with him.” That perhaps explains why, in early 1961, Gil didn’t have a problem with allowing his underage daughter to move to San Francisco with her surrogate mom.

Soon enough, Tamar found herself in a relationship with Journeyman Scott McKenzie, and bandmate John Phillips began coming by Tamar and Michelle’s room on a nightly basis. It wasn’t long before Michelle, still just sixteen, was romantically involved with twenty-five-year-old Phillips, despite the fact that John was still married to and living with Susie Adams, with whom he by then had two children, Laura MacKenzie Phillips having been born on November 10, 1959 in, naturally enough, Alexandria, Virginia. Father Gil, who had recently taken a sixteen-year-old bride of his own (one of a string of six wives), still wasn’t concerned. And it’s probably safe to assume that Phillips’ father, who had pursued his bride when she was just fifteen, wouldn’t have been too concerned either.

In October 1962, a year or so after meeting Michelle, John curiously found himself in Jacksonville, Florida, alongside Naval Air Station Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport for “two weeks of rest and rehearsal” that just happened to coincide with the Cuban Missile Crisis. For a guy who, in his own words, “never felt comfortable with political advocacy,” John seems to have had a keen interest in Cuban affairs. Two months later, on New Year’s Eve 1962, Holly Michelle Gilliam became John Phillips’ second wife. She also joined his reconfigured band, as did Canadian Denny Doherty, who had formerly been with the Mugwumps alongside Cass Elliot. This new lineup was dubbed the New Journeymen.

The newly formed trio promptly embarked on a drug-fueled Caribbean adventure, arriving first at St. Johns, where John claimed that they “snorkeled on acid” for several weeks. They next ferried over to St. Thomas, where they set up camp at a dive beachfront boardinghouse known as Duffy’s. Soon enough, Ellen Naomi Cohen, better known as Cass Elliot, showed up with John’s nephew, who was a childhood friend of hers. Cass had been born in Baltimore but had grown up in Alexandria, where, like Phillips, she had attended George Washington High School. As the legend goes, Cass waited tables at the dive while the trio

performed folk songs. During their time there, “The town was,” according to Phillips, “crawling with drunken Marines and sailors on their way home from Vietnam.”

Moving on from the boardinghouse, the group next took over an unfinished home on Creeque Alley, where, according to John, they were known as “the island’s open house and everyone was welcome to our commune.” At some point though the governor supposedly ordered them off the island “because he thought his nephew was doing drugs with the crazies at Creeque Alley.” The band had formalized its new lineup of John Phillips, Michelle Phillips, Denny Doherty and Cass Elliot, and they had a whole album’s worth of material written. That first album would feature such enduring classics as California Dreamin’ and Monday, Monday. On none of the band’s subsequent albums would they produce anywhere near the level of songwriting that they were somehow able to achieve on that Caribbean adventure.

Though isolated on St. Thomas, the songs the group brought back to LA with them just happened to be of the previously unheard but soon-to-emerge folk-rock variety. In his autobiography, *Papa John*, Phillips quotes Doherty as saying that everyone was “evolving toward the same sound at the same time without really communicating with each other about it.” It was, I suppose, just the way things were fated to be—another one of those amazing serendipities!

To be sure, Phillips told a number of different versions of the story of the origins of the songs on that first album. One version had California Dreamin’ being written in a New York hotel room in the middle of the night, with assistance from Michelle. Another version held that the tune was composed on the drive to LA from New York. Yet another version had the song dating back to 1963. Phillips also claimed at times that the song wasn’t even written for the Mamas and the Papas but rather for Barry McGuire, who was a hot commodity following the 1965 release of *Eve Of Destruction*.

Within a month of arriving in LA, the band had a producer/manager (Lou Adler, a Jewish kid who had grown up in a tough, Hispanic section of East LA) and a record deal, and John and Michelle were at home in a comfortable house on Lookout Mountain in Laurel Canyon. They would soon be able to afford to purchase Jeanette McDonald’s former Bel Air mansion at 783 Bel Air Road, which featured “hand-carved wooden gar-



goyles” and “a walk-in vault beneath the house,” which, as I already mentioned, is a very handy feature. Sitting on five acres, the lavish home, with five Rolls-Royces in the driveway, was the site of virtually nonstop partying.

The new lineup, of course, needed a name, and John pushed hard for the occult-based Magic Cyrcl, a name by which the band was briefly known before ultimately settling on the Mamas and the Papas. They proved to be a rather short-lived band, recording and performing only from 1965 to 1968, with a brief reunion in 1971 to satisfy contractual obligations to their record company. During that time, the band produced five albums and eleven top forty singles. To date, the lineup has sold nearly 100,000,000 albums.

The Mamas and the Papas’ freshman album, *If You Can Believe Your Eyes and Ears*, was released in early 1966 and rose to the very top of the charts. It was all downhill from there. While recording their second album in June 1966, Michelle was discharged from the band due to the fact that she was having an affair with Denny Doherty, which was causing severe friction in the group. By August though she was back, which didn’t prevent the group’s second album from performing rather poorly. The third, recorded in 1967 and entitled *Deliver*, failed to live up to its name. Then in June of that year, the Mamas and the Papas delivered a closing set at the Monterey Pop Festival that almost everyone agrees was pretty wretched.

Two months after Monterey, the band made their final television appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. Two months after that, the quartet headed off to Europe while recording their fourth album, *The Papas and the Mamas*. Shortly thereafter, the band broke up. John tried his hand at a solo career with the unsuccessful release of *John Phillips, the Wolf King of LA*, which bore the logo of his own Warlock Records. To satisfy record label demands, the group then briefly reformed for their fourth album, *People Like Us*. Following that unsuccessful venture, the band once again dissolved.

During the heyday of the Mamas and the Papas, John and Michelle Phillips knew, and regularly played host to, virtually everyone of importance in the canyons. In addition to all the singers and musicians living in Laurel Canyon, the power couple’s circle of friends included Warren Beatty, Peter and Jane Fonda, Jack Nicholson, Terry Melcher and girl-

friend Candice Bergen, Marlon Brando, Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate, Abigail Folger and Voytek Frykowski, soon-to-be-dead gossip columnist Steve Brandt, Larry Hagman, presidential brother-in-law Peter Lawford (fresh from his alleged involvement in covering up the murder of Marilyn Monroe), Dennis Hopper, Ryan O'Neal, Mia Farrow, ethereal Freemason Peter Sellers, and Zsa Zsa Gabor. And a short, scraggly singer/songwriter by the name of Charles Manson.

There were, to be sure, numerous ties between the Mamas and the Papas and Charles Manson. And between the Mamas and the Papas and the Cielo Drive victims. John Phillips, for example, had invested \$10,000 in Jay Sebring's business venture, Sebring International, which was rumored to have been a front for various illegal activities, including drug trafficking. Michelle Phillips had a brief affair with Roman Polanski in London while Polanski was married to the soon-to-be-murdered Sharon Tate (during that same sojourn to London, Tate was reportedly initiated into the practice of witchcraft). Mama Cass, as previously noted, lived just across the road from the house at 2774 Woodstock Road occupied by Folger and Frykowski. Both homes were frequently visited by known drug dealers. Regulars at Cass' home included Pic Dawson (also a regular at the Frykowski/Folger home and at the Tate/Polanski home), the son of a US State Department official who, according to John Phillips, was suspected by authorities "of using diplomatic pouches to move drugs between countries," and Billy Doyle, a local dealer who Dennis Hopper claimed was filmed while being flogged at the Tate/Polanski house just three days before the murders. Another regular was Bill Mentzer, later convicted of the brutal murder of Cotton Club producer Roy Radin. The LAPD once described Mentzer as a member of "some kind of hit squad."

So dark was the scene at the home of the 'Lady of the Canyon' that, according to journalist Maury Terry, four of the LAPD's initial prime suspects in the Tate killings were drug dealers associated with Cass Elliot. And yet, curiously enough, many of the canyon's peace-and-love spewing musicians were regulars at Mama Cass' home as well. As *Rolling Stone* noted in its fortieth anniversary edition, "'Mama' Cass Elliot's cozy canyon house functioned as a sort of rock salon." In a similar vein, Barney Hoskyns wrote in *Hotel California* that "Cass kept permanent open house." Also noted in Hoskyns' tome was that the Laurel Canyon

scene “all spun around him and Cass,” with the “him” in this case being David Crosby, who, like Cass, had an insatiable appetite for potent pain killers like Demerol, Dilaudid and Percodan. Crosby was one of many Canyonites who regularly dropped by Cass’ place to hang out and engage in impromptu jam sessions, and to mingle with some seriously disreputable characters.

Also a regular at Cass’ place, by some reports, was Charlie Manson himself. According to Ed Sanders, it was at Cass’ home that Charlie first met her neighbor, coffee heiress Abigail Folger (who helped finance Kenneth Anger’s films, like the one that was supposed to star Godo Paulekas but instead starred Mansonite Bobby Beausoleil). According to Maury Terry, the rather notorious Process Church of the Final Judgment—which evidence suggests had deep ties to the Manson, Son of Sam and Cotton Club murders—also came knocking on Cass’ door, actively seeking to recruit her as well as John Phillips and Terry Melcher.

Terry has written that the Manson Family’s iconic bus was seen parked at the home of John and Michelle Phillips in the fall of 1968. Some reports also hold that Manson attended a New Year’s Eve party at the couple’s home on December 31, 1968, just months before the murders began. So close were the ties between the Mamas and the Papas and the Manson clan that both John Phillips and Mama Cass were slated to appear as witnesses for the defense at the Family’s trial, though neither was ever called. For a band that sang about being “safe and warm, if I was in LA,” the members of the Mamas and the Papas kept some pretty dangerous company in the City of Angels.

Speaking of dangerous company, not long after the band hit the charts, Tamar Hodel received a postcard from Michelle Phillips asking her to watch their scheduled performance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and to then meet the group at San Francisco’s Fairmont Hotel before a scheduled concert. Tamar showed up with father George at her side—the two, as with Gram and Robert Parsons, apparently still maintaining a close relationship—and Tamar, George, John, Michelle, Denny and Cass embarked on a drug-fueled pre-show odyssey.

By 1970, John and Michelle had divorced. Many years later, Michelle would reveal that their time together had included at least one episode of domestic violence, one that she was still reluctant to discuss: “It was serious. I ended up in the hospital. That’s all I’ll say about it.” The un-

ion had yielded John a second daughter, Gilliam Chynna Phillips, born February 12, 1968, in Los Angeles. On January 31, 1972, John Phillips married for the third time, to actress and Crowley aficionado Genevieve Waite. On the wedding guest list were soon-to-be-governor Jerry Brown and soon-to-be-lieutenant-governor Mike Curb.

The couple's time together would be marked by wildly out-of-control drug consumption and the birth of two more offspring: Tamerlane, whose name is perhaps in part an homage to Tamar Hodel, and Bijou Lilly, who was taken away and placed in foster care in Bolton Landing, New York, after her drug-addled parents were deemed unfit to raise her. In June 1972, shortly after marrying Waite, Phillips moved into a canyon home at 414 St. Pierre Road that had been built by William Randolph Hearst. The Rolling Stones had just vacated the property and their trusty sidekick, Gram Parsons, was still hanging around and would grow very close to John Phillips. Parsons though would soon turn up dead, while John would head off to London where he reportedly planned to record a solo album with assistance from Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. That project never got off the ground, however, as Phillips' addictions rendered him impossible to work with.

Cass Elliot turned up in London the very next year, but unlike her former bandmate, her trip abroad was to be one-way; on July 29, 1974, she was found dead in occasional Canyonite Harry Nilsson's London flat. Ms. Elliot, it seems safe to say, knew a little too much about the dark side of Laurel Canyon.

Following the dissolution of the Mamas and the Papas, Cass had gone on to a successful solo career and had become a familiar face on American television screens. In addition to hosting two primetime network specials, she had guest-hosted the *Tonight Show* and had appeared on such popular early 1970s shows as *The Red Skelton Show* and *Love, American Style*. She had been married twice, first in 1963 to vocalist Jim Hendricks in what was reportedly a platonic arrangement aimed at getting Hendricks a draft deferment. During that first marriage, which was annulled in 1968, Cass had given birth to a daughter, Owen Vanessa Elliot, born on April 26, 1967. Hendricks, however, was reportedly not the father and Cass steadfastly refused to reveal who Owen's true father was. In 1971, following the breakup of the band, Cass married again, to Baron Donald von Weidenman, a wealthy Bavarian heir. That

marriage collapsed after just a few months though and Cass was single when she died just a few years later. Owen, already fatherless, was just seven.

Denny Doherty, meanwhile, went on to host a popular variety show in Canada, as well as perform in various formations of the New Mamas and the Papas. He passed away on January 19, 2007, reportedly due to kidney failure.

Michelle Phillips released an unsuccessful solo album and then switched gears and went on to a successful acting career, gracing the small screen in such hit shows as *Knot's Landing*, *Hotel*, and *Beverly Hills, 90210*. She continued to have numerous flings and has married several more times. She is currently the only living member of the original Mamas and the Papas.

As for John Phillips, in 1975 he sobered up enough to put together the soundtrack for the film *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, a surreal venture featuring the talents of fledgling actor David Bowie and director Nicolas Roeg, who had previously collaborated with Crowleyite Donald Cammell on *Performance*. At that same time, Phillips was working on completing a horrifically bad, Andy Warhol-produced stage musical entitled *Man on the Moon*, which closed just two days after opening. Phillips at one time had Don "Miami Vice" Johnson in mind to play the lead in his space opera. Like the rest of the Hollywood notables in this story, Johnson was a canyon dweller at the time. His next-door neighbor happened to be a guy by the name of Chuck Wein, an avid occultist and buddy of Warhol who, in addition to managing bizarre nightclub acts, directed the 1972 documentary *Rainbow Bridge*. Wein shared a curious nickname with fellow Canyonite Charlie Manson: The Wizard.

For the remainder of his career, Phillips' musical output consisted primarily of occasionally writing songs for and with others, his most well known contribution being his co-writing duties on *Kokomo*, recorded and released by the Beach Boys.

In 1981, Phillips found himself facing charges of trafficking large quantities of narcotics. By his own account, he had an arrangement with a pharmacy that allowed him to obtain large amounts of narcotics without prescriptions (daughter Bijou would later say that he had actually purchased the pharmacy, guaranteeing virtually unlimited access). The charges were quite serious; in Phillips' own words, he "was looking

at forty-five years and got thirty days.” He began serving his sentence, appropriately enough, on April 20 and he was released just three-and-a-half weeks later. It never hurts to have friends in high places.

Phillips’ circle of friends in the post-Mamas and the Papas years included J. Paul Getty, Jr., Bobby Kennedy, Jr., and Princess Margaret. Getty and Kennedy, both plagued by demons of their own, were likely being supplied by Phillips. Another name in Phillips’ Rolodex was Colin Tennant, the wealthy heir of a massive petrochemical conglomerate in the UK. Tennant owned a private island in the British West Indies where wealthy friends like John Phillips and Mick and Bianca Jagger could engage in unknown activities in complete seclusion.

Upon being released from his preposterously short period of confinement, Phillips put together a version of the Mamas and the Papas that included daughter Mackenzie Phillips and original lead vocalist Denny Doherty. Scott McKenzie, who had summoned all the runaways across the country to come to San Francisco with flowers in their hair, later replaced Doherty. Laurie Beebe subsequently replaced Mackenzie Phillips, after which Doherty returned once again to replace John Phillips. The band finally called it quits in 1994.

Phillips had divorced Waite in 1985. In 1992, he received a liver transplant and a new lease on life. Just months later, he was photographed drinking in a bar in Palm Springs. In 1998, Phillips and the other surviving members of the Mamas and the Papas were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Three years later, on March 18, 2001, Phillips died of heart failure. The saga wasn’t quite over, however; Phillips’ daughters would carry on with the family tradition—while spilling some dark family secrets along the way.

Oldest daughter Mackenzie began her acting career at the tender age of twelve when she landed a role in what was to be George Lucas’ breakthrough film, *American Graffiti*. Just a few years before, it will be recalled, Lucas had been an unknown cameraman at the Rolling Stones’ notorious Altamont concert. During the filming of *Graffiti* in 1972, John Phillips, who I’m sure had lots of important business to attend to and therefore little time to look after his daughter, signed over legal guardianship of Mackenzie to producer Gary Kurtz. A few years later, in 1975, Mackenzie landed a role on what would quickly become a hit television series, *One Day at a Time*. During the third season, however, Macken-



zie was arrested for public drunkenness and cocaine possession, after which her substance abuse problems continued to spiral out of control, causing frequent problems and considerable tension on the set of her hit show.

Providing a template for Charlie Sheen to later follow, she was fired from her show in 1980. After two nearly fatal overdoses, she was invited back by producers in 1981. The following year she collapsed on the set and was once again fired. What had once seemed a very promising acting career was over as quickly as it had begun. From the late 1980s through the early 1990s, she performed intermittently with the reformed Mamas and the Papas. In 1992, she reportedly entered a long-term rehab program that she didn't emerge from for nine months. Following that, she kept a low profile for many years. In August 2008, however, she was arrested at LAX for heroin and cocaine possession and on Halloween day 2008, she entered a guilty plea and was once again sent to rehab.

A year later, in September 2009, Mackenzie released her tell-all memoir, *High on Arrival*, which painted a disturbing picture of her late father. In addition to introducing her to drugs at the age of eleven by injecting her with cocaine, Mackenzie claimed that Papa John had raped her on the eve of her first marriage and had engaged in an incestuous affair with her that spanned a decade and ended only when she became pregnant and did not know who the father was—a scenario, it should be noted, with remarkable parallels to the ordeal endured by Michelle's surrogate mother, Tamar Hodel.

John Phillips' memoir covering the time period in question made no mention of the illicit relationship with his daughter. He did though claim that Mackenzie was once raped at knifepoint by an unknown assailant. He also noted, shockingly enough, that Mackenzie's "house in Laurel Canyon was destroyed by fire." That, as we all know, hardly ever happens.

The year after dropping her bombshells, Mackenzie appeared on what is arguably the most appalling 'reality' show to ever hit the airwaves, *Celebrity Rehab*, in a role far removed from her glory days on a hit primetime show. That same year, sister Chynna Phillips entered rehab as well, though she was reportedly seeking relief from "anxiety." Chynna first captured the spotlight in 1990 as one-third of the vocal

group Wilson Phillips, alongside Carnie and Wendy Wilson, offspring of reclusive Beach Boy Brian Wilson. That group though proved to be very short-lived, as did Chynna's musical career. In 1995, Chynna married actor William Baldwin. In 2003, she became what *Vanity Fair* described as a "fervent born-again Christian. She was baptized in brother-in-law Stephen Baldwin's bathtub." The magazine also quoted Chynna as saying that "being a mom is challenging for me—my perspective is warped."

Like her older sisters, Bijou Lilly Phillips—born April 1, 1980, just a year before her father was harshly punished for running a major narcotics trafficking operation—merged into the fast lane at a very young age. Her mother was addicted to heroin while carrying her and Bijou has candidly described herself as a "crack baby." Raised partially in a foster home, she was reunited with her father by the courts when in the third grade. That wasn't necessarily a good thing.

Described by *Index* magazine as "a wild child who, through fate and circumstance, was somehow allowed to partake of New York's nebulous nightlife at an age traditionally more suited to playing with dolls," Bijou was a cover model from a very young age. She was also the fourteen-year-old star of a Calvin Klein ad campaign that many people (as well as the US Justice Department) considered to be bordering on child pornography, and that Bijou herself has referred to as "the kiddy porn ads."

Bijou told her interviewer from *Index* that coaching her and creepily lurking behind the scenes of that notorious Calvin Klein photo shoot—I'm guessing as a technical adviser—"was this porn guy." The interviewer identified that "porn guy" as Ron Jeremy, who is not your run-of-the-mill "porn guy," and not just because he is arguably the world's most famous porn star. He is also a very well-connected porn star. His mother, for example, was an asset of the OSS, precursor to the CIA. His uncle had ties to notorious gangster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel. And he attended high school with none other than future CIA director George Tenet.

Bijou has alluded to the fact that Mackenzie was not the only Phillips daughter to receive unwanted attention from Papa John. In her music can be found lyrics such as "he touched me wrong." Asked directly about such references, she told an interviewer that she had "made this decision not to talk to the press about anything that's gone on in my life, but just to write music about it. They can interpret it themselves,"

though she then quickly added, "It's blatantly obvious." The youngest of the Phillips clan also acknowledged that she has a "Daddy" tattoo on her rear. "That was [done] during a time," she said, "when I was a pretty sick puppy."

Bijou made her film debut in 1999 and has had a number of low-profile film and television roles since then. Most recently, she has had a recurring role on the television series *Raising Hope* as, of all things, a serial killer. She is currently an avid Scientologist. Many of the problems she has faced, she ultimately realized, stem from the fact that she'd "never been shown respect by my parents. I'd always been treated like an object, not like a human."

## 19

### **HUNGRY FREAKS, DADDY FRANK ZAPPA**

**“The fact that Frank Zappa was one of the most prominent rock-star residents of Laurel Canyon didn’t change the fact that he viewed the flower-power underground with amused contempt.”** Barney Hoskyns, author of Hotel California

**“Frank openly made fun of the very counterculture he was helping to sustain.”** Jefferson Airplane vocalist Grace Slick

FRANK ZAPPA WAS BORN ON THE FIRST DAY OF WINTER IN THE YEAR 1940 IN Baltimore, Maryland. Precisely sixty-four years later, on the winter solstice of 2004, his first grandchild, Mathilda Plum Doucette, would be born to daughter Moon Unit Zappa.

Zappa’s father, Francesco Vincenzo Zappa, hailed from Partinico, Sicily, described by Zappa biographer Barry Miles as “the Mafia heartland.” Francesco was of Greek and Arab ancestry, while his wife Rose Marie was a blend of Italian and French. Many of Francesco and Rose Marie’s siblings seem to have lived very short and tragic lives, including Francesco’s twin sisters who perished in a train crash. Rose Marie had one sister who died at birth, another (Margaret) who only made it to the

age of two, and a third who died shortly after Margaret. She also had a brother who simply vanished at the age of nineteen and was never seen or heard from again.

Francesco Zappa arrived in America in 1908, settling with his parents in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, just outside of Washington, DC. He attended the city's Polytechnic High School and then the University of North Carolina, after which he spent the rest of his life in the employ of the US military intelligence establishment. He and Rose Marie had four offspring, the oldest of whom was Francis Vincent, better known as Frank.

Frank's first schooling was at the Edgewood School, part of the Edgewood Arsenal complex where his father worked and the family lived. Edgewood was, for the uninformed, the longtime home of US chemical warfare research, as well as being, by the government's own admission, the site of human mind control experimentation in the post-WWII years. At some point in the 1940s, the Zappa clan relocated to Florida for a short time for unknown reasons, but they soon returned to Baltimore and the Edgewood Arsenal. In 1951, father Francesco was offered a position at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, but he chose instead to head further west and relocate the family to Monterey, California. While there, he taught classes at the Naval Postgraduate School.

After a couple years in Monterey, the Zappas relocated once again, first briefly to Claremont before moving on to the San Diego area, the current home of the world's largest naval fleet. While there, Francesco put his skills to work on the Atlas Missile Project, a program that would produce America's very first intercontinental ballistic missiles. Zappa's area of expertise would tend to indicate that the US was looking into developing chemical warheads for those ICBMs; that though is impossible to determine since Zappa's work in San Diego and elsewhere was classified.

In the summer of 1956, the Zappa family hit the road once again, this time landing in Lancaster, California, right alongside Edwards Air Force Base. Frank Zappa wouldn't be the only rising star to later arrive in Laurel Canyon by way of the sparsely populated wasteland of Lancaster; joining him would be tragically short-lived Byrd Clarence White, America vocalist Dewey Bunnell, and the indescribably bizarre Don Vliet, better known as Captain Beefheart.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

Shortly before the move to Lancaster, there was an unusual event in Frank's life. According to the Zappa biographies, to celebrate his fifteenth birthday his mother arranged for her son a personal phone call to famed composer Edgard Varese, who at the time was out of the country and unable to take the call. Frank did though speak with the composer's wife and later received, by various accounts, either a letter from Varese or a personal phone call. None of those accounts offer any clue to how Rose Marie Zappa had ready access to someone of Varese's stature.

In Lancaster, Frank attended Antelope Valley High School where he began experimenting with 8mm film and met and befriended Vliet, who would later change his surname to Van Vliet. The two graduated together in 1958, with Frank receiving a diploma despite the fact that he was short on credits. In 1959, at the tender age of eighteen, Frank moved into his own apartment in Echo Park and began attending Pomona College, where he met Kathryn "Kay" Sherman. Frank's brother Bobby Zappa, meanwhile, enlisted in the US Marines.

On December 28, 1960, just a week after Zappa's twentieth birthday, Frank and Kay were married and Frank began working in advertising. The marriage would last just four years. Not long after marrying Sherman, Zappa became involved with character actor Timothy Carey's bizarre underground film project known as *The World's Greatest Sinner*. Zappa provided the soundtrack for Carey's experimental film, which remained largely unseen for decades after its completion in 1962. The occult-based plot revolved around star Carey's metamorphosis from insurance salesman to rock star to cult leader to self-proclaimed god.

At around that same time, Zappa met and played occasional gigs with Terry Kirkman, who would later form yet another Laurel Canyon-affiliated band, the Association. He also began writing songs for other up-and-comers and forged a friendship and working relationship with Paul Buff, owner of the independent Pal Recording Studio in Cucamonga, California. Buff had studied aviation electronics in the US Marines, where he graduated top in a class of 500. Following his time in the service, he secured a job at General Dynamics where he engineered parts for guided missiles. He eventually left that job to, of all things, open his own recording studio. It was in that studio that Buff taught Zappa how to multi-track and overdub. At a time when most independent record-



ing studios featured just mono or, at best, two-track recording capabilities, Buff's studio featured a custom-built five-track tape recorder.

In March of 1963, Zappa famously appeared on *The Steve Allen Show* to 'play' a bicycle as a musical instrument. That same year, Herb Cohen, who would become the manager of Frank Zappa and fellow canyonites Linda Ronstadt, Alice Cooper, Lenny Bruce and Tim Buckley, returned to Los Angeles. After conveniently being in the Congo at the time of the CIA-sponsored coup that toppled (and led directly to the execution of) Patrice Lumumba, the country's first legally elected prime minister, Cohen had spent time in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he functioned as an international arms dealer.

In 1964, Zappa's marriage to Sherman collapsed and he moved into friend Paul Buff's Pal Studio, which he quickly took over and renamed Studio Z. Not long after, in a curious incident in March 1965, Zappa was charged with 'conspiracy to commit pornography' after accepting an offer to produce erotic audiotapes in his studio/home. He was sentenced to a six-month stint in jail, but all but ten days were suspended.

A year later, in June 1966, Frank Zappa and his recently formed band, the Mothers of Invention, released the groundbreaking album *Freak Out!* It was, depending upon who is telling the story, either the first or second double rock album. (Bob Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde* was scheduled to be released a month before *Freak Out!*, but Dylan's album was apparently delayed.) It was also the first rock 'concept album' and the first to print lyrics on the album sleeve. During the recording of the album—which featured contributions from Vito's troupe, Bobby Beausoleil, Frank's ever-present groupies, and various other hangers-on—Zappa moved into a Laurel Canyon home on Kirkwood Drive with Pamela Zarubica, also known as Suzy Creamcheese.

In the spring of 1967, Frank signed a contract to play at the Garrick Theater in New York, an engagement that would last six months. On one notable occasion, Zappa invited active-duty Marines onto the stage and handed them a doll, which he instructed them to pretend was a "gook baby." The GIs happily obliged the request and gleefully dismembered the doll while Frank looked on. Though Marines weren't normally part of the show, concerts by the Mothers often included the "hurling of severed baby-doll heads into the crowd of gaping groovers," as former GTO Pamela Des Barres remembers it in her book *I'm With the Band*. It was

a practice that Zappa protégé Alice Cooper would greatly expand upon.

On the autumnal equinox of 1967, Zappa married Navy brat Adelaide Gail Sloatman, who was then working as former cop/gangster Elmer Valentine's personal assistant, overseeing the operations of the Whiskey-A-Go-Go and the Trip. Just one week later, on September 28, 1967, daughter Moon Unit Zappa was born. She would ultimately be joined by three siblings, each bearing a progressively more bizarre name: Dweezil Zappa, Ahmet Emuukha Rodan Zappa, and Diva Thin Muffin Pigeen Zappa. All would be pulled out of school at the age of fifteen and their father would refuse to pay for any of them to attend college.

The Zappas soon returned to Laurel Canyon and took up residence in what had already become the community's most notorious commune, the iconic Log Cabin. Des Barres described the living conditions for her and other future members of the GTOs: "Lucy and Sandra shared the vault in the basement of the log cabin that Tom Mix built... Directly across from the vault was a large closet where Christine Frka privately resided." The basement featured a second walk-in vault that was frequently occupied by Carl Franzoni, to whom the Zappa song Hungry Freaks, Daddy was dedicated. People lived in every nook and cranny of the property, as well as on the grounds, which came "complete with a stream and minilake, caves, hideaways..."

Also at that time, Zappa and manager Cohen jointly launched two new record labels, Bizarre Records and Straight Records. Along with a recording of comic Lenny Bruce's last live performance, the labels would deliver to the world some of the oddest and most outrageous acts ever committed to vinyl, including the partially underage GTOs, shock-rocker Alice Cooper, Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, and Larry "Wild Man" Fischer.

When discovered and signed by Zappa, Fischer was a self-styled 'street singer' with a colorful history and a noticeable lack of songwriting and vocal talent. Born on November 6, 1944, Larry lost his father when he was quite young and his mother was described as being emotionally distant and verbally abusive. Larry had no friends during his childhood and he was reportedly thrown out of high school. At the age of sixteen, he was institutionalized after attacking his mother with a knife. He later made two additional attempts to kill his mother and attacked his brother on at least one occasion as well.

In 1963, he was institutionalized once again, at Camarillo State Hospital, where he was subjected to repeated electroshock ‘treatments.’ “They did all kinds of things to me,” Fischer once said, “like I was like a guinea pig.” He was released in 1964 but was committed again two years later, in 1966. Accounts vary as to whether he was released or whether he escaped in this instance. One way or another he was back out in 1968, although he was never welcomed home again and so took to the streets, singing for change. It was there that he was discovered by Zappa, who released Fischer’s first single in October 1968 on, appropriately enough, the Bizarre label.

Fischer’s magnum opus, *An Evening with Wild Man Fischer*, hit record stores on April 28, 1969. The double album, produced by Zappa, featured Fischer on the cover holding a knife to a maternal figure. Later that year, Zappa got Fischer a booking on *Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In*. It wasn’t long though before Larry had bitterly parted ways with Zappa following an incident in which Fischer angrily threw a bottle that narrowly missed hitting infant Moon Unit. Larry thereafter dropped out of sight for several years, surfacing again in 1975 when he wrote and sang a jingle for the newly launched Rhino Records.

In 1977, Rhino returned the favor by releasing Fischer’s second album, *Wildmania*, to less than critical acclaim. Billy Mumy, yet another former child actor, co-produced Fischer’s third and fourth albums, *Pronounced Normal* (1981) and *Nothing Scary* (1983), both on the Rhino label. Though Mumy maintained a close relationship with Fischer, Wild Man once pulled a gun on the former *Twilight Zone* and *Lost in Space* star, who Larry suspected of being involved in a bizarre conspiracy involving Weird Al Yankovic and Dr. Demento.

A few years after the release of *Nothing Scary*, Mumy recorded a duet featuring the unusual pairing of Fischer and Rosemary Clooney. After that, Wild Man Fischer largely drifted back into obscurity. By 2004, he was living anonymously in an assisted care facility. On June 16, 2011, his tragic life came to an end, reportedly due to a heart condition. Six months earlier, on December 17, 2010, another decidedly offbeat one-time member of the Zappa inner circle, Captain Beefheart, had also passed away.

Don Glen Vliet, born on January 15, 1941, in Glendale, California, was one of Zappa’s earliest musical collaborators. Vliet, who moved to

Lancaster as a pampered young teen in 1954, was a child prodigy by some reports. He was also the grandson of a second cousin to accused Nazi sympathizer Wallis Simpson, wife of King Edward VIII.

Beefheart first professionally collaborated with Zappa at Pal Studio in 1963, but the demos produced from those sessions were unsuccessful. Vliet then worked for a while as a door-to-door salesman, during which time, if legends are to be believed, he sold a vacuum cleaner to psychedelic pioneer Aldous Huxley. If so, then Huxley must not have gotten much use out of it, since he passed away later that year, just hours after the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963.

By 1965, Beefheart had formed the Magic Band, which would release thirteen albums between 1965 and 1982, albums on which Vliet would play harmonica and saxophone as well as provide his distinctive lead vocals. The first of those albums was *Safe as Milk*, released in 1967, followed by *Strictly Personal* in 1968. The band's third album, 1969's *Trout Mask Replica*, was released by Zappa's Straight Records and is considered to be Beefheart's signature work. To this day, the disc is regarded by some as one of the greatest rock albums of all time, though others have described Vliet's work in considerably less flattering terms.

Whether Vliet was the musical genius some view him as is a topic for others to debate; what is of far more interest here is how that music was created. *Trout Mask Replica* was recorded in a tiny two-bedroom house with blacked out windows in Woodland Hills. It was there that Beefheart's band members were essentially held prisoner for eight months, with the Captain in total control of everything, including the band members' eating and sleeping schedules. The drummer, John French, has described the atmosphere in that house as "cultlike" and has made ominous references to "brainwashing sessions."

The musicians were restricted from leaving the house and were forced to rehearse for fourteen hours every day. They were subjected to both sleep deprivation and food deprivation, and they were actively encouraged to physically attack each other. Beefheart would frequently utilize physical violence to keep the others in line; French wrote in his memoirs of being "screamed at, beaten up, drugged, humiliated, arrested, starved, stolen from, and thrown down a half-flight of stairs." They lived in poverty and squalor, with public assistance the band's only income. For one full month, the abused musicians had to survive on a

single cup of beans each per day. Arrests for shoplifting were not uncommon.

Beefheart also assigned new names to all the band members, “loosening,” as Barry Miles wrote, “their hold on their old identities.” John French, for example, became Drumbo. So strong was Vliet’s hold on his bandmates that though a couple were able to escape the deplorable conditions, they ultimately returned to an environment that was, according to a friend of the band, “positively Mansonesque.” For their efforts, the musicians were paid little or nothing. And Beefheart claimed sole credit for composing and arranging the album, though it was in fact a collaborative effort. Later albums would follow much the same patterns.

There certainly doesn’t appear to have been any shortage of “Mansonesque” characters populating Laurel Canyon circa 1969, and they mostly seem to have been clustered around Frank Zappa. We have already seen how Vito Paulekas, who ran the Mothers’ freak sideshow, had clear parallels to Manson and was even described by those close to him as being very Manson-like. Now we see that Beefheart as well seems to have attended the Manson school of cult leadership. And Zappa himself had some rather Mansonesque qualities, including a dictatorial, autocratic style; a penchant for surrounding himself with an endless stream of very young, impressionable girls; some peculiar ideas about child sexuality; his self-assignment as the leader of a commune; and a fondness for handing out offbeat names.

It should also be mentioned here, I suppose, that Manson associate Phil Kaufman served as Zappa’s road manager for a time. And according to Ed Sanders, “In early May [1969]... Beausoleil went to Frank Zappa, the brilliant composer and producer, and wanted Zappa to come to the ranch to hear the music,” an invitation that was reportedly declined. Less than two months later, Beausoleil would conspire to murder musician Gary Hinman.

Nineteen-sixty-nine was also the year that Zappa dissolved the original Mothers of Invention. Together for just five years, there had always been tension within the band, owing primarily to Zappa’s dictatorial style. Frank was viewed by many as a “control freak,” and he was widely seen as being cold and emotionally distant, even with his immediate family (he chose to spend the vast majority of his time alone

in his home studio, where it was understood that he was never to be disturbed). He was also viewed by band members and others as elitist, owing in part to his habit of staying at a different hotel than the rest of the band while on the road. David Anderle of MGM Records perhaps summed up Zappa best: "I always felt there was something a little totalitarian about Frank... I was awed by the clarity of the vision and his ability to make it happen... but it was without warmth."

Some viewed with suspicion Zappa's fondness for taking out full-page ads in the local *LA Free Press*, ostensibly to report on band news. According to Miles, "there were dark mutterings about Frank's attempt to control the Freak scene." The freak scene, that is, that he openly disdained and yet still sought to control. "The other Mothers," notes Miles, "were concerned by Frank's somewhat messianic diatribes."

Around that same time, Zappa gave up his role as ringleader of the Log Cabin and bought a house high up in the hills of Laurel Canyon, on Woodrow Wilson Drive. In stark contrast to his readily accessible prior lodgings, the new home was isolated and security was very tight, including a guardhouse and a closed-circuit television system. It was there that Zappa would live out the remainder of his years. The Log Cabin, meanwhile, was taken over by Eric Burden of British rock band the Animals. The cabin had by then become a mandatory stop for all visiting 'British Invasion' bands. According to biographer Barry Miles, the cabin's new ringleader didn't much care for working with the former occupant, comparing working with Zappa to "working with Hitler."

Zappa's move, and his newfound obsession with security, was said to be prompted in part by a curious visit to the Log Cabin in the summer of 1969—the summer of the Tate/LaBianca murders. A man identified only as "the Raven" arrived wielding a gun. Little else seems to be known about the incident but it is interesting to note that just a few years earlier, a guy who was very fond of that moniker had arrived in California. Also known as the Reverend Jim Jones of the People's Temple, he would become a rather infamous figure.

Frank Zappa remained an enormously prolific composer, arranger and performer of music throughout his life, sometimes playing with various incarnations of the Mothers. Although never a huge commercial success and almost never heard on the radio, his immense body of work is widely respected among fellow musicians and is considered to



be hugely influential. What is of far more interest here though are some specific events from Zappa's later years.

On July 14, 1982, while Zappa was performing on his father's home turf in Palermo, Sicily, a war broke out between tear-gas wielding police and inexplicably armed audience members. According to Miles, the concert was held at the "mafia-controlled Stadio Comunale La Favorita and all the security appeared to be made men." The Italian army was soon called in to restore order. Had Zappa's father been alive and in attendance, he might well have joined in the gunplay; he reportedly owned a handgun that he at times threatened to use, and he also was said to enjoy a good brawl now and then.

In September 1985, Frank testified before the Senate Commerce, Technology and Transportation Committee, taking Tipper Gore's PMRC committee to task over the issue of record album labeling. This is said to have ignited in Zappa a passion for politics, to such an extent that he dabbled with the idea of running for president. What he ultimately decided to do instead was serve as something of a front man for organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

In 1990, he visited Czechoslovakia at the request of newly installed president Vaclav Havel, who asked him to serve as a consultant on trade and tourism. Zappa was treated by the new Czech administration (which wasn't nearly as popular at home as it was in the West) as though he was making an official state visit. He announced that he had "come to Czechoslovakia to see Communism die... I have been an enthusiastic capitalist for years." He also announced his intention of starting up an international consulting firm aimed at breaking down barriers to Western trade and investment. Toward that end, he began meeting with multinational corporate entities that had an interest in investing in Czechoslovakia.

The man who had, as Miles has noted, refused during the Vietnam era "to be drawn into anti-war protests or demonstrations," and who had his whole life been "more content to mock hippies and groupies than to criticize the Vietnam War, the American overthrow of democratic governments in Chile and Iran, or any of the other excesses committed in his name by his government," had now "internalized the whole Time-Life anticommunist line." Following his escapades in Czech-

oslovakia, Zappa made a number of trips to Russia to facilitate business deals through what he dubbed his “international licensing, consulting and social engineering” business enterprise.

Zappa’s role as unofficial front man for the World Bank came to a premature end when he died of prostate cancer on December 4, 1993, just a couple weeks short of his fifty-third birthday. Rather bizarrely, he was laid to rest in an unmarked grave following a private ceremony less than twenty-four hours later. And it was not until the next day, December 6, 1993, with the body already safely in the ground, that his death was announced to the world.

In 2001, son Ahmet began dating actress Rose McGowan (no relation), whose colorful history included spending part of her childhood in the pedophilic Children of God cult. Her father ran a chapter of the sect, which also bequeathed to Hollywood the Phoenix brothers, Joaquin and River, the latter of whom died under mysterious circumstances at the tender age of twenty-three outside the Viper Room, very near the mouth of Laurel Canyon, on Halloween night, 1993. McGowan’s previous paramour had been shock-rocker Brain Warner, better known as Marilyn Manson. A fourth cousin of bellicose political commentator and onetime presidential candidate Pat Buchanan, Warner, whose stage surname is an homage to—who else?—Charles Manson, has proudly served as a high priest in Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan.

## 20

### **BORN TO BE WILD** JOHN KAY

**"I have an explosive temper if someone aggravates me... I have been known to put my fists through one or two walls."** Steppenwolf vocalist John Kay

**"John had a hell of a temper when he was doing drugs."** Steve Palmer, a member of one of many incarnations of Steppenwolf

OF ALL THE SINGERS, SONGWRITERS AND MUSICIANS TO ANSWER THE PIED Piper's call summoning them to Laurel Canyon, none took a longer route there than John Kay, the enigmatic frontman for the band Steppenwolf. Kay, as it turns out, came all the way from Nazi Germany, by way of Toronto, Canada and Buffalo, New York, as did his wife and one of his bandmates.

Kay was born Joachim Fritz Krauledat on April 12, 1944, in East Prussia, a province of Germany before 1914 that was separated from the rest of the country by provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, though it remained a German-speaking province. After the plunder and annexation of Poland by the Nazis, it once again became a part of the German state, but only for the next five years. After the fall of Nazi Germany, East Prussia ceased to exist, with the northern portion being absorbed by the USSR into Byelorussia and the southern portion placed under the Polish flag.

Kay was born in Tilsit to Fritz and Elsbeth Krauledat. Fritz had enlisted in the German army in 1936 and decided to make a career of it, eventually rising to the rank of *Oberwachtmeister*, which roughly translates to Brigade Sergeant Major. He was on hand for the invasion of Poland in 1939 and the plunder of France in 1940. With the launch of Operation Barbarossa on the summer solstice of 1941, Fritz was sent to the Russian front. He last saw his wife at Christmastime in 1943. In March of the following year, she received notification of his death.

Between late July and early August of 1944, the widowed Elsbeth left Tilsit with her infant son. It was a fortuitous exit given that the Red Army almost immediately thereafter began bombing the region into oblivion. Elsbeth had been issued a permit that allowed her to travel anywhere in Germany and she used it to move herself and Joachim to Arnstadt, crossing the pre-Berlin Wall border in the process. Upon arrival in Arnstadt, Elsbeth and Joachim were taken under the wing of the Kranz family, who put a roof over their heads and became their benefactors. Soon enough, Elsbeth met Gerhard Kyczinski, a former German soldier and POW who was a mason by trade. In August 1950, Gerhard and Elsbeth married. For the next eight years, they would share a home in Arnstadt with Joachim.

During those years, young Joachim twice vacationed with his mother in the resort town of Travemünde, which Kay later described as “a very popular vacation spot with white beaches and fancy hotels.” He also attended the Freie Waldorf Schule, an exclusive private school with a perpetual waiting list. Mother, son and stepfather seemed to travel rather freely, twice crossing over into East Germany and back to visit Gerhard’s family. Also while still in Germany, Joachim acquired his first radio and began listening to US Armed Forces Radio, where he first heard an early idol, Little Richard. He also acquired a record player and began collecting albums by Little Richard and others, including Elvis and the Everly Brothers. He also attended screenings of rock’n’roll themed Hollywood films, like Elvis’ *Love Me Tender*. At the age of thirteen, not long before leaving Germany, he acquired his first camera.

It would appear then that Kay experienced a rather privileged upbringing for a young war refugee.

In March of 1958, Gerhard, Elsbeth and Joachim packed up and headed off for Toronto, Canada, where several members of the Kraule-

dat and Kyczinski families had already relocated. The trio opted to travel by plane rather than ship, even though flying was a decidedly luxurious mode of travel in those days. Joachim Krauledat, who would soon become John Kay, entered the Canadian school system in the ninth grade. It is said that he knew virtually no English upon arrival, but within mere months he was reportedly speaking it fluently.

The family quickly acquired a late model Chevy and John acquired his first acoustic guitar—and a reel-to-reel tape recorder. He also discovered that Toronto had far more radio stations playing rock’n’roll music than Germany had had to offer. He discovered other strains of American music as well, including gospel and country. Before long, he would have an electric guitar and an amplifier and speaker, along with a better acoustic guitar.

In April of 1963, Gerhard and Elsbeth relocated once again, this time to Buffalo, New York. John stayed behind in Toronto to finish up high school, joining his parents a couple months later. As recounted by Kay in his autobiography, in Buffalo the family rented “a luxurious main floor flat in a stately old house on Woodward Street out towards Williamsville.” Gerhard, according to John, “started his own import-export business,” a pretty impressive accomplishment for a guy who had just entered the country.

The family didn’t stay long in Buffalo, choosing instead to pull up roots once again and relocate, this time all the way across the country to Los Angeles, California. Elsbeth immediately landed a job at the upscale Bullocks department store in Westwood. Within just a few years, she was named manager of her department. Gerhard, meanwhile, quickly “found the job of his life, working for the German consulate in Los Angeles as the Consul General’s chauffeur,” a job he held from 1964 until 1978. As always, John and his family lived charmed lives; not only did the parents both quickly land good jobs, but the aspiring-rock-star son had the good fortune to land in LA at the dawn of a music revolution!

John lost no time forging a friendship with Morgan Cavett, who was already introduced to readers as the son of Oscar-winning screenwriter Frank Cavett. At the time, Cavett was working as the manager of the New Balladeer coffeehouse. Morgan also happened to be the godson of poet and writer Dorothy Parker, who had been born Dorothy Rothschild and who had herself lived for many years at the mouth of Laurel Can-

yon, at the famed Garden of Allah apartments (where she attempted more than once to kill herself). Morgan had also gone to school with doomed canyon musician Lowell George and he was a close associate of the Vito Paulekas dance troupe. Kay began regularly sleeping on the floor of Cavett's large home, which sat at the mouth of Laurel Canyon directly behind the Chateau Marmont.

Cavett quit his job at the Balladeer soon enough and Kay took over as manager of the popular club. Among the regulars at the time were soon-to-be-Byrds David Crosby, Roger McGuinn and Gene Clark, and Bryan MacLean, who would become a member of Love. In his off hours, Kay also began hanging out at the Troubadour and was soon working there as a self-styled floor manager. There he met Van Dyke Parks, who was known at the time for hosting drug-fueled parties attended by the likes of David Crosby and Beach Boy Brian Wilson. By that time, Morgan had rented an apartment in Laurel Canyon and John regularly camped out there, sleeping in a large walk-in closet. Kay also became a regular at Ciro's and was there, along with Vito and his crew, when the Byrds hit the scene and ignited the folk-rock revolution.

Having quickly formed connections to some of the key players in the nascent Laurel Canyon scene, Kay made the rather bizarre decision to leave Los Angeles and his family behind and return to Toronto, hitchhiking there by way of Buffalo. By then, Toronto's Yorkville district had a flourishing folk scene featuring soon-to-be-stars like Gordon Lightfoot, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell. It was almost as if Kay had been dispatched back to Canada to point the other artists there in the right direction, which is exactly what he seems to have done.

According to Kay's autobiography, "within a day or two of [his] arrival" in Toronto, he met the manager of a local club and promptly got a booking that lasted several weeks. He was also offered the basement of the club to sleep in. John Kay, it appears, just had a knack for immediately establishing himself in a new town. He quickly joined a band that would come to be known as the Sparrow, which was known for swapping members with another local band known as the Mynah Birds, fronted by Rickey James Matthews. The Mynahs were bankrolled by a local businessman named John Craig Eaton. At the height of their power, the immensely wealthy and influential Eaton family, which is often referred to as 'Canada's Royal Family,' was worth some \$2 billion.



Kay recruited bassist Bruce Palmer but then traded him to the Mynah Birds for Nick St. Nicholas, who, like John, had begun life in Nazi Germany. St. Nicholas was born Klaus Karl Kassbaum on September 28, 1943, but, as with John, Kassbaum's family had emigrated to Toronto in the 1950s. Also joining Kay was keyboardist John Raymond Goadsby, another former Mynah Bird who went by the name Goldy McJohn. Rounding out the band were drummer Gerard McCrohan, known as Jerry Edmonton, and his songwriter brother Dennis McCrohan, who also adopted the surname Edmonton before later settling on the name Mars Bonfire.

Mynahs Neil Young and Bruce Palmer soon found their calling and rode out of town for their magical meeting with Stephen Stills. Joni soon headed west as well. Kay, meanwhile, married Jutta Maue, with whom he had much in common. Maue was born in Nazi Germany in February 1944, just a couple of months before John was born. Her father was killed on the Eastern Front in May 1944, not long after Kay's father was likewise killed. After the war, Maue and her family emigrated to Toronto, a seemingly popular destination for German families in the 1950s.

With his new band in tow, Kay soon headed out of town as well—the first destination being New York City, where the group cut three tracks before returning to Toronto. They were soon back in New York though with a lengthy club booking and a recording contract that kept them there for an extended period of time in 1966. During that time, according to Kay, the band started listening to Edgard Varese, a favorite pastime of future Laurel Canyon musicians.

Later that same year, bookings at the Whisky-a-Go-Go and the club formerly known as Ciro's brought the band out to Los Angeles. After about a month though the boys ran out of gigs and Kay resumed his habit of sleeping at Morgan Cavett's apartment. Things were not looking good for the band in LA at that time; they had run out of work and most band members had expired work visas and were in the country illegally. But John Kay, as we have already seen, seems to have had a guardian angel: "It was like a fairy tale. Here I was, no work, no money, a pregnant wife and no prospects, then in walks this guy living next door, from a successful record label, saying he thought I might have a shot at a contract if I could get a band together. It seemed almost like it was

all meant to be. Everything seemed to fall into place at the right time.”

Kay quickly began putting together a new band. For guitar duties, strangely enough, he recruited a local high school kid with the rather provocative name of Michael Monarch. According to Monarch himself, quoted in Kay’s *Magic Carpet Ride*, when he joined the band he “had only been playing for less than two years.” According to legend, Monarch was just sixteen when he laid down the lead guitar track for *Born To Be Wild* and just seventeen when he did the same for *Magic Carpet Ride*.

Through posted notices advertising the band’s need for a bass player, John met and hired John Russell Morgane, also known as Rushton Moreve. Jerry Edmonton on drums and Goldy McJohn on keyboards completed the new ensemble, which took the Germanic name Steppenwolf—inspired by the occult-influenced novel of the same name by Herman Hesse—and signed with ABC Dunhill. This formation would not last long though. Over time, Kay, whom Nick St. Nicholas has referred to as “the Führer,” would fire nearly every one of the original band members. And some of their replacements.

The fledgling band rehearsed through the summer of 1967 in a rented garage. By December 1967, though they had been together just a matter of months, ABC decided the band was ready to cut an album. That self-titled debut was recorded in just four days at a cost of just \$9,000 and released the very next month. On April 4, 1968, just a few months after the release, Steppenwolf had their national television debut on *American Bandstand*, lip-syncing to their monster hit, *Born To Be Wild*.

The week before the band was beamed into America’s living rooms, Jutta gave birth to what would be John Kay’s only offspring, Shawn Mandy Kay, on March 29, 1968. Growing up, Shawn’s circle of friends and classmates would include Carnie and Wendy Wilson (daughters of Beach Boy Brian Wilson), John Phillips’ daughter Chynna, Zappa offspring Moon Unit and Dweezil, Ethan Browne (son of Jackson Browne), and Phil Spector’s son Donte. Shawn Kay would later recall that she was intimidated by her father when she was young, adding that, “when he was around, there was a certain amount of tension in the air.”

In October 1968, Steppenwolf dropped its second album, unimaginatively entitled *The Second*. That disc contained the band’s second

monster hit, *Magic Carpet Ride*, based on an unfinished song brought to the band by bassist Rushton Moreve. It was to be the band's last top-ten single. It was also, given that *Born To Be Wild* was donated to the band by the aforementioned Mars Bonfire, the only hit single written by a band member (a lesser hit, *The Pusher*, was penned by Hoyt Axton, who also wrote *Three Dog Night's Joy To The World*, and who was both a resident of Laurel Canyon and the son of a US Navy officer).

It makes perfect sense then, I suppose, that following the release of that second album, Moreve was unceremoniously fired by Kay and replaced with Nick St. Nicholas. According to Kay, Moreve had been "becoming increasingly paranoid of the police and would relate to us these wildly imaginative tales of being arrested and beaten." Moreve, it should be noted, was the boyfriend of 'Animal' Huxley, the only granddaughter of the very same Aldous Huxley who had been sold a vacuum cleaner by Captain Beefheart. As Goldy McJohn recalled it, just before being let go, Moreve and Huxley (who was name-checked on the cover of Zappa's *Freak Out!* album) packed up their belongings and left the state out of fear that there was going to be a massive earthquake that would cause California to sink into the ocean. When that failed to materialize, Moreve ultimately returned to the LA area but was never asked to rejoin the band. He was later killed in a motorcycle accident on July 1, 1981, in Santa Barbara, California at the age of thirty-two.

Steppenwolf released their third album, *At Your Birthday Party*, in March 1969. The cover art featured a photo of the band taken at the burned-out remains of Canned Heat's former Laurel Canyon home. The disc yielded no top ten singles and was largely a commercial failure. Just a few months later though, the band's career got a massive boost with the release of the film *Easy Rider* on July 14, 1969. With a soundtrack that prominently featured *Born To Be Wild* and *The Pusher*, both pulled from Steppenwolf's debut album, the film gained the band a worldwide audience. It also solidified their image as a Hell's Angels/outlaw biker band. Kay, who fancied himself to be a tough guy, actively embraced that image, frequently appearing with his band at biker rallies and routinely appearing on stage and in publicity photos clad in black leather and with a perpetual scowl.

As 1969 came to a close, Kay and the band released their fourth album, *Monster*, which sold somewhat better than its predecessor. The

band also launched a successful tour in 1970, which included a stop at the Bath Festival of Blues in the UK alongside fellow Laurel Canyon acts the Byrds, Canned Heat and the Mothers of Invention. Another Laurel Canyon band, Three Dog Night, which already had three top ten singles by 1970, tagged along for part of the tour.

Steppenwolf released two more instantly forgettable albums before Kay officially retired the band in 1972. He had already fired Nick St. Nicholas, in part because, as Kay noted in his autobiography, he and the rest of the band “weren’t sure what Nick’s sexual orientation was or had become.” That is apparently a problem when one wants one’s band to project a tough, macho image.

Kay had been hinting since the release of Steppenwolf’s second album that he had aspirations for a solo career. His first two solo efforts though, released in 1972 and 1973, failed to attract much attention, with the latter of the two stalling out on the charts at number 200. Not surprisingly then, it didn’t take Kay long to decide to get the band back together, initially including original members Edmonton and McJohn. Goldy though, whom Kay claimed “had a lot of demons buried deep in his psyche,” was fired after the first of three albums the new lineup released, leaving drummer Jerry Edmonton as the only original band member to not be discharged. With the albums failing to gain much traction on the charts, Kay once again retired the band in 1976.

A new version of Steppenwolf soon emerged, however, this one put together by fired former members Goldy McJohn and Nick St. Nicholas. That development though did not sit well with Kay, who felt that he alone had the moral right to use the Steppenwolf name, though he did not have exclusive legal rights to it. Kay would later write that St. Nicholas and McJohn were “both lucky to be alive today after what they did. I knew people who in turn knew people who, for a price, would put a serious hurt on someone with no questions asked.” As I may have mentioned, Kay likes to think of himself as something of a bad-ass.

Kay quickly engaged his attorneys in some legal maneuvering to strongarm McJohn and St. Nicholas into signing over all their future royalties to he and Edmonton. He then set about putting together his own version of Steppenwolf, this time leaving out even Edmonton. Kay had decided that, this time around, he alone would cash in on the Steppenwolf name. The reconstituted band embarked on a low-budget tour

that featured small venues where band members had to set up and tear down their own equipment. It was a far cry from the band's heyday in the late 1960s and after two failed albums, the second of which was not even released in the US, the band once again called it quits in 1984.

It wasn't long though before Kay, in his own words, "received an offer to tour jointly with the Guess Who, a reconstituted lineup fronted by their original bass player." Kay readily accepted the offer and by doing so lent his tacit approval to a version of the Guess Who that included only one original member. This was, of course, the very same John Kay who had used every means available to prevent his own bass player and keyboardist from using the name Steppenwolf.

The new Steppenwolf lineup released two instantly forgettable albums in 1987 and 1990 before Kay once again retired the band name. He continues to occasionally put out relatively obscure solo efforts, including live albums in 2004 and 2006. Others connected to the band have not fared so well. Steppenwolf's original producer, Gabriel Mekler, who also produced Three Dog Night, died in a motorcycle accident sometime in 1977. Rushton Moreve, as already noted, also perished in a motorcycle accident, in July 1981. Drummer Jerry Edmonton died in a car accident on November 28, 1993. Nick St. Nicholas and Michael Monarch, meanwhile, play in an all-star band dubbed the World Classic Rockers.

And *Born To Be Wild* and *Magic Carpet Ride* continue to be played daily on classic rock radio stations.

## **A WHITER SHADE OF PALE**

### **ARTHUR LEE AND LOVE**

**“We definitely started what became the Hippie movement and it spread from there up to Haight-Ashbury and the Fillmore in San Francisco, and then all across the nation.”** Arthur Lee, vocalist for the band Love

**“Arthur was the whitest black guy I knew. He didn’t live the black lifestyle, always liked the white way of life, and liked white girls.”** Producer Skip Taylor

OF ALL THE BANDS TO POUR OUT OF LAUREL CANYON DURING ITS HEYDAY, none is more shrouded in mystery and rumor than Love, fronted by one of the most talented and troubled figures on the Sunset Strip, the menacingly charismatic Arthur Lee. Though Lee and his bandmates never achieved the sales figures of contemporaries like the Doors, the Byrds, and the Mamas and the Papas, the band’s body of work continues to be hugely influential and its album *Forever Changes* is widely considered to be among the greatest rock albums of all time.

Arthur Porter Taylor was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on March 7, 1945. His mother, Agnes Porter, was the daughter of Ed Porter, a



white man, and Malvise “Mal” Mosley, a very fair-skinned black woman. Throughout her life, most of Agnes’ friends and acquaintances assumed she was white. Chester Taylor, a black cornet player, was Arthur’s father, but Arthur only saw him a few times throughout his life and he consequently never knew whether he had any half-siblings on his father’s side.

Arthur’s early years were spent in Memphis, where he was raised by his doting—though authoritarian—mother and her sister Vera, who frequently babysat while Agnes worked. Vera was a heavy drinker and smoker who Arthur credited with starting him on cigarettes when he was just three. According to Arthur, Aunt Vera died young from ingesting rat poison, which must have had a considerable impact on the young boy.

Growing up just one block away was friend and classmate Johnny Echols, two years younger than Arthur. In 1952, Agnes and then seven-year-old Arthur uprooted and moved to Los Angeles. The next year, Johnny Echols and his family decided to move to LA as well, strangely finding a home just two doors down from Arthur’s new family home. Agnes soon met Clinton “C.L.” Lee, whom she married on April 23, 1955. Five years later, C.L. legally adopted Arthur, who would from then on be known as Arthur Lee.

Clinton had served in the military during WWII before settling in Los Angeles in 1946. Arthur’s authorized biography provides the following description of C.L. Lee’s postwar employment: “Skilled at masonry, he prospered during LA’s postwar construction boom. Arthur would often point to the sculptures that adorned buildings along Wilshire Boulevard as evidence of his stepfather’s handiwork.” Many of those adornments, as with those on the monuments of Washington carved by Carl Franconi’s ancestors, are loaded with Masonic symbolism.

Arthur’s LA neighborhood was filled with musical influences. Little Richard, who had such a profound influence on John Kay, was a neighbor, as was singer Bobby Day. Ray Charles had a recording studio nearby. Attending Dorsey High School with Albert were Billy Preston and future Beach Boy Mike Love. And Arthur, unlike other kids in the neighborhood but very much like other future Laurel Canyon stars, had musical instruments and a reel-to-reel tape recorder, as well as a television. He was also known for always having money in his pocket.

Lee was a naturally gifted athlete who served as the captain of Dorsey High's basketball team. He was also known as a tough kid who didn't shy away from a fight. In the late 1950s, legendary fighter Sugar Ray Robinson lived around the corner and Arthur entertained thoughts of becoming a boxer. Instead he opted to pursue a musical career, dropping out of high school during his senior year. Arthur had formed his first successful band while still in school. Dubbed Arthur Lee and the LAGs, their first professional gig was at an exclusive Beverly Hills country club, right across the street from future bandmate Bryan MacLean's family home. The LAGs' unscrupulous manager/agent routinely booked them as the Coasters, or the Drifters, or whoever else had a current hit on the charts. Lee and the rest of the group were, though quite young, very accomplished musicians who could mimic the sound of numerous other bands.

While still a minor, Lee recorded his first single, *The Ninth Wave*, for prestigious Capitol Records. The release received little promotion though and failed to chart. Also while still a minor, he received a brand new Corvair Monza, courtesy of step-dad Clinton. In 1964, he wrote the song *My Diary* for vocalist Rosa Lee Brooks. The guitar work on the single was supplied by an unknown musician named Jimi Hendrix, who had never before set foot in a recording studio. That same year, Lee disbanded the LAGs and formed the American Four with longtime friend and classmate Johnny Echols. They soon added acclaimed local drummer Don Conka. The group was essentially a top forty cover band, once again good enough to sound like anyone they chose to mimic, though they did release an original single, *Luci Baines*, named for the First Daughter who had spent a night out on the town with Gene Clark.

One figure on the canyon scene who would prove to be hugely influential on young Arthur was club owner and former cop/gangster Elmer Valentine. Arthur would later write that "Elmer Valentine was not only a good friend, he was like a father figure to me." Another major influence was the emergence of the Byrds and the human circus surrounding them. As Echols would later recall, "What impressed us when we saw the Byrds were the people in the audience—what the *Los Angeles Times* called the 'Sherwood Forest People'—because they looked like something out of Robin Hood. It was this huge, fascinating group of

eclectic people, all dressed totally bizarrely, with long, long hair. These were the leftovers from the Beat era. They followed the Byrds around.”

Those Sherwood Forest people were, of course, the Vito Paulekas crew. And they would soon be following Arthur and his band around as well.

When the band had worked its way up from playing a bowling alley to playing the Brave New World club, they changed their name to the Grass Roots. They also added a rhythm guitarist by the name of Robert Kenneth Beausoleil. Shortly thereafter, they added a second rhythm guitarist, Bryan MacLean, who had grown up amid considerable wealth—his father was an architect for the rich and famous. As Bryan later acknowledged, he “knew everyone in Hollywood.” Bryan had been a regular at the New Balladeer club, along with Gene Clark, Roger McGuinn, David Crosby, Michael Clarke, and John Kay. He had dropped out of high school at seventeen to pursue an art career, but had decided to focus on music instead, unsuccessfully auditioning to be one of the Monkees. Soon after, he met Arthur and Johnny and gave up his temporary employment as the Byrds’ road manager.

For a brief time, both Bobby and Bryan filled the rhythm guitar position, making it a six-piece band. However, Arthur soon found that the band wasn’t earning enough to carry both of them and so Beausoleil was let go. Bryan was chosen over Bobby in part because MacLean had a connection to the Vito crew, guaranteeing the fledgling band a lively audience and a lot of buzz on the Strip.

Beausoleil would later migrate to the San Francisco area for the famed Summer of Love, moving into the former Russian Embassy with filmmaker and occultist Kenneth Anger, who—according to Bobby, quoted in John Gilmore’s *Garbage People*—“had this contact with this group called ‘The Process.’” Anger was also, not too surprisingly, yet another son of the military/intelligence complex; his father, Wilbur Anglemyer, had been an engineer who developed machineguns for Kellogg during WWII and later went to work for Douglas Aircraft.

Beausoleil played in a number of long-forgotten bands, many bearing names with obvious occult overtones. While playing with a lineup known as Orkustra, Bobby once shared a stage with Stephen Stills, Neil Young and the rest of Buffalo Springfield. Another formation he briefly joined was known as the Magick Powerhouse of Oz.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

Beausoleil returned to LA in October 1967 following a split with Anger. Meanwhile, Charles Manson, released from prison on March 21, 1967, established his first roots in Los Angeles around December 1967 at a notorious home in Topanga Canyon known as the ‘Spiral Staircase,’ which by some reports was a cult gathering spot. It was there that Bobby first met Charlie and the two aspiring musicians quickly formed a bond, with Bobby agreeing to join Charlie’s band, the Milky Way. That supergroup broke up after only one gig, however, though Bobby and Charlie remained close.

Beausoleil—who, according to John Gilmore’s *Garbage People* was chronically abused as a child by an aunt and uncle, with a former girlfriend describing it as “typical of the worst of the sexual and other abuse brought down on a little kid”—had a brief film career as well, appearing as Lucifer in Anger’s *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (though the footage was originally shot for *Lucifer Rising*), and as Cupid in Robert Carl Cohen’s *Mondo Hollywood*. Later, as previously noted, Beausoleil would compose, perform and record the soundtrack for *Lucifer Rising* from a prison cell, with help from fellow Mansonite/musician Steve “Clem” Grogan.

At the time he met Manson, Beausoleil was living with musician Gary Hinman, as was Mansonite Mary Brunner; Hinman’s Topanga Canyon home reportedly featured a basement drug lab. By 1968, Bobby had his own place in Topanga Canyon, at 19844 Horseshoe Lane. By early 1969, he was living in an apartment in Laurel Canyon. In July of that year, Bobby, Brunner and Susan Atkins murdered Hinman in his home, reportedly on the orders of Manson. Bobby was arrested on August 6, just two days before the carnage at Cielo Drive. But here, I suppose, I may have digressed just a bit.

Love’s initial lineup of Arthur Lee on vocals, Johnny Echols on lead guitar, Bryan MacLean on vocals and rhythm guitar, John Fleckenstein on bass and Don Conka on drums would not last long. Actually, as was true with Steppenwolf, none of the configurations of Arthur’s band would last long. In those early days, Lee and Echols were still living at home with their parents. Bryan though had moved into the upper loft of the Vito Clay Studio; on the lower level was the Byrds’ rehearsal space. By the end of summer 1965, Arthur and Johnny had moved in as well.

As John Fleckenstein recalled, “Vito and those guys were like our

groupies. They trailed us everywhere we played and brought their whole scene with them.” But unlike the other group with whom Arthur’s band shared both groupies and rehearsal space, the Grass Roots were considered to be a great live band, arguably the best that Laurel Canyon had to offer. The band though had a slight problem—the name Grass Roots was already taken by another band. So in the fall of 1965, Arthur’s band became Love, claimed by some to be an homage to departed guitarist Bobby Beausoleil, whose nickname was Cupid.

With the name change came a new venue, Bido Lito’s, yet another of the small clubs lining the Sunset Strip during its glory days. Vito and company, of course, came along for the ride. Kenny Forssi, who had arrived in LA in 1964, was recruited as the band’s new bass player, replacing Fleckenstein. Forssi’s roommate, Swiss-born Alban “Snoopy” Pfisterer, was subsequently hired to fill in on drums for the frequently absent Conka. Don was, by all accounts, a much more proficient drummer than Snoopy, but his prodigious drug intake made him extremely unreliable.

In January 1966, the band was signed by Jac Holzman to his Elektra Records label. Holzman’s was, to say the least, an unlikely success story. Between the years 1950 and 1955, over 1,000 record labels were reportedly launched in the US. Only two survived, one of which was Atlantic Records. The other was Jac Holzman’s Elektra Records, launched, as industry legend is written, while Holzman, the son of a Harvard-educated doctor, was a nineteen-year-old student living in the dorms at St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland. The venture was purportedly financed with just \$600, half from Holzman’s Bar Mitzvah and the other half from a classmate’s veteran’s bonus.

As part of Arthur’s deal with Holzman, he was given his own publishing company, Grass Roots Records. Publishing royalties were paid through Third Story Music, a company controlled by the shadowy Herb Cohen and his brother. Arthur also had a signed personal management contract with Cohen.

Once signed, the band quickly got to work recording their self-titled debut album. Snoopy laid down all the drum tracks for the perpetually AWOL Conka. And in a strange turn of events, Echols, Forssi, and MacLean actually played their own instruments in the studio, though Lee did fill in at times. It is said that Lee could play any band member’s instrument better than they could, with the notable exception of gui-

tar virtuoso Johnny Echols. And all of the band members, needless to say, could play better than the guys in the band they shared rehearsal space with.

Elektra staff producer Paul Rothchild—who would play a key role in shaping the sound of the second rock band signed by Elektra, the Doors—was doing prison time on a minor drug charge so Holzman and various others filled in as producers on the disc. Released just a few months after the band was signed, the album featured cover art photographed at—where else?—the ruins of a fire-ravaged home in Laurel Canyon.

On June 18, 1966, the band made its first television appearance on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*. Also appearing was the Bobby Fuller Four, performing their hit song I Fought The Law. Exactly one month later, on July 18, 1966, rising star Bobby Fuller would be found dead in his car, the victim of a very obvious homicide that was treated by the LAPD as a suicide. At about that same time, Arthur moved into what was known as The Castle, a massive estate that occupied a full city block and that was, by some reports, the onetime home of Bela Lugosi. Lee had previously been living on one floor of a large home owned by Elmer Valentine.

It is said that the members of the Doors, and Jim Morrison in particular, idolized Love and its leader, Arthur Lee. The Doors' long, improvisational songs like *The End* and *When the Music's Over* were directly inspired by Love's long, improvisational jams, as Ray Manzarek has freely admitted. And Arthur often claimed that Morrison would camp out outside Lee's Laurel Canyon home waiting for a chance to hang out with his label mate. For a time in the mid-1960s, Lee dated Pamela Courson, who would thereafter become Morrison's frequent companion and, upon his death, the sole heir to his sizable estate. Courson was with Morrison when he died under what remains to this day a shroud of mystery. She herself was dead less than three years later, on April 25, 1974, allegedly of a self-administered heroin overdose.

Before recording sessions began for the band's sophomore album, Michael Stuart joined as the group's new drummer, with Snoopy moving over to keyboards. Arthur also added John Barbieri, also known as Tjay Cantrelli, on saxophone and flute. Little is known about the mysterious Cantrelli other than that he apparently hailed from Compton,



California. The new additions made Love, for a brief time, a seven-piece band, which Arthur felt was necessary for the intricate arrangements that were to be featured on the album.

Stuart's father worked in the aerospace industry, first in Texas and then in the military town of San Diego, where various other Laurel Canyon notables spent time during their formative years. Stuart scored a scholarship to Pepperdine, followed by a stint at UCLA. Before joining Love, he played with the Sons of Adam, yet another band that had a communal home in everyone's favorite canyon. The Sons had gotten their start in Baltimore, just outside Washington, DC, where they were known as Fender IV. Their new name had been bestowed upon them by Vito associate Kim Fowley.

*Da Capo*, Love's second album, was produced by Paul Rothchild, who had, as previously noted, been a fixture at Club 47 in Cambridge in the Boston Strangler days. Rothchild's parole officer, ever accommodating, had signed off on him venturing out to California. The cover art for the new disc was once again photographed at a fire-ravaged home in Laurel Canyon, though the sound of the record was much different than the first, fusing jazz with psychedelic rock.

Around the time of the *Da Capo* sessions, Arthur vacated The Castle and moved into what was dubbed the 'Trip house' on Kirkwood Drive in Laurel Canyon, so named in honor of the fact that the film of that name was shot there. About that very same time, Peter Fonda, star of *The Trip*, decided to more fully immerse himself in the folk-rock scene by recording an entire solo album that, perhaps mercifully, was never to be released. The disc contained a single penned by up-and-comer Gram Parsons.

As was true of virtually all of Laurel Canyon's stars, the members of Love were of military draft age. As John Einarson's biography of Arthur Lee notes, "Unless you were able to secure a college deferment or a coveted 4-F ineligibility rejection, the draft (compulsory military service) was a cold, looming reality for every adolescent male... [and] black Americans found themselves drafted in disproportionate quantity." And yet, shockingly enough, every member of every incarnation of the band, black and white alike, deftly avoided military service. Arthur is said to have fooled the draft board by pretending to be gay. Snoopy supposedly did so by showing up sleep-deprived and unwashed. And so on.

Soon after the recording of *Da Capo*, Arthur dropped Snoopy and Tjay from the roster and Love once again became a quintet. The pared down band quickly got to work on the material for what is widely regarded as their masterpiece and essentially their swan song, *Forever Changes*. Recording sessions began at the dawn of the Summer of Love. The band Love, meanwhile, made the dubious decision to pass on the Monterey Pop Festival.

Arthur initially brought in Hal Blaine and the rest of the Wrecking Crew for the *Forever Changes* sessions, which he later described as a ploy to motivate the band. By that time, Echols, Forssi, MacLean and Stuart all had serious heroin habits. Arthur was shooting up as well, but his drug of choice was cocaine. He was also a prolific smoker of hash and an acid head. In any event, the ploy reportedly worked and the band pulled it together enough to complete the sessions, but it was the last time they would record together.

Though now considered one of the finest collections of songs ever pressed on vinyl, *Forever Changes* received a lukewarm reception when released in November 1967, topping out at number 154 on the charts. Though a local favorite, Love had never established a strong national presence. And by 1968, local gigs were drying up and band members weren't above pawning their instruments for drug money. Arthur decided to let Bryan go. Around that same time, road manager Neil Rappaport returned home from a Miami gig and promptly turned up dead. Dark rumors circulated suggesting that band members had murdered Rappaport in a dispute over drugs and money. Years later, Arthur claimed that he "still [didn't] know what happened to him." Some of the rumors circulating suggested that he had been hanged. Snoopy told an interviewer that, "Neil and Johnny [Echols] became shooting partners. And then one day, Johnny fixed Neil a little too much—can you dig it? Technically you could call it murder, but each guy prepares his own needle."

By mid-1968, Love had ceased to exist as a band. There hadn't been any formal breakup—Arthur had simply stopped calling the others, who were rapidly descending into a downward spiral of heroin addiction. Forssi was living in the converted garage of a home in Laurel Canyon, with his accommodations, according to Arthur, painted entirely black, including the windows. By late summer 1968, Lee had assembled a new

band he was calling Love, though it didn't contain any of the eight musicians who had previously played under that name (John Fleckenstein, Don Conka, Johnny Echols, Kenny Forssi, Bryan MacLean, Snoopy Pfisterer, Tjay Cantrelli, and Michael Stuart). Arthur served as singer, songwriter, manager, booking agent, arranger and producer.

Circa 1969, Lee sold the 'Trip house' and moved to a more secluded, secure location off Coldwater Canyon. There he would become something of a recluse, though stepdad C.L., who handled maintenance of the property, was a frequent presence. That same year, Arthur declined an invitation to play at Woodstock, just as he had done with Monterey. He did though release two new Love albums in rapid succession, just three months apart at the tail end of 1969. Neither gained any traction on the sales charts. A year later, in December 1970, he tried again with an album entitled *False Start*. The disc generated a certain amount of buzz owing to the fact that the first track on the album featured the lead guitar work of Jimi Hendrix, who had also helped arrange the song. It was the first release of new music by the guitar legend since his tragic death just three months earlier, on September 18, 1970. The album, nevertheless, failed to sell.

Shortly before his death, Hendrix had talked to Lee about putting a new band together, which was to feature the two of them and Steve Winwood. Arthur had another curious connection to Hendrix; both had been lovers of Devon Wilson, who had been one of the last people to see Hendrix alive and who died in a mysterious fall at the Chelsea Hotel just five months after the death of Hendrix. And so it was that Arthur Lee was romantically linked to two women, Courson and Wilson, who in turn were romantically linked to two legendary rock stars, Morrison and Hendrix, with all four of them subsequently turning up dead in a span of just three-and-a-half years, from September 1970 through April 1974.

Lee released his first solo album, *Vindicator*, in late 1972. It was poorly reviewed and failed to generate much in the way of sales, so Arthur put together a new version of Love and came back with *Reel to Real* in 1975. No one seemed to really care. Rumors soon began to circulate that Arthur was reduced to working as a house painter or, worse yet, was panhandling on Sunset Blvd. If true, it was a remarkable fall from grace for a guy accustomed to such luxuries as getting his clothes custom-made. He would remain a rather elusive enigma for the next

several years, and then begin a series of incarcerations. Meanwhile, in 1980, his uncle, Johnson Porter, was gunned down on the mean streets of Los Angeles.

In December 1983, Lee was arrested and charged with arson, a crime that he did time for at the California Institution for Men in Chino, California. Upon his release, he left LA for Memphis, returning to LA in 1988, only to soon be arrested and charged with auto theft, a crime for which he briefly served more time. Upon his release this time, he moved into his girlfriend's apartment in Valley Village, just north of Coldwater Canyon. A year-and-a-half later, in March 1991, he sold fifty percent of his song publishing catalog to raise cash.

One year later, Arthur released what was to be his last album of new music, *Arthur Lee and Love*. Once again, it was not well received by fans or critics. After remaining largely out of sight for the next three years, Lee was arrested on June 10, 1995, for discharging a firearm off his balcony. He was also found to be in possession of a cache of armor-piercing Teflon bullets and, of course, drugs. Like many of his contemporaries in the peace-and-love crowd, Arthur had a longtime fondness for guns. Less than three weeks later, he was arrested once again for a domestic violence incident.

On June 27, 1996, Lee was convicted on the weapon and drug charges, a 'third strike' under California law that resulted in a twelve-and-a-half year prison sentence. At the end of 2001, he was granted an appeal and released to face a new trial; at retrial he was convicted of lesser charges and sentenced to time served. Arthur was a free man once again, but that freedom proved to be rather short-lived; on August 3, 2006, Lee passed away in Memphis after a battle with leukemia.

Arthur was not the only member of the band to spend time in a California correctional facility. Don Conka, the band's original drummer, though he never actually played on any Love records, reportedly served ten years or more on drug-related charges. In latter years, he rejoined Arthur in reformulated versions of Love, though nothing that came from those sessions and performances was recorded. Conka died on September 24, 2004; many who knew him were surprised that he hadn't died years earlier.

Bryan MacLean initially walked away from the music business following his discharge from the band. As one might expect from a kid

born into a life of privilege, he dabbled for a time in the world of high finance, trading in stocks and real estate before suffering a nervous breakdown and then finding his salvation in the mid-1970s with an Evangelical Christian ministry. He then returned to the music industry, focusing largely on Christian music and collaborating at times with his half-sister, Maria McKee, vocalist for the short-lived band Lone Justice. On Christmas Day 1998, MacLean was dining with writer Kevin Delaney at a Los Angeles eatery when Bryan excused himself to use the restroom, where he promptly collapsed and died of a reported heart attack at the relatively young age of fifty-two. Delaney had been working on a book about the legendary band, but that book never materialized.

The fate of Tjay Cantrelli is one of many lingering mysteries that surround the band. It is generally assumed that he died sometime in the early 1990s, but no one really knows for sure. Alban "Snoopy" Pfisterer and Michael Stuart, now known as Michael Stuart-Ware, both reportedly disappeared for varying lengths of time but both eventually resurfaced, with Stuart-Ware publishing a biography of the band in 2003 and Snoopy releasing an obscure solo album in 2008.

Another enduring mystery surrounds the post-Love activities of Johnny Echols and Ken Forssi, both of whom dropped out of sight for an extended period of time. According to persistent rumors, the pair were reduced to holding up donut shops to get drug money, resulting in lengthy prison sentences following convictions on multiple counts of armed robbery. Echols has claimed the rumors are untrue, but he has acknowledged that the pair were arrested outside an LA donut shop, and the fact remains that the two disappeared for nearly twenty years.

Forssi, who showed quite an aptitude for aerospace engineering before embarking on a music career, died of a brain tumor on January 5, 1998, the same year as MacLean's curious death. It is said that he had been obsessed with the notion of global political conspiracies in his final years. His alleged partner-in-crime, Johnny Echols, is currently living in the 'New Age' mecca of Sedona, Arizona.

Ken Forssi was not, it should perhaps be noted, the only Laurel Canyon local with prior connections to the aerospace industry; at least two of Charlie's girls had such connections as well. Nancy Pittman, who was introduced to the Manson Family by actress Angela Lansbury, was the daughter of an aerospace engineer who designed missile guidance sys-

tems. And 'Squeaky' Fromme, childhood friend of actor/comedian Phil Hartman, was the daughter of yet another aerospace worker, one who has been described as being abusively authoritarian.

Arthur Lee also had, by numerous accounts, an authoritarian streak of his own. According to drummer Snoopy, Lee was "a megalomaniac; extremely authoritarian." Record producer David Anderle noted that he didn't "want to say that Arthur was demonic, but he was very manipulative and destructive." Lee also had undeniable charisma and a commanding, and somewhat menacing, stage presence. Michael Ware has written that, "Arthur had... an aura of calm, quiet power... he seemed better than 'regular' human beings. More capable. Everyone looked up to him and respected him, and feared him."

Like others in this saga, Arthur Lee also appears to have suffered with a rather pronounced dissociative disorder. Drummer Gary Stern once said that he believed "there were two Arthurs, as if he was schizophrenic." Rock'n'roll photographer Herbie Worthington described Arthur as "a walking contradiction. He could be the sweetest person one minute and then his mind would click and he could be an asshole." Worthington's take on Lee, needless to say, sounds hauntingly like Bonnie Clark's take on brother Gene: "He could be very warm and loving, but that could change in a heartbeat."

## 22

# ENDLESS VIBRATIONS THE BEACH BOYS

**“Dennis Wilson was killed by my shadow because he took my music and changed the words from my soul.” Charles Manson**

ARTHUR LEE WAS CERTAINLY NOT WITHOUT RIVALS FOR THE TITLE OF ‘MOST talented yet troubled musician on the Sunset Strip’ in the 1960s. Many would argue that the rightful holder of that crown was the man whose eccentricities are the stuff of legend—Brian Wilson, the primary creative force behind the spectacular rise and enduring success of the Beach Boys.

The Beach Boys were somewhat unique among the bands calling Laurel Canyon home back in the day. For starters, they dropped their first album before there *was* a Laurel Canyon scene, and before there was a British Invasion as well. And their squeaky clean, all-American public image was seriously at odds with the look favored by their long-haired, bearded peers. Their music as well, initially focused almost exclusively on surfing, cars and girls, seemed far removed from the folk-rock revolution swirling around bands like the Byrds and Buffalo Springfield.

Some readers may be inclined to dismiss the Beach Boys as being roughly on par with that other much-maligned Laurel Canyon band, the Monkees. But as was true of Mickey Dolenz, Peter Tork and Mike Ne-



smith, the Wilson brothers and their bandmates were very much welcomed as peers by the rest of the canyon community. Brian Wilson was, in fact, looked upon as an almost God-like figure, regarded as arguably the finest musician, songwriter, producer and arranger of his era. No less a figure than David Crosby has said that, in the 1960s, "Brian was the most highly regarded musician in America, hands down."

The story of the Beach Boys begins in the late 1700s, when the Wilson clan first ventured across the Atlantic and put down roots in New York. Henry Wilson, born in 1804, was the first American-born member of the family. He moved to Ohio where, according to Peter Carlin, "he worked as a stonemason." Not unlike Carl Franzoni's father. And Arthur Lee's stepfather. And John Kay's stepfather. There might be a pattern developing here.

In the late nineteenth century, William Henry Wilson moved to Kansas to try his hand at farming, but soon lost interest in that and went into the industrial plumbing business instead. Again according to Carlin, he soon scored "contracts to work on the state's new reformatory system." There was, no doubt, lots of money to be made in the prison-building business. Some of that money was invested in ten acres of prime farmland in Escondido, California, where he arrived around 1904. By 1905 though, he was back in Kansas in the plumbing business. William Henry's son, William Coral "Buddy" Wilson, set out for California a decade later, in 1914.

Buddy has been described by Carlin as "Moody and scattered, plagued by searing headaches and a self-destructive thirst for whiskey... Often awash in alcohol and self-pity, Buddy's bile regularly boiled over into violence, directed most often at [wife] Edith. But he could also turn his fists on his children." One of those children, who came to blows with his dad on more than one occasion, was Murry Gage Wilson, born July 2, 1917. Murry reportedly despised his abusive father and after the death of his mother never saw or spoke to him again.

Murry left school in 1935, at the height of the Great Depression, and, though many Americans were struggling to eke out a living any way they could, he had no trouble finding work as a clerk with the Southern California Gas Company. On March 26, 1938, he married Audree Korthof, with whom he would have three boys, two of them born in curious proximity to the summer and winter solstices: Brian Douglas Wil-

son, born June 20, 1942; Dennis Carl Wilson, born December 4, 1944; and Carl Dean Wilson, born December 21, 1946.

By 1942, Murry had landed a better job as a junior administrator at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. A few years later, he took a foreman's position at AiResearch, an aeronautics firm tasked with manufacturing parts for Boeing civilian and military aircraft. He next decided to go into business for himself, opening an industrial equipment rental company in South Gate that he called ABLE Machinery.

Like his father before him, described by Steven Gaines in *Heroes and Villains* as having an "explosive temper," Murry was widely regarded as being volatile and prone to violence. Son Dennis would say that he and his brothers had "had a shitty childhood. Our dad used to whale on us... That asshole beat the shit out of us." The chronic abuse, he noted, led to both of his brothers being bed-wetters into their teens. Gaines wrote that, "on many occasions [Murry's] punishments went beyond simple beatings into the realm of the sadistic." It is said that Dennis, the most rebellious of the three boys and therefore the most frequent target of Murry's wrath, was on various occasions beaten with a 2 x 4 and burned with matches. One particularly savage beating delivered to brother Brian when he was just two left him nearly deaf in his right ear.

Even more disturbing if true was another aspect of the boys' childhoods that Dennis would later allude to when he would tell people cryptic stories about being raped by black men.

Murry's younger sister Emily had also married in 1938, to Milton Love, whose family owned a thriving Los Angeles-area sheet metal business. Milton and Emily lived in a luxurious 5,000 square foot villa in Baldwin Hills with their six offspring, the oldest of whom was Mike Love. The couple were said to be rather rigid disciplinarians.

Following his graduation from high school, Brian began taking music and psychology classes at El Camino Junior College. It was at that time that the Beach Boys, conceived as a family business, came into being. Brian was joined by brother Dennis, who would evolve into the band's drummer, and brother Carl, who would become the group's lead guitarist, as well as cousin Mike Love and neighbor/classmate Al Jardine. Dennis, the only real surfer in the band, is credited with suggesting the group's musical direction. The band's first single, *Surfin'*, was recorded in September 1961 and released December 8 of that same year. The

song quickly climbed to numbers two on the local charts and seventy-five on the national Billboard charts. Brian promptly dropped out of college to devote his undivided attention to music. Dennis was just seventeen at the time and Carl was not quite fifteen. They were, it appears, getting into the music business at the right time—in the decade from 1955 to 1965, record sales increased tenfold, from about \$60 million annually to \$600 million.

Murry almost immediately appointed himself the band's manager and producer, while assigning Audree bookkeeping duties. He then formed the Sea of Tunes publishing company to handle Brian's songs, granting himself controlling interest. He also got the boys a contract with prestigious Capitol Records. The Beach Boys offices, fortuitously enough, would end up being located right across the hall from the offices of master publicist Derek Taylor, so they would naturally become clients. Taylor would arrive in Los Angeles seeking work as an independent press agent just in time to take on the Byrds as his star clients. But first he would make quite a name for himself in the UK by generating a media firestorm around a fledgling band known as the Beatles.

Throughout his life, Brian worked with a series of collaborators, many of them with interesting connections. His first such collaborator was Gary Usher, an aspiring twenty-year-old musician who, according to industry legend, happened to be walking down a Hawthorne, California, street while visiting a relative when he heard the Boys in their home studio working on the song *Surfin' Safari* and, intrigued, knocked on the door. Usher is credited with starting what would become a Beach Boys trademark—songs about cars.

On June 4, 1962, with Dennis and Carl still just seventeen and fifteen, Capitol released the Beach Boys' first major label single, *Surfin' Safari*, backed by one of Usher's automotive songs, 409. Both songs soared up the charts, leading to a summer tour and a commitment from Capitol for a full album. By October, *Surfin' Safari* the album had debuted and Murry had the band booked at Pandora's Box. He also managed to convince Capitol to give up producing duties to Brian. Though just twenty years old, Brian Wilson was granted unprecedented artistic control, serving as the band's songwriter, producer and arranger. He would prove to be amazingly proficient at those duties, putting out an astounding ten albums in just over three years, beginning with *Surfin'*

USA in March of 1963, which climbed to number three on the Billboard charts, and carrying through to the groundbreaking *Pet Sounds* in May of 1966. Along the way, Brian wrote and recorded for other artists as well. After *Pet Sounds* though, following the much-publicized failure-to-launch of *Smile*, his output became considerably more erratic and of decidedly variable quality.

Back in those early days at Pandora's Box, Brian met and was immediately drawn to Marilyn Rovell, who, along with her sister Diane, made up two-thirds of the vocal group the Honeys. The Rovell family home on Sierra Bonita Drive soon became Brian's favorite hangout, despite the fact that he was twenty and the object of his affections was just fourteen. The pair quickly fell into an illicit romantic relationship, as Carlin writes, "seemingly with the knowledge and permission of [Marilyn's parents], who were sleeping under the same roof at the time."

In the fall of 1964, Brian moved into his own apartment on Hollywood Blvd., where Marilyn, still just fifteen, was a frequent guest. The two were married by the end of the year. Brian though was not the only Beach Boy with a preference for very young girls. Brother Dennis would later begin an affair with Carole Freedman, who, though just sixteen, had already been married and was the mother of a one-year-old son (rumored to have been fathered by Jim Morrison). Brother Carl would marry barely sixteen-year-old Anne Hinsche, the daughter of a wealthy casino owner from the Philippines. Mike Love's second wife would be seventeen-year-old Suzanne Belcher. In the summer of 1968, also known as the summer of Manson, Dennis would begin an affair with fifteen-year-old Diane Adams. And shortly before his death, Dennis would marry Shawn Love, who, in addition to being only fifteen when she moved in with Dennis, then well into his thirties, was by most accounts the illegitimate daughter of first cousin and bandmate Mike Love!

The lyrics to some of the Beach Boys' songs also at times revealed a taste for underage girls, which is often the case in rock'n'roll records. This was particularly evident in tracks such as I Wanna Pick You Up and Hey Little Tomboy. And Brian once shared with an interviewer some disturbing observations concerning his then three-year-old daughter Carnie. After describing her sexual experimentation, which he attributed to her having picked things up from observing her parents, he concluded: "It just goes to prove that if you don't hide anything from kids,

they'll start doing things they normally wouldn't do until much later."

Around the time that Brian married Marilyn, he fell into the social circle of Loren Schwartz and Tony Asher, best friends from their days together at Santa Monica High School. Asher, the son of silent film star Laura LaPlante and movie producer Irving Asher, had grown up in a sprawling Westside mansion, surrounded by Hollywood luminaries. Schwartz was yet another former child actor whose home functioned as the gathering spot for the clique, which also at times included Stephen Stills, Chris Hillman, David Crosby, Roger McGuinn and Van Dyke Parks. It was at Loren's place that Brian was first introduced to pot and acid.

In 1965, Brian and Marilyn bought their first real home, on Laurel Way, where Schwartz was a regular visitor. By then, Brian had been heavily influenced by the work of deranged producer Phil Spector, having repeatedly sat in on Spector's recording sessions with the Wrecking Crew, who became the musicians featured on most of the classic Beach Boy recordings. Brian was also by that time regularly getting his hair styled at the salon of a guy named Jay Sebring, who Sammy Davis, Jr. credited with having introduced him to Satanism.

Two of the guys from Schwartz's social circle, Tony Asher and Van Dyke Parks, would later become Brian's two most acclaimed collaborators, Asher on *Pet Sounds* and Parks on the legendary lost album, *Smile*. Parks was the son of a Jungian psychiatrist as well as being, as previously noted, another former child actor. A few years before the *Smile* sessions, Van Dyke's older brother, Benjamin Riley Parks, was killed in unusual circumstances in Frankfurt, Germany, while on an unspecified assignment for the US State Department. According to Richard Henderson, writing in *Van Dyke Parks' Song Cycle*, Benjamin had been the "youngest member of the State Department to date" and a "pall of uncertainty surrounded the tragedy, as evidence suggested that his brother could have been a casualty of the Cold War." That, of course, would seem to suggest that Parks was, in reality, doing intelligence work under State Department cover.

Though Wilson and Parks were previously acquainted through Schwartz, Terry Melcher is credited with getting the pair together as a songwriting team; Melcher reintroduced the two at a party at his 10050 Cielo Drive residence and they got to work soon after that at Brian's home studio on Laurel Way. Melcher had recently been one half of the

vocal duo Bruce & Terry; the other half had been Bruce Johnston, who in 1965 became a touring member of the Beach Boys, replacing Glen Campbell.\* Both were replacements for Brian, who was always far more comfortable in the studio than on the stage.

By 1967, Brian and Marilyn had relocated to Bellagio Road in Bel Air, to a home reportedly once owned by Edgar Rice Burroughs. According to Gaines, “The house boasted... a hidden study that could be entered by a secret door behind a bookcase.” Around that same time, Brian developed a ravenous appetite for Desbutals, a potent combination of methamphetamine and pentobarbital that was, remarkably enough, legally available with a prescription at the time. His bedside reading material in those days included the novels of Hermann Hesse, who inspired the name of John Kay’s band, and literature on the Subud philosophy, which inspired Jim/Roger McGuinn’s name change.

Also in 1967, Brian made the decision, just two weeks before show time, to cancel the Beach Boys’ booking for the Monterey Pop Festival. Wilson was of the opinion that his band wouldn’t quite fit in with the likes of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, and he was probably correct. By the next year, 1968, the Boys were clearly out of step with popular youth culture.

Around that time, Brian took on a side project—building a band around his good friend Danny Hutton. Born in Ireland in 1942, Hutton had moved to the US as a child and grown up in Los Angeles. Before hooking up with Wilson, he had produced tunes and done voiceover work for Hanna-Barbera and had also, like many of his peers, auditioned to be a Monkee. With Wilson’s help, he joined with Cory Wells and Chuck Negron to form a vocal trio originally named Redwood. Their first singles were recorded and produced by Brian in his home studio.

Wells was born Emil Lewandowsky in 1942 in Buffalo, New York, where he was raised by his mother and a violently abusive stepfather. He joined the US Air Force right out of high school, in large part to escape his home life. After being discharged, he formed the Enemies and

\* Campbell, a former member of the Wrecking Crew, was another member of the Laurel Canyon community with curious views on the war and the draft. He told *Variety* magazine back in the 1960s that protestors who were burning their draft cards “should be hung... if you don’t have enough guts to fight for your country, you’re not a man.”

soon relocated to Los Angeles, just in time to join the emerging scene and become the house band for a time at the Whisky. Negron was also born in 1942, in New York City. Raised in the Bronx, Negron was a high school basketball star who had been recruited to play for a college in California. He would later become a raging heroin addict for some twenty years and make three-dozen failed rehab attempts before finally getting clean.

Brian Wilson wanted to sign the new band to the Beach Boys' Brother Records, but that idea was vetoed by Brian's brothers and cousin. It was probably not the best financial decision by the other Beach Boys given that the new band, renamed Three Dog Night, quickly became one of the most successful recording acts of the era, selling millions of albums and releasing a long string of hit songs, many of which, including Harry Nilsson's *One*, Paul Williams' *Just An Old Fashioned Love Song*, and Randy Newman's *Mama Told Me Not to Come*, were written by other famous Laurel Canyon residents.

Nineteen-sixty-eight proved to be a rather strange and eventful year for many of the Beach Boys. Mike Love, who had bought a house in Coldwater Canyon in the summer of 1967, ventured off to India to visit the personal compound of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and engage in some Transcendental Meditation. Perhaps he was seeking a little anger management. In *Catch a Wave*, Carlin notes that "barely harnessed rage was a recurring feature of Mike's public persona." In *Heroes and Villains*, he is described as "a pretty evil guy, kind of like a secret service agent, with a real military attitude." Joining Love at the compound were all four Beatles, singer/songwriter Donovan, and Mia and Prudence Farrow.

Brian, meanwhile, found himself committed to a mental hospital in 1968, which very likely means, given the era, that he was subjected to electroshock 'therapy' and heavy doses of anti-psychotic drugs. In February 1970, cousin Mike Love would also find himself committed to a mental hospital, but only, according to Carlin, after "a long, high-speed car chase through Hollywood as he attempted to evade cars driven by his father and brothers." Love was taken away in a straightjacket for involuntary treatment.

It was Dennis Wilson though who would later have the most memorable 1968 stories to tell, though he would claim to have virtually no memories of that time. Early in the year, he moved to Will Rogers' for-



mer home at 14400 Sunset Blvd., at the mouth of Rustic Canyon. It was there that, through the summer of 1968, he played host to Charles Manson and a number of his followers. Wilson not only provided the Family with food and very comfortable accommodations, he also picked up the tab for their medical expenses and allowed Charlie and Co. the use of his expensive vehicles, at least one of which, a Ferrari, was wrecked by aspiring musician Steve "Clem" Grogan, who was barely sixteen at the time.

Through Dennis, Manson met and gained the admiration of various other Laurel Canyon regulars, including Terry Melcher and Gregg Jakobson. Dennis also took Charlie on several occasions to record some of his songs at brother Brian's home studio, where Manson met Brian and his then-collaborator, Van Dyke Parks, and where Redwood was also recording at the time. No recordings from those sessions have ever seen the light of day, though one of Manson's songs, *Cease To Exist*, was essentially stolen by Dennis and renamed *Never Learn Not To Love*.

On November 22, 1968, the fifth anniversary of the assassination of JFK, the Beatles released what is known as "the White Album" (*The Beatles*), which would allegedly inspire the 'Helter Skelter' Manson murders. Just days after the Beatles' release, the Beach Boys released the single *Bluebirds Over The Mountain* backed by the Manson b-side *Never Learn Not To Love*. The next year, Dennis told an interviewer that, "Sometimes the Wizard frightens me—Charlie Manson, who is another friend of mine, says he is God and the devil! He sings, plays and writes poetry." Wilson added that Brother Records would likely be releasing an album by the aspiring singer/songwriter. But Manson, like *Three Dog Night*, ended up taking his talents elsewhere.

By 1969, Brian appeared to have lost interest in making music and was selling vitamins out of a health food store in West Hollywood. In November of that year, Murry sold Brian's *Sea of Tunes* song catalog to A&M, with Brian reportedly not seeing a penny of the proceeds. The next year, the band hired a new publicist, former radio newsman Jack Rieley, who many considered to be something of a huckster. According to Gaines, a "report claimed that Jack was in the employ of a Washington, DC, right-wing conservative organization called the Stern Concern."

As the early 1970s rolled around, Brian took to hanging out at Danny Hutton's house, which was, not surprisingly, on Wonderland Avenue

in Laurel Canyon. The home's most compelling feature was the 'party room' with blacked-out windows, where piles of cocaine could usually be found. Wilson wasn't the only regular visitor—Ringo Starr was known to hang out there as well, as was John Lennon and his sidekick Harry Nilsson. Keith Moon, who would soon turn up dead in Nilsson's home, was a regular as well.

The world barely bothered to say goodbye to Murry Wilson, who passed away on June 4, 1973 after suffering a massive heart attack. So loathed was he that neither Brian nor Dennis bothered to show up for his funeral.

Around the time of Murry's death, Brian began working with Tandy Almer, one of the more curious figures circulating around the Sunset Strip scene. Almer's biggest claim to fame was penning the song *Along Comes Mary*, which was a massive hit for the Association in 1966. The following year, Almer appeared on a CBS special entitled *Inside Pop: The Rock Revolution*, hosted by Leonard Bernstein. Showcasing the best of the new acts, the show also featured Frank Zappa, Hollie Graham Nash, Byrd Roger McGuinn, and Beach Boy Brian Wilson. Tandy Almer was clearly expected to be the next big thing, but that never came to pass.

The project that Brian initially sought Almer's help with was a bizarre one—writing new lyrics for his beloved old songs. That project was ultimately aborted though and Wilson instead penned some new songs with Almer, including the 1973 hit *Sail On, Sailor*. Around 1974, after completing his work with Brian, Almer left LA and disappeared. For decades, no one knew his whereabouts and there was much speculation that he was dead. Not known until his actual death, on January 8, 2013, was that he had been alive and well and living a reclusive life in and near Washington, DC for nearly forty years! He died in a nondescript basement apartment in, of all places, McLean, Virginia. What he was doing for all those years living in the CIA's backyard will likely forever remain a mystery.

On June 24, 1974, the Beach Boys released *Endless Summer*, a double album of their early hits, and for the first time in years they were back on the charts and drawing huge crowds at their concerts. The record spent three full years on the charts and sold more than three million copies. With Brian Wilson once again a valuable commodity, Stan Love—younger brother of Mike, former NBA player, and at 6' 9"

a physically imposing figure—was assigned as a full-time minder and bodyguard for the perpetually troubled songwriter.

By 1975, Stephen Love, another brother, had taken over as the band's manager and the wildly controversial Eugene Landy had replaced Stan Love as Brian's minder. Landy preached the gospel of complete control over his patients' personal, professional, social, financial and sexual lives. Employing an army of minions, he monitored, recorded and controlled every aspect of Brian's life, with strong indications that he also kept him heavily drugged. Wilson was treated like a child and constantly humiliated by his coterie of handlers.

Landy's outlandish and ever-escalating fees led to his ouster by the rest of the Beach Boys the following year. He was replaced with a brawny trio of bodyguards/minders: towering Stan Love, former professional football player and *Playgirl* model Rocky Pamplin, and Steve Korthoff, another Wilson cousin and a former US Marine. Brian also retained a new psychiatrist, Steve Schwartz, but as Carlin reveals, Schwartz didn't last long: "One day the phone rang and a strange doctor asked Brian to come see him; when Brian arrived at the office, he was told that Dr. Schwartz had been in a terrible camping accident and had fallen off the side of a mountain to his death." Wilson had apparently picked an unacceptable handler.

In late summer 1978, Brian and Marilyn separated, ending their troubled marriage amid allegations that Brian had supplied drugs to his two very young daughters. Around that same time, Brian spent several months in the Brotman Memorial Hospital's psychiatric ward.

The summer before, Dennis had released the first solo album by a Beach Boy, the critically acclaimed but now largely forgotten *Pacific Ocean Blue*. The album was co-written and co-produced by fellow Manson fan Gregg Jakobson. By the end of the year, Dennis was living in Coldwater Canyon with Christine McVie of Fleetwood Mac, a British band that had been transformed into a Laurel Canyon band following the mid-1970s addition of Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks. Wilson lived with McVie for more than two years, during which time the home's pool house burned to the ground.

As 1980 rolled around, the Beach Boys could be found playing a benefit concert in support of the presidential campaign of former spy-master George H.W. Bush. Early the next year, they played one of the

inaugural balls for the incoming administration, putting their stamp of approval on the Reagan/Bush era. It wasn't the first time the Reagan and Wilson families had crossed paths; Dennis had once had a brief affair with Reagan daughter Patti Davis, who also had a relationship with Eagle Bernie Leadon. The Boys later played a private birthday bash for then-Vice President Bush.

Around the time of the Reagan inauguration, Stan Love and Rocky Pamplin invaded the home of Dennis Wilson, who by then was said to have a serious alcohol addiction, and savagely beat him. Wilson was reportedly kicked, stomped, bludgeoned with a telephone receiver and thrown through a plate glass window. The assault, later described by Love as "one of the most brutal beatings ever," left Wilson in the hospital with broken ribs and a battered face. Love and Pamplin were served with restraining orders and received fines and probation for the attack, which was allegedly motivated by the desire to prevent Dennis from supplying drugs to Brian. It seems likely though that it was actually motivated by Mike Love's rage over Dennis' affair with his illegitimate and underage daughter.

After having a son together in September 1982, Dennis and Shawn were married on July 28, 1983. The marriage though was a violent and turbulent one, with divorce papers filed just four months later, in November 1983. The divorce case never made it to court though because Dennis allegedly drowned in thirteen feet of water in a Marina Del Rey boat slip the next month, on December 28, 1983. At the time, he reportedly had no home of his own and had taken to crashing at friends' houses. He was largely estranged from his brothers and cousins, once telling an interviewer that if "there wasn't the Beach Boys and there wasn't music, I would not even talk to them."

Dennis was known throughout his adult life for living life in the fast lane, with a fondness for fast cars, faster women and mass quantities of controlled substances. He was married five times in his brief thirty-nine years on this planet, a record bested by cousin Mike Love, who according to Carlin had already been married and divorced six times by 1981. One of Dennis' paramours, according to a court filing, was one of Love's wives. Another, as previously stated, was Mike's daughter. Dennis was also known for having expensive tastes and for being generous to a fault. He was said to be obsessed with sex and to at times refer to him-

self as 'The Wood.' All of which, along with his obvious interest in music, made Dennis an ideal companion for Charlie Manson, who continued to see Dennis from time to time after the summer of 1968, even turning up at his door a day or two after the Cielo Drive murders.

A year before Dennis' untimely death, Eugene Landy had reentered Brian's life. He would remain in control of Wilson this time for nearly a decade, pocketing millions of dollars in fees along the way. The California Board of Medical Quality Assurance ultimately filed charges against Landy, leading to him surrendering his license to practice psychology in the state. That did not, however, end his complete control over Brian's life; Landy soldiered on, claiming that Brian was no longer his patient and that the two were now creative and business partners.

In May 1990, Stan Love filed to be Brian's legal conservator, igniting a battle over, quite literally, the control of Brian Wilson. That battle came to an end on February 3, 1992, when Landy was ordered by the courts to permanently remove himself from Brian's life. Wilson remained curiously conflicted about his longtime therapist/controller, claiming at one time that he slipped so far into the abyss under Landy's care that he attempted suicide in 1985, but also contending that Landy's death on March 22, 2006 left him devastated.

A few years after Brian was liberated from Landy's control, he married Melinda Ledbetter, with whom he adopted five kids. A couple years later, in December 1997, Audree Wilson, matriarch of the clan, passed away at the age of eighty. Carl Wilson succumbed to cancer just two months later, on February 6, 1998, leaving Brian as the last Wilson brother standing, an outcome that few in the 1960s and 1970s would have likely predicted. Following Carl's death, Mike Love, ever the authoritarian control freak (because every Laurel Canyon band had to have one), worked diligently to oust Al Jardine from the touring band, leaving himself in complete control of a band that featured him as the only original member.

Brian, meanwhile, finally completed the long overdue *Smile* project. He debuted the work live from the stage in 2004, and followed with an album in September of that same year, nearly forty years after the album's originally intended release date.

As with various other artists profiled herein, there is little question that Brian Wilson has throughout his life suffered from a serious dis-

sociative disorder. He has at times complained of hearing disembodied voices. His biographers have frequently described what the psychiatric community would identify as 'fugue states.' Gaines, for example, has written that, "Often Brian would disappear," turning up days later "peniless in Watts or East LA." Carlin has likewise described an incident that involved Brian going missing for days before turning up in a gay bar in San Diego happily playing the piano for drinks. Carlin also provided a revealing description of Brian's writing technique: "While composing, Brian appeared strangely absent, as if he were functioning less as a conscious artist than as a kind of antenna."

## THE GRIM GAME HOUDINI

**“What struck both of us was that there were huge gaps in Houdini’s life story and some puzzling inconsistencies. So we embarked on a journey to discover the real man. Early on, we discovered an important connection that most biographers seemed to miss.”** From the Introduction to The Secret Life of Houdini, by William Kalush and Larry Sloman

THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DEBATE OVER THE QUESTION OF WHETHER HARRY Houdini ever lived in the Laurel Canyon home known locally as the ‘Houdini House.’ Even if Houdini did live in the home that now lies in ruins, his story would seem to have little relevance here. After all, Houdini, widely considered to be the consummate entertainer of his era, reached the peak of his career long before there was a Laurel Canyon—before there was even that magical place known as Hollywood. But perhaps there is still something to gain through an examination of the life of the famed magician.

What are generally claimed to be the basic details of Harry Houdini’s life can be found in several published biographies. Born Erik Weisz in Budapest, Hungary, on March 24, 1874, he was the fourth of seven children born to Rabbi Mayer Samuel Weisz and the former Cecelia Steiner. The family later changed the spelling of their names and Houdini became Ehrich Weiss, known by friends and family as “Ehrie,” which ultimately became “Harry.” His stage surname was an homage to famed



French magician Robert Houdin.

In mid-1878, Rabbi Mayer, with his five sons and pregnant wife in tow, set sail for America, arriving on July 3, 1878. The family first put down roots in Appleton, Wisconsin, before later moving, in 1887, to New York City. Four years later, Houdini launched his career as a magician, at first performing basic card tricks. He had little success and at times would make ends meet by performing in freak shows. In 1893, he met singer/dancer Wilhelmina Beatrice Rahner, known as “Bess,” who would become both his wife and lifetime stage assistant. The pair though, performing as “The Houdinis,” continued to find success an elusive goal.

To say that Houdini’s fortunes changed in 1899 would be a bit of an understatement. As recounted by Kalush and Sloman, “Within months, he had gone from cheap beer halls and dime museums to the big-time—vaudeville. In one year’s time, he had gone from literally eating rabbits for survival to making what today would equal \$45,000 a week.” After finally hitting it big, however, Houdini then did something rather inexplicable—he abruptly sailed off to England to begin a lengthy European tour. Kalush and Sloman pose the obvious question: “Why would someone who had finally made it big risk everything and leave behind lucrative contracts to go to England with no real prospects in sight?” Why indeed? Such a move in those days would normally be an act of career suicide, but things worked out a little differently for Houdini; everywhere he went—first in England and then in Scotland, Holland, Germany, France and Russia—he was lauded by the press and quickly catapulted into the national limelight.

After a four-year absence, Houdini returned to the US in 1904 and resumed his lucrative career. For many years he was the highest-paid performer on the vaudeville circuit and would frequently perform to huge crowds in stunts that were sometimes arranged with corporate sponsors to promote their business. In 1912, he introduced what would become his most famed escape act, the Chinese Water Torture Cell.

In 1918, Houdini decided to try his luck with the fledgling new entertainment medium known as motion pictures, starring first in a multi-part serial and then in *The Grim Game* (1919) and *Terror Island* (1920). It was during this time that he is said to have taken up residence in Laurel Canyon, at the corner of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and Lookout Mountain Avenue. Following that, he moved to New York and started up his

own production company, the Houdini Picture Corporation, which released *The Man From Beyond* (1921) and *Haldane of the Secret Service* (1923), after which Houdini gave up his less-than-successful film career.

For the last few years leading up to his death on October 31, 1926, Houdini primarily focused on debunking psychics and mediums, leading some to speculate that the spiritualist movement may have been behind his untimely demise. To this day, séances are regularly held around the world in attempts to contact the famed magician and escape artist.

And that, in a nutshell, is the Harry Houdini story as it is usually told. But telling stories as they are usually told is a rather boring pursuit, so we are going to take a slightly different approach to see if maybe there isn't an entirely different story hidden in the obscure details of Houdini's life—beginning with his sudden rise to fame after wallowing in obscurity for years. As noted by Kalush and Sloman, "The young Houdini... couldn't make enough money to succeed at magic. Hungry and crestfallen, he was ready to give up his dream, until he walked into a Chicago police station and met a detective who would change his life. Immediately after this fateful encounter, his picture graced the front page of a Chicago newspaper. That picture catapulted him to renown." Within months, Houdini was arguably the most famous entertainer in the country.

The detective with whom he had that fateful encounter was John Wilkie, a major player in the formation of the International Association of Police Chiefs, which was founded in Chicago in 1893, at the outset of what has been dubbed the Decade of Regicide (which set the stage for WWI). Wilkie also had a hand in the formation of the ominously titled National Bureau of Identification, and he ultimately became the chief of the US Secret Service, America's premier intelligence operation during that era. It should probably be noted here that one of Houdini's nephews, Louis Kraus, worked for the Treasury Department, overseer of Wilkie's Secret Service.

Authors Kalush and Sloman are of the opinion that, "It was forward-thinking for the chief of America's only intelligence operation to be using entertainers for covert activities in 1898." Maybe so, but the authors duly note that such actions were not unprecedented; nearly four decades earlier, Abraham Lincoln had recruited an eighteen-year-old magician named Horatio G. Cooke to serve as a Civil War spy. Lincoln and Cooke were close enough that he was reportedly present at the

president's deathbed. Later, near the end of his life, Cooke became a close friend of Harry Houdini. An entertainer of a different variety, stage actor John Wilkes Booth, also appears to have served as an intelligence operative during the Civil War.

There are indications that the practice of using entertainers to carry out covert operations dates back to well before the 1860s. If researchers Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman are to be believed, the most acclaimed entertainment figure of all time, poet/actor/playwright William Shakespeare, was part of a spy ring serving under Sir Francis Walsingham, head of the Elizabethan Secret Service. So too were Christopher Marlowe and various other of Shakespeare's contemporaries. As Phillips and Keatman point out, spymaster Walsingham chose "the best possible recruits—poets and dramatists, whose lifestyles were ideally suited to his purpose. They had the perfect cover, travelling widely and receiving welcome everywhere, and since many were also actors, role playing was often second nature... many knew foreign languages. Furthermore, as the usual social barriers were often dropped for poets, they were equally at home in back street pubs or in the palaces of the mighty. They were thus in the privileged position of having their eyes and ears everywhere."

It appears then that the practice of utilizing entertainers for covert operations didn't begin with Wilkie, who was himself a magician and a disciple of escape artist R.G. Herrmann. In addition to Houdini, Wilkie recruited other magicians as well, including Herrmann, Louis Leon, and heavyweight prizefighter/magician Bob Fitzsimmons. In addition to Wilkie, another of Houdini's covert backers was Senator Chauncey Depew, an uncle of magician Ganson Depew and a former mentor to then-Vice President Theodore Roosevelt (who would be catapulted into the presidency by the assassination of William McKinley, one of the final victims of the Decade of Regicide). Houdini soon gained another hidden backer—William Melville, the head of Scotland Yard's Special Branch and the most visible law enforcement official in the UK. Melville would ultimately become the first chief of Britain's MI5, assuming essentially the same position filled more than three centuries earlier by Walsingham. As Kalush and Sloman discovered, "Within days of arriving in England, Houdini met with a prominent Scotland Yard inspector and once again, his career took off." That inspector was Melville, whom Houdini secretly

met with on June 14, 1900, five days after arriving on England's shores. He had left the US on May 30 using a passport issued just two days earlier—a passport that contained more than its fair share of anomalies.

The document listed Houdini's birthday as April 6, though his actual birthday is said to be March 24. It claimed that he was born in 1873, making him one year older than he actually was. Most curiously of all, the document indicated that Houdini was a native-born citizen, though he most assuredly was not. For reasons that no one seems able to explain, he had been allowed to surrender his previous passport, issued to a naturalized citizen, in exchange for the officially issued but clearly fraudulent passport that he used to tour Europe.

Given his background as both a magician and a Mason (by his own account), it goes without saying that secrecy, deception, and illusion were second-nature to Houdini. He also, as Sloman and Kalush noted, had the unusual "ability to interact with a country's police officials and do demonstrations inside their jails," and he was known to be rather proficient at the art of breaking-and-entering. Needless to say, these abilities would have served Houdini well in the world of espionage. So too would many of the devices he boasted of inventing. Again according to Kalush and Sloman, Houdini "told the *New York Herald* that he invented rubber heels and cameras that work only once. The *Boston Transcript* reported that he invented 'an envelope which cannot be unsealed by steam without bringing to light the word 'opened' and a wash which will remove printer's ink from paper'... In his own *Conjuror's Monthly*, he touted the use of chloride of cobalt for sending invisible messages."

A friend of Houdini's, fellow magician Billy Robinson, was also well-versed in the tradecraft of the intelligence community. In his book *Spirit Slate Writing and Kindred Phenomena*, Robinson "detailed thirty-seven methods for secret writing [which] would play an important part in spy communication during World War I." He also "detailed how to read other people's letters without opening the envelopes by using alcohol to render them temporarily transparent," and offered readers "subtle methods to share information while being closely scrutinized." Kalush and Sloman share what became of Robinson not long after penning the book: "Then, virtually overnight, he changed his name and appearance, left the country, and broke many of his connections. Years later, his only brother wouldn't even be able to find him." Robinson died in 1918

while performing a bullet catch trick that he had performed many times before. Houdini would write that “it seems as if there were something peculiar [sic] about the whole affair.”

In addition to possessing skills and knowledge that were ideally suited to the spook trade, Houdini also ran what could best be described as his own personal spy ring; in addition to an unknown number of fulltime confederates (mostly young women, including one of his nieces), “Houdini employed female operatives on an *ad hoc* basis when he came to town.” Probably the most important of his operatives was a young fellow magician named Amedeo Vacca, whose relationship with Houdini was unknown to virtually everyone throughout the escape artist’s life. So secret was the close relationship between the two that even Harry’s wife, as well as his brother, magician/confederate Hardeen, were unaware of it.

Houdini was a man for whom secrecy seems to have been something of an obsession. His home was said to be laced with secret passageways and hidden rooms, and his desk contained hidden compartments. There are indications that, while on the road, he would frequently maintain, for unknown purposes, a second hotel room in a different hotel. A man named Edward Saint (aka Charles David Myers), who was close to Bess, once claimed that Houdini “had safes and vaults in his home, and vaults in banks that his lawyers had access to; but one secret, now made public for the first time, is the fact that Houdini had one safety deposit vault in a bank or trust company in the East under some familiar name other than Houdini, and of which the secret location rested only in Houdini’s brain. In this vault was kept highly secret papers.” As far as is known, no one—not even Geraldo Rivera—has located that secret vault.

With his espionage tradecraft and dubious passport in tow, Houdini traveled to Germany in September 1900 after taking the British Isles by storm. As was the case in England and Scotland, the press immediately showered the visiting entertainer with accolades. There was one key difference in the German press coverage though: “The newspaper accounts of Houdini’s demonstrations at German police stations portray him as a police consultant rather than a mere entertainer... For a vaudeville performer, Houdini seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time and have unprecedented access at the Berlin police station.”

As he had in the US and the British Isles, Houdini established some unusual connections in Germany for a stage performer. One associate

of his in Germany was a chemist named Hans Goldschmidt, who had patented an incendiary compound known as thermite. “Houdini noted that he was in Berlin when Goldschmidt performed his first test on a safe. He didn’t explain why a stage escape artist would be at such a demonstration.”

Houdini continued his pre-WWI tour by visiting France and Russia. Curiously, the countries that Houdini visited on his unusual tour—Russia, Germany, France and England—would have the distinction of being the major players in the soon-to-unfold Great War, but that’s probably just a bizarre coincidence. In Czarist Russia, “the magician had official permission to appear in any city in Russia, an extraordinary set of circumstances that bespeaks the close relationship between Superintendent Melville and the Okhrana, the imperial Russian secret police.” Houdini’s Russian tour was booked by a guy named Harry Day, “a mysterious expatriate American who changed his name and met Houdini in London around the same time as Houdini’s first meeting with Melville... [Day] eventually became a member of Parliament and did overseas espionage for the British government.” For many years thereafter, the shadowy Day would handle Houdini’s European bookings.

Following his lengthy tour of prewar Europe, Houdini returned to America with much press fanfare. One of his most high-profile stunts upon his return was escaping from the heavily fortified Cell #2 at the United States Jail in Washington, DC—the cell that had famously housed Charles Julius Guiteau, convicted assassin of President James Garfield, prior to Guiteau’s hanging at the facility. Guiteau, who, like his father, was closely affiliated with a religious cult known as the Oneida Community, shot Garfield on July 2, 1881, having learned how to use a handgun just a few weeks earlier. He claimed to be acting on orders from God.

Houdini, needless to say, succeeded in escaping from Guiteau’s former cell—and also rearranged all the prisoners residing on the jail’s fabled ‘murderer’s row.’ To do so, of course, he would have needed a master key, which someone clearly provided to him. But why? Such were the perks provided an entertainer who appeared to be “working as an agent for US government agencies, international police associations, and a special branch of Scotland Yard.”

A couple years after his escape from the US Jail, there was an unusual incident at the Houdini household. On October 25, 1907, an in-

truder made a concerted effort to kill the performer, slashing at the sleeping figure more than 100 times with a razor. Harry Houdini, however, was not home at the time. Had he been, there might have been a different outcome, given that some reports contend that the escape artist carried a handgun at all times. The victim of the attack instead was his brother Leopold, who closely resembled Harry. Household servant Frank Thomas was arrested and charged with the attack, though there was scant evidence linking him to the crime and no known motive. Indeed, Thomas had arrived the next morning for work seemingly unaware the attack had taken place. Remarkably, Houdini was able to keep his name out of all press accounts of the crime and trial despite the fact that the attack occurred at his home, he appears to have been the intended victim, and the alleged assailant was his own servant.

On November 26, 1909, Houdini became the first man to successfully fly a powered craft on the Australian continent. He cheerfully dispatched publicity photos featuring him in a plane surrounded by German soldiers—a move he would soon regret when those German soldiers found themselves on the opposite side of the battlefields of WWI (following America's entry into the war, Houdini would attempt to destroy all photographs documenting his training of German pilots). That first flight and all subsequent Australian flights were arranged by Lieutenant George Taylor of the Australian Intelligence Corps. Curiously, despite Houdini's avid early interest in aviation, he did not, as far as is known, ever fly again after leaving Australia.

On April 29, 1911, Houdini debuted his famed Chinese Water Torture Cell escape in Southampton, England, though he had perfected and copyrighted the act well over a year earlier. The inherently dangerous stunt caused quite a sensation: "Just the sight of the apparatus was enough to give you shivers and make you believe, as one critic noted, that you were about to witness a ritual sacrifice." Around that same time, Houdini was, for reasons unknown, busily buying mothballed electric chairs at auctions across the country.

In 1913, Houdini's beloved mother passed away, which apparently resulted in Harry learning some deep family secret. Following her death, Houdini sent the following cryptic note to one of his brothers: "Time heals all wounds, but a long time will have to pass before it will heal the terrible blow which Mother tried to save me from knowing." The mean-



ing of this rather provocative note remains a mystery. Houdini, by the way, was in Denmark when his mother died and he requested a delay of her funeral to allow himself time to return to the States. Despite strict prohibitions in Jewish law, the entertainer's request was granted.

In December 1914, just a few months after the provocation that allegedly triggered WWI, Houdini was summoned to the nation's capitol for a private audience with then-President Woodrow Wilson. It is anyone's guess what business the two men discussed but it probably had little to do with stage tricks. A year-and-a-half later, on that most notorious of dates, April 20, an estimated 100,000 people gathered in Washington, DC to watch Houdini perform a straightjacket escape. Other than for a presidential inauguration, it was said to be the largest crowd ever assembled in downtown Washington. One year later, in April 1917, the US declared war on Germany.

For the duration of the United States' involvement in the war, Houdini spent a considerable amount of time aiding the war effort, both through fundraising and by frequently visiting the front lines, where he ostensibly went from camp to camp providing entertainment for the troops. Houdini's Hollywood career also began just as the US was entering the war. It has often been said that one of his first credits was as a special-effects consultant on the *Mysteries of Myra* cliffhanger serial, though others have claimed that Houdini had no involvement in the production. Curiously, the real consultant for the project is said to have been occultist/intelligence asset Aleister Crowley.

Houdini's first feature-length film, *The Grim Game*, opened to rave reviews. Ensnared in Hollywood, Houdini quickly made friends with mega-stars Charlie Chaplin and Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, both of whom would soon be caught up in scandals—a career-ending one in Arbuckle's case. The fledgling actor next began work on *Terror Island*, filmed largely on Catalina Island. Unlike his feature debut, *Island* opened to poor reviews, leading a discouraged Houdini to launch his own production company to create his own starring vehicles.

Just after completing *Terror Island*, in December 1919, Houdini was involved in yet another bizarre incident. Having injured his ankle performing the water torture escape, he paid a visit to a doctor who examined the performer and pronounced him in imminent "danger of death." Houdini nevertheless lived on for several more years; the doc-

tor, meanwhile, turned up dead within two weeks.

By the end of 1921, the Houdini Picture Corporation had two feature-length films in the can—*The Man From Beyond* and *Haldane of the Secret Service*. The first, co-written by Houdini himself and released on April 2, 1922, featured a strange plotline revolving around a man found frozen in arctic ice and brought back to life, a case of mistaken identity, confinement in a mental institution, escape from that same institution, and an abduction. *Haldane*, released the following year, was Houdini's first attempt at directing himself. It featured the magician as his real-life alter ego, but its performance at the box office signaled the end of Houdini's film career.

For the rest of his years, Houdini devoted a considerable amount of time to investigating and debunking the spiritualist movement, which flourished in the post-WWI years as legions of fake 'mediums' preyed upon the grief of those who had lost loved ones in the war. By design or otherwise, Houdini's crusade served primarily to publicize the movement, which included among its members a number of Harry's friends, most notably and prominently Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of fictional detective Sherlock Holmes and possible perpetrator of the infamous Piltdown Hoax of 1912. Both Doyle and Houdini also had connections to Le Roi and Margery Crandon, and that is where this story takes a decidedly dark turn.

Margery, born Mina Stinson in Canada in 1888, had moved with her family to Boston, Massachusetts, at a young age. As a teenager, she is said to have been a musical prodigy and to have played various musical instruments in local orchestras, while later working as an actress, secretary and ambulance driver. In 1917, the then-married Mina was hospitalized and operated on by Dr. Le Roi Goddard Crandon, a man who occupied a prestigious position in Boston society. Crandon was a direct descendent of one of the original twenty-three Mayflower passengers and a member of the Boston Yacht Club. He had graduated from Harvard Medical School and had also obtained a master's degree in philosophy from Harvard, where he also served as an instructor. Just before meeting Mina, he had served as a Naval officer and as head of the surgical staff at a US Naval hospital during WWI.

Shortly after meeting the doctor, Mina divorced her first husband and, in 1918, became the much older Le Roi Crandon's third wife. The

two seemed hopelessly mismatched, she being young, vivacious and, by all accounts, very attractive, while he was said to be rather arrogant, unpleasant and antisocial. Nevertheless, the pair quickly became the talk of Boston's high society, particularly after the summer of 1923 when they began holding regular séances in their home. One member of the couple's inner circle was a fellow by the name of Joseph DeWyckoff, a wealthy steel tycoon born in Poland and educated in England and Czarist Russia before settling in America to practice law. He was jailed in Boston on embezzlement charges, later fleeing to Chicago after embezzling yet more money. He soon turned up in, of all places, Havana, Cuba, where, according to Kalush and Sloman, "in 1898 he was recruited by John Wilkie, the Secret Service chief, as a co-optee and was involved in spying for the United States during the Spanish-American War."

That would be, needless to say, the very same John Wilkie who had kick-started Harry Houdini's career that very same year. As a reward for his service, DeWyckoff, who "had a history of violence," "was given the contract to salvage the Battleship Maine in the Havana Harbor." The Maine had been sunk in what appears to have been a false-flag operation carried out by US intelligence operatives to justify launching a bloody colonial war.

Although fragmentary, there is clear evidence that Le Roi and Mina Crandon, in conjunction with DeWyckoff and various others, began sometime soon after getting married to 'adopt' an untold number of children who subsequently went missing. A number of letters that Dr. Crandon penned on the subject and dispatched to his buddy Doyle appear to have gone missing as well. As Kalush and Sloman note, "Strangely, many of the letters regarding the investigation into the boys have been expunged from Crandon's files." In one surviving letter, sent on August 4, 1925, Crandon notes that "about December first I had Mr. DeWyckoff bring over a boy from a London home for possible adoption... In April 1925, our Secret Service Department at Washington received a letter saying that I had first and last sixteen boys in my house for ostensible adoption, and that they had all disappeared."

Four years earlier, a Boston newspaper had reported that two boys had been rescued from a raft; one, eight-year-old John Crandon, was Margery/Mina's son from her previous marriage; the other, a ten-year-

old English ‘adoptee,’ was reportedly so unhappy at the Crandon home that he was frantically attempting an escape, with the younger boy in tow. “Two years later, when Margery began her mediumship, there was no trace of that boy in the household.” Perhaps he was the ‘homeless’ boy whose dead body was reportedly found on the outskirts of Joseph DeWyckoff’s large estate in Ramsey, New Jersey, during that time period.

By 1924, Dr. Crandon was openly asking his many friends in the British spiritualist movement to “be on the lookout for suitable boys to adopt.” Around that same time, as another associate noted in a letter, Crandon was “being sued for \$40,000 for operating on a woman for cancer, when she was simply pregnant, and destroying the foetus... A highly incredible story which persists is that a boy who was in his family some weeks mysteriously disappeared. He claims that the boy is now in his home in England, but still official letters of inquiry and demand are received from that country. This is no mere rumor, for I was shown some of the original letters... The matter has been going on for more than a year. It is very mysterious.”

In response to questions raised about the disappearance of one particular boy, Margery/Mina complained that “people wrote asking his whereabouts, and the prime minister of England cabled to ask where he was and demanded a cable reply. Why people even said Dr. Crandon committed illegal operations on little children and murdered them.” According to Margery, “the poor little fellow had adenoids and had to be circumcised,” so Crandon opted to perform the surgery at home. It was widely rumored that the good doctor had performed another procedure at home as well—surgically altering his wife’s vaginal opening to allow her to ‘magically’ produce various items at séances.

On one occasion, Margery opened a closet in her home and showed an associate a collection of photos of well over 100 children, “most of them really lovely.” Margery told the woman that, “Those are Dr. Crandon’s caesareans—aren’t they sweet? All caesareans.” Given that Crandon wasn’t known for delivering babies at all, the notion that he had delivered over 100 of them via caesarean was an absurdity. Who then were all these children and why had Dr. Crandon photographed them? Such are the questions raised by the fragmentary evidence trail indicating that an untold number of young boys fell into the nefarious hands of a cabal of wealthy individuals with connections to the intelligence com-

munity. Not to worry though—the disappearances were investigated by John Wilkie’s Secret Service and a British MP by the name of Harry Day.

Not long before his death, Houdini, who had an extensive library of literature on the occult, began working with horror writer and occultist H.P. Lovecraft on various magazine articles. In 1926, he hired Lovecraft (who could, like Crandon, trace his lineage to the Massachusetts Bay Colony) and Clifford Eddy, Jr. (another occultist and horror writer and one of Houdini’s covert operatives), to co-write a book debunking superstition. According to Kalush and Sloman, “Shortly after meeting with Eddy and Lovecraft, Bess was stricken with a nonspecific form of poisoning.” Indeed, there is evidence suggesting that both Harry and Bess Houdini suffered from some form of poisoning prior to Harry’s death. In addition, Houdini is said to have exhibited severe mood swings and had some “aggressive confrontations” in the weeks leading up to his death, both of which were out of character for the illusionist (though Bess is widely reported to have suffered from extreme mood swings throughout her life).

As the story goes, Houdini, who prided himself on being able to take a punch from pretty much anyone, was sucker-punched in his dressing room by a McGill University student, causing his appendix to burst and ultimately leading to his death on October 31, 1926. Houdini’s physicians dutifully swore out affidavits certifying the cause of death to be “traumatic appendicitis,” though the medical community now acknowledges that such a medical condition has never existed. No autopsy was performed. Joscelyn Gordon Whitehead, the guy credited with sucker-punching Houdini, had some rather provocative connections. His father, for example, was a British diplomat serving in the Orient. After Houdini’s death, Whitehead is said to have become a recluse living something of a hermetic existence. He did have at least one close associate though—Lady Beatrice Isabel Marler, a wealthy heiress and the wife of Sir Herbert Meredith Marler, a prominent Canadian politician and diplomat who once served as Canada’s ambassador to the US.

The mid-1920s were not a good time for the Houdini/Weiss brothers. Brother Gottfried Weiss, born two years before Harry, died in 1925. Harry followed suit the next year. Brother Nathan Weiss, born four years before Harry, died soon after, in 1927. On June 22, 1927, Houdini’s European booking agent, Harry Day, reported that his apartment had

been ransacked. That day would have also been Houdini's wedding anniversary—assuming, that is, that Harry was actually legally married to Bess, which may not have been the case. Two months after the break-in at Day's apartment, Theodore 'Hardeen,' one of Houdini's two surviving brothers—the one who had inherited all of brother Harry's props, effects and papers—reported that his home had also been broken into while he had been on the road.

After Houdini's death, it was widely rumored that Bess—who in addition to suffering from wild mood swings was also an alcoholic and a drug addict who was occasionally suicidal—ran an illegal speakeasy/brothel in conjunction with a woman named Daisy White, said to have been Harry's mistress. Nothing unusual about that.

In mid-1945, Theodore 'Hardeen' checked into Doctor's Hospital for a scheduled operation. On June 12, 1945, Hardeen left that hospital in a body bag. It was reported at the time that Hardeen had been planning to pen a book on his brother and had begun work on the project before checking into the hospital. Nearly two decades later, on October 6, 1962, Leopold Weiss—Harry's last living sibling and the one who had been brutally attacked in his brother's home—is said to have jumped off a ledge and fallen six stories to his death. The last of Houdini's secrets went to the grave with him.

It has often been noted that Houdini took far longer to perform many of his stage escapes than was actually necessary and that he was frequently out of view of the audience during such times. This has generally been assumed to have been for dramatic effect. Authors Kalush and Sloman though offer a far more compelling possibility: "One explanation is that such challenges gave Houdini both the opportunity and an alibi to conduct a mission while he was performing." It was, in other words, the perfect cover, for how could a man be responsible for something that occurred elsewhere when he was performing on stage for a captive audience at the time? There are, it should be noted, clear parallels here to the story told by Chuck Barris, who has claimed that he was similarly slipping off to conduct covert missions while performing his duties as a chaperone for *The Dating Game*.

Of course, no one took Barris seriously because we all know that such things don't really happen in the real world—or at least not in the world that most of us think we live in.

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# **WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN** **PUNK AND NEW WAVE ARRIVE**

**"He seriously thought that Miles, Stewart and I were part of some conspiracy hatched by my father and backed by the CIA." Ian Copeland, referring to Bernie Rhodes, onetime manager of the Clash**

AS THE 1970S WORE ON, THE SOUNDS EMANATING FROM LAUREL CANYON began to be replaced by a new genre of rock music. What was initially dubbed "punk rock" was soon transformed into the less raw version known as "new wave," and both were sold to the masses as a new form of rebellion against the status quo.

The new scene was populated with a new batch of rising stars, bands and artists with names like Sex Pistols, the Clash, Buzzcocks, the Cramps, Generation X, Cherry Vanilla, General Public, the (English) Beat, Public Image Ltd., the Fleshtones, the B-52s, the Cure, the Police, Blondie, Television, REM, Patti Smith, Lou Reed, John Cale, Magazine, Simple Minds, the Specials, Wall of Voodoo, the Go-Gos, the Bangles, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, Echo and the Bunnymen, the Psychedelic Furs, Joy Division, Bow Wow Wow, Gang of Four, Squeeze, Siouxsie & the Banshees, Oingo Boingo, Adam Ant, Gary Numan, the Smiths, the Fixx, A Flock of Seagulls, Bananarama, Sting, Thompson Twins, Katrina and the Waves, Lords of the New Church, Midnight Oil, Steel Pulse, Dread Zeppelin, Social Dis-



## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

tortion, Human League, Soft Cell, Timbuk 3, Camper Van Beethoven, Circle Jerks, dada, the Alarm, the Jesus and Mary Chain, the Plimsouls, the Ramones, the Stranglers, UB40, Suburban Lawns, Stan Ridgeway, XTC, Concrete Blonde, Ultravox, and the Fine Young Cannibals.

All of the acts listed above had something in common: In addition to being among the most critically acclaimed and commercially viable of the new artists, all of them owed their success at least in part to their association with one or more members of the Copeland clan.

The patriarch of that clan, Miles Axe Copeland, Jr., born in 1916, was something of a legend in Western intelligence circles. At the outbreak of WWII, the former working musician was magically transformed into one of the founding members of the OSS. During the war years, while he was stationed in the UK, he met Elizabeth Lorraine Adie, a British intelligence asset then assigned to the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Lorraine's brother, Ian Aide, was also a highly placed British intelligence operative.

Miles and Lorraine, he the son of a doctor and she the daughter of a prominent neurosurgeon, were married in the UK on September 25, 1942. After the war, the two moved to Washington, DC, where Miles worked alongside other intelligence heavyweights like "Wild Bill" Donovan to form the Central Intelligence Agency. For the next several decades, Copeland would play key roles in various nefarious activities throughout the Middle East, Africa and Asia. In 1947, he was dispatched to Damascus, Syria to serve as the CIA station chief and to orchestrate a series of coups that resulted in power being consolidated in the military and national security sectors. These were the first coups orchestrated by the newly formed CIA, but they would certainly not be the last. Along for the adventure was firstborn son Miles Copeland III, who had been born in London on May 4, 1944. On April 25, 1949, second son Ian, born just outside of Damascus, joined the family.

The Copeland family thereafter alternated between various posts in the Middle East and their sometime home in Washington. On July 16, 1952, third son Stewart was born in Alexandria, Virginia. That same month, the senior Copeland worked with Gamal Nasser to organize a coup in Egypt. In 1953, Miles worked closely with Archibald and Kermit Roosevelt to orchestrate the coup that toppled Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh and consolidated the

power of Shah Reza Pahlavi. That same year, the Copeland family was dispatched to Cairo, Egypt, where Miles was tasked with creating the Mukhabarat, Egypt's version of the CIA, for soon-to-be President Nasser. Copeland stayed on for four years, becoming Nasser's top Western adviser and the country's CIA station chief. While there, Lorraine developed a keen interest in archeology and thereafter worked as, or at least posed as, an archeologist. And a very young Miles Copeland III became friends with Colonel Hassan Touhaimi, described in a web-posted bio of Copeland as "Nasser's machine gun toting bodyguard who lived next door." Every pre-pubescent boy, I think we can all agree, needs friends like that.

From 1957 through 1968, the Copeland clan was stationed in Beirut, Lebanon, where Miles, Sr. served as that country's CIA station chief. In his memoirs, son Ian has described Beirut at that time as a "center of intrigue and espionage." During the early years of that assignment, Copeland worked closely with such intelligence community luminaries as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and CIA chief Allen Dulles. Also during those years, the Copeland sons attended the American Community School in Beirut, where Miles III served as the president of his senior class. When he was just sixteen, Miles also obtained a license to teach judo to the Lebanese Army. Of those years spent in Lebanon, Ian Copeland has written that he "grew up thinking we were stinking rich. We certainly lived like we were." Ian has attributed that lavish lifestyle to his father's rather lucrative expense account.

Following his stint in Beirut—during which time he had frequently been on assignment in various hotspots throughout the Middle East, northern Africa and Asia—Copeland played a more low-profile role in US intelligence operations. In 1988, he penned an article entitled "Spooks for Bush" that argued that the intelligence community heartily backed the presidential bid of former spymaster George H.W. Bush. Three years later, Miles Axe Copeland, Jr. passed away, survived by his wife, daughter and three sons.

From fall 1962 through 1966, Miles Copeland III attended Birmingham Southern College, spending one semester at the American University in Washington, DC. After that, he was off to Lebanon to attend the American University of Beirut, where he spent three years. During that time, he formed his first business partnership with, again according to

his online bio, “his close friend, Amr Ghaleb, son of Egypt’s ambassador to Lebanon (known to run the largest spy network in Lebanon).” While at work at the business entity he dubbed Middle East Security Consultants, Copeland was reportedly fond of answering the phone with the greeting: “CIA, how can we help you?”

After graduating from the university in 1969, Miles joined the rest of the family in the UK, where he quickly began serving as a manager for the band Wishbone Ash and signing other new musical acts, including Joan Armatrading, Al Stewart and the Climax Blues Band. By 1974, he had launched his first record label, British Talent Managers (BTM), become a partner in a concert-booking agency and started a music industry magazine, *College Event*. As Ian later recalled, “When [Miles] found it difficult to get press on some of his bands, he simply determined to start his own magazine.” He also joined with then-unknown attorney Allen Grubman to form what would become the most powerful music industry law firm in the country.

It was, needless to say, a natural progression for a kid who had grown up immersed in the world of covert operations and whose first business venture had been a security consulting firm co-owned by the son of another powerful figure in the intelligence community. The publication *College Event*, not surprisingly, employed some classic spytrade subterfuge: Copeland kept his name off the publication by employing a front-man editor so that he could then write glowing endorsements of his own bands, disguised, of course, as objective reviews.

In 1976, Miles gave up the magazine, record company and booking agency partnership and started over as an agent, manager, producer and record company for numerous new punk and new wave acts that would soon emerge as some of the very brightest stars on the new musical horizon. Copeland launched several new record labels—including Illegal Records, Deptford Fun City Records, Step Forward Records and New Bristol Records—and executive produced the first film dedicated to promoting the new scene, *Urgh! A Music War*. His office soon became the headquarters for the most influential fanzine of the era, *Sniffin’ Glue*. In 1979, Copeland and Jerry Moss, the head of AMC Records, launched International Records Syndicate, Inc., better known as IRS Records. The label quickly became home to many of the most influential new wave acts. In 1983, Miles became the only music produc-

er to be given his own show on the upstart MTV network, *IRS Records Presents The Cutting Edge*, which ran through 1987 and served to, not surprisingly, primarily promote Copeland's acts.

Copeland was also given his own prime-time television show in the UK, *Miles Copeland's England*. The program was widely viewed as being pro-Conservative Party and pro-capitalist and was reportedly a favorite of then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. A repeat showing of the short-lived series was cancelled amid complaints that it would have undue influence on pending elections in the country.

Meanwhile, younger brother Ian Copeland had become quite a mover-and-shaker in the music industry as well. His self-professed wayward youth in Lebanon had included joining an older 'outlaw' biker gang after acquiring his first motorcycle at the age of fifteen. His memoirs are filled with other tales of bold adventures—including running away from home as a minor and making his way through several countries—but most of them seem rather apochryphal. He claims that his first business enterprise, when he was still quite young, was "basically running a whorehouse" servicing the US Marines called into the country by his father. He also claims to have helped a friend flee the country after said friend had likely killed a cop.

On September 19, 1967, at the height of the increasingly unpopular Vietnam War, while other kids were desperately trying to avoid the draft, Ian voluntarily enlisted in the US Army. As he emphasized in his memoirs, he "*wanted* to go to Vietnam." Assigned to the 1st Infantry Division, also known as the Big Red One, he arrived 'in country' just after the Tet Offensive of 1968. As recounted in his tome, his unit would soon find itself "banned from Saigon... following numerous complaints alleging brutality." Ian also writes approvingly of his unit's habit of "randomly bombard[ing] places around the country where we suspected Charlie might be," blithely ignoring the fact that those places likely harbored mostly noncombatants. Of his time in Vietnam, Copeland has written that he "loved it—not all the time, but enough to have seen me through it all, and to have mostly fond memories as I think of Vietnam." His fond memories are no doubt influenced by the fact that, as someone cleared to handle sensitive communications, he was given a considerable amount of autonomy: "Since we handled messages classified as Confidential, Secret and Top Secret, we were able to close off

our area with barbed wire and make it off-limits to absolutely everyone, including officers.”

While just nineteen, Ian Copeland was promoted to the rank of sergeant, becoming, by his account, the youngest US serviceman ever to achieve that rank. He has credited that promotion in part to the fact that he rode as a bodyguard for an unnamed lieutenant who was heavily involved in black market operations. What Copeland fails to mention is that black market operations in Vietnam were mostly run by our own CIA. Copeland also was awarded a Bronze Star, a Good Conduct Medal, four campaign medals, a National Defense Service Medal, a Vietnam Service Medal, and a Republic of Vietnam Commendation Medal.

Following his tour of duty in Vietnam, Ian was assigned to Fort Lee, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC. There he was tasked with providing riot control training to troops being prepped to police the May Day peace march on Washington. He subsequently volunteered for a second tour of duty in Vietnam, but soon found himself facing drug charges in the UK. He was ultimately found “not guilty” of the charges, owing largely to the fact that his father secured representation for him from a member of the Queen’s Counsel. His time spent fighting the charges though resulted in his Vietnam orders being rescinded and instead he was dispatched to a remote communications outpost in England. In October 1970, he was sent to one of the numerous US military installations around Mannheim, Germany, a hub for military intelligence operations. A few months later, in January 1971, he was honorably discharged after serving his country for nearly three-and-a-half years.

In late April 1971, shortly after his discharge, Copeland incongruously decided to join a week-long protest organized by the group Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Given his own history and his family history, readers are excused for questioning whether his sudden misgivings about the war were sincere or whether he was in fact working to infiltrate the dissident group. A clue can perhaps be found in the fact that, not long after joining the protest, Ian answered an ad seeking Vietnam veterans who would be willing to sign up to fight as mercenaries in the Congo.

Copeland never made it to the Congo though; instead he went to work for big brother Miles. By 1979, Ian had founded Frontier Booking International, better known by the acronym FBI, which quickly became the go-to booking agency for “new wave” acts, a term that Ian Cope-

land claims to have coined. Soon he was booking all of brother Miles' acts and many more as well. Between the two of them, Miles and Ian signed, managed, booked, recorded, produced or otherwise handled a remarkably high percentage of the big name acts that emerged from the new music scene.\*

The youngest and best known of the Copeland brothers, Stewart, also opted to venture into the emerging punk/new wave scene, but he did so by forming his own 'punk' band. Before actually recruiting any musicians, he quickly came up with a band name, the Police, and designed the band's logo and an album cover. The band that he would then assemble, featuring himself on drums, Gordon Thomas Matthew "Sting" Sumner on bass and lead vocals, and Andrew James Summers on guitar, would soon become arguably the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful of the new bands. The initial success of the Police in the US is what largely opened the floodgates for a new British invasion of punk and new wave bands. And that was in spite of the fact that the band was in no way a punk band and didn't really even qualify as a new wave band. As the British press pointed out, band members were much too professional, and a bit too old, to really fit into the new scene.

In 2002, Stewart Copeland played briefly in a reconstituted version of the Doors, alongside founding members Ray Manzarek and Robby Krieger. Copeland's former bandmate, Andy Summers, who was a decade older than Stewart and Sting, had been on the Laurel Canyon scene back when the original Doors were playing the Sunset Strip. As he wrote in *Rolling Stone* in July 2007, in 1968 he "was living in Laurel Canyon and going to Sunset Strip every night." Briefly a member of Eric Burden and the Animals at that time, Summers had been one of the regulars at the Log Cabin.

And the beat goes on...

\* Ian Copeland was also in a three-year relationship with actress Courteney Cox, who famously made her debut dancing with rocker Bruce Springsteen in a music video. Cox, as it turns out, was partially raised by and is the step-daughter of Hunter Copeland, brother of Miles Axe Copeland, Jr. and an uncle of the three boys. Hunter Copeland had been a decorated WWII officer, returning home with a Silver Star, four Bronze Stars, and a Purple Heart.

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**“For whatever reason—it’s still not understood by criminologists—California in the 1970s was ground zero for serial killers.”**

Stella Sands, writing in The Dating Game Killer

ONE THING THAT HAS BECOME VERY CLEAR WHILE RESEARCHING THIS BOOK is that there are disturbing parallels between the Laurel Canyon saga and my previous research on the phenomenon of serial killers—research that led to my earlier book, *Programmed to Kill*. Nowhere is that more true than in the details of the curious case of Rodney Alcala, otherwise known as the Dating Game Killer, who is said to be one of the country’s most prolific serial killers. He has been convicted of seven murders, accused of several more, and some law enforcement officials have claimed, rather ludicrously, that he could be responsible for as many as 130 murders. It is only in recent years though that he has been identified as a serial killer, despite the fact that all the crimes he is accused of were committed in the 1970s.

In addition to being an alleged serial killer himself, Alcala allegedly operated on the same turf as a few other, more high-profile serial killers. And as fate would have it, he also had a number of connections to the Laurel Canyon scene and some of the key people and places that made up that scene. In other words, Alcala’s story seems to provide a bridge between the seemingly idyllic Laurel Canyon scene and the brutal world of serial murder.

In the opening chapter of Stella Sands’ *The Dating Game Killer*, that



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connection is hinted at:

“As cars cruised up and down Hollywood Boulevard and the Sunset Strip, radios blared edgier, angrier rock and roll: *Masters Of War* by Bob Dylan, *What’s Going On?* by Marvin Gaye, *Eve Of Destruction* by Barry McGuire. Musicians from bands like the Doors, the Byrds, Cream, and the Animals played the Whiskey-a-Go-Go [sic] on the Sunset Strip—and partied with wild abandon at the Chateau Marmont Hotel up the street... Amidst all this turmoil and social upheaval in 1968, an event occurred that is not well documented by the era’s historians: ‘Tali S.,’ age eight, was abducted on her way to school.”

This story begins though in 1943, in San Antonio, Texas, with the birth on August 23 of one Rodrigo Jacques Alcala-Buquor. Growing up, young Rodrigo (known as Rodney) attended mostly private Catholic schools where he got excellent grades and never showed any signs of being a problem child. In 1951, when he was about eight, he and his family moved to Mexico where he attended the American School. Not long after relocating, Rodney’s father left the family and returned to the States alone. In 1954, after a few years in Mexico, Rodney and his mom and siblings relocated once again, this time to Los Angeles, California. By 1956, he was enrolled at the private Cantwell High School for boys, which later merged with Sacred Heart of Mary High School for girls to become the Cantwell-Sacred Heart of Mary High School, owned and operated by the LA Archdiocese.

Alcala finished out his senior year at Montebello High School, graduating in 1960. According to various reports, he had a wide circle of friends and never had any trouble lining up dates during his high school years. In addition to being an excellent student and talented athlete, he was on the yearbook planning committee and he took piano lessons. He was, in other words, a well-rounded and popular kid—the kind of young man you would expect to see voted “most likely to succeed” by his high school classmates.

On June 19, 1961, Rodney Alcala enlisted in the US Army. His older brother was at the time attending prestigious West Point Military Academy, which generally requires a nomination from a US Senator or a member of the House of Representatives. There is no explanation in the available literature as to how the Alcala family had either the financial means or the political connections to secure such an appointment.

Rodney meanwhile entered a program in North Carolina to become a paratrooper but instead served as a clerk, if his service records are to be believed. He was stationed, interestingly enough, at Fort Bragg, which had become, with the creation of the Psychological Warfare Center in 1952, a hotbed of research on 'unconventional warfare.' Fort Bragg is also the longtime home of US Special Forces.

After two years of military service, Alcala unexpectedly showed up at his mother's Montebello home after having gone AWOL. He was quickly hospitalized and informed that he was in immediate need of psychiatric treatment. Taken first to San Francisco, he soon found himself at a military hospital at the Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro, near Irvine, California. He remained there for an unspecified length of time.

Following his release, he returned to his mother's home in Montebello and shortly thereafter enrolled in UCLA's College of Fine Arts, from where he earned a degree in 1968. During his first year there, another young student who had just moved out from Florida—a guy by the name of Jim Morrison—likewise enrolled in UCLA's College of Fine Arts. Both young men displayed a passion for making student films. According to Morrison biographers Jerry Hopkins and Danny Sugerman, during Jim and Rodney's time at the College of Fine Arts, a fellow student cut his girlfriend's heart out.

On September 25, 1968, an eight-year-old girl later identified as Tali Shapiro was abducted while on her way to the Gardner Street Elementary School in Hollywood. At the time, according to Sands, Shapiro was "living temporarily at the Chateau Marmont Hotel in West Hollywood with her brother, sister, mother, and music-industry father." The family was temporarily rubbing elbows with the likes of Jim Morrison and Janis Joplin because, as it turns out, "their home had recently burned down in a fire." As Gary Valentine Lachman has written, the hotel during that era was widely rumored to offer a decidedly unhealthy environment in which to raise a young girl: "Tales of pacts with the Devil followed [Led] Zeppelin throughout their career, and stories of orgies, black masses and satanic rites were commonplace, mostly centered around the infamous Chateau Marmont off the Sunset Strip."

On the morning of her abduction, Shapiro is said to have woken early and, without informing her parents, decided on her own to walk to school rather than taking the bus—which seems difficult to believe

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given her young age and the fact that the school was a little over a mile away down seedy Sunset Boulevard. As the story goes, Alcala was spotted luring Shapiro into his vehicle by a good samaritan, who then followed Alcala back to his apartment where he called police from a nearby phone. The police though apparently didn't rush over, giving Alcala time to strip, viciously rape and then bludgeon the young girl nearly to death. She was so thoroughly battered, with her head bashed open and a heavy bar placed across her throat, that the responding officer initially thought she was dead.

Upon arrival, the officer knocked on the suspect's front door and was greeted through the window by a partially naked man who claimed he had just gotten out of the shower and would need a minute to get dressed. Despite the fact that the officer was responding to a report of an abducted child (with the witness on the scene) and had just encountered the presumed suspect, he nevertheless allowed that suspect time to get dressed and escape. According to Sands, "In the short time it had taken to kick in the door, the perpetrator—the *monster*—had slipped out the back." The *LA Weekly* concurred, claiming that Alcala "escaped through a backdoor." Not many apartment units, it should probably be noted, come equipped with a back door.

In any event, the apartment was found to be full of photographic equipment and stacks of photographs of young girls. The suspect, however, was nowhere to be found. The case was assigned to, of all people, LAPD detective Steve Hodel, brother of Michelle Phillips' surrogate mom, Tamar Hodel, and son of accused Black Dahlia killer George Hodel. According to a January 21, 2010, article in the *LA Weekly*, Hodel was at the time a "newbie detective working juvenile crimes." The Shapiro family, meanwhile, abruptly decided to relocate to Mexico, a move that is routinely cited as the reason the crime was never prosecuted.

Following his unlikely escape, Alcala immediately relocated to New York and, using the name John Berger, applied for admission to the prestigious New York University School of the Arts. Although the semester had already begun at the notoriously selective school, Berger/Alcala was nevertheless admitted. He attended for three years, working at times as a security guard and, during the summers of 1969, 1970 and 1971, as an arts counselor. One of Alcala's instructors at the school was a guy who during those same years had a slaughter perpetrated at his

home, and who Pamela Des Barres once described as being “definitely *not* normal,” Mr. Roman Polanski.

In June of 1971, Cornelia Crilley, a TWA stewardess who lived with her family across from the sprawling Cavalry Cemetery, was found dead. She had been in a two-year relationship with a Leon Borstein, then an assistant district attorney for Brooklyn who later became the chief special prosecutor for New York City. Borstein, who claimed that Crilley was the love of his life but who nevertheless married just a year after her murder, was initially the prime suspect. The crime appeared to have nothing whatsoever to do with Rodney Alcala—but a full four decades later, in 2011, he would be indicted for her murder.

By the time of Crilley’s murder, Sands notes, “detective Steve Hodel and his LAPD team had been trying to locate Alcala for nearly three years.” They finally got a break when Alcala was added to the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list and was subsequently recognized by a couple of the teens at the camp where he served as a counselor. Upon his arrest and return to Los Angeles, Alcala was facing very serious charges of kidnapping, rape and attempted murder, yet he was allowed to cop a guilty plea to a single count of child molestation, for which he received a sentence of one to ten years. He ultimately served less than three years, with much of that time spent at the notorious California Medical Facility at Vacaville. Also housed at Vacaville during that time was Donald DeFreeze, who would soon emerge as Cinque, leader of the so-called Symbionese Liberation Army. According to Dr. Colin Ross, during that same time period, “the CIA was conducting mind control experiments [at Vacaville] under MKSEARCH Subproject 3.”

In August 1974, a prison psychiatrist recommended that Alcala be released and he was paroled to LA County and required to register with the local police as a sex offender. Within just weeks of gaining his freedom though, Alcala kidnapped a thirteen-year-old girl and was promptly arrested once again. He again caught a lucky break and was found guilty only of violating his parole and of furnishing drugs to a minor, escaping far more serious charges. He served about two-and-a-half years and was paroled on June 16, 1977. Just days after being released, he asked his parole officer for permission to take a trip to New York City, and, since he had behaved himself so well the last time he was on parole, his request was granted.

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Alcala remained in New York for a little over a month, ostensibly to visit relatives. During his time there, a woman by the name of Ellen Jane Hover went missing. Being the small world that it is, Ellen just happened to be the daughter of Herman Hover, who had been the longtime owner of *Ciro's* on the Sunset Strip, the club that famously launched the career of the Byrds. She was also the goddaughter of Sammy Davis, Jr. For reasons that were never explained, the FBI took a keen interest in Hover's disappearance, which happened to come at a time when New York City was gripped by intense fear. It was, after all, the infamous 'Summer of Sam' and Hover's disappearance on July 15, 1977, was sandwiched between two Son of Sam attacks, one on June 26 and another on July 31.

Hover remained missing for almost a full year, until her skeletal remains were discovered in June of 1978, in a shallow grave on, of all places, the Rockefeller estate in Westchester County. It would be over three decades later that Rodney Alcala would be charged with her murder.

Upon his return from New York, Alcala applied for a job as a typesetter at the *Los Angeles Times*. He applied using his real name and was promptly hired, despite having been twice convicted for felony offenses, having served time for crimes committed against children, being a registered sex offender, being on parole, and holding the distinction of once numbering among the FBI's Ten Most Wanted. A coworker would later say, perhaps tellingly, that Alcala seemed like he knew a lot of famous people.

On November 10, 1977, the nude, brutalized body of eighteen-year-old Jill Barcomb was found posed on a side road adjacent to, and in full view of, the Marlon Brando estate overlooking Laurel Canyon. The murder was investigated by LAPD detective Phillip Vannatter, who would later famously tote a vial of blood around with him while investigating the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman. For many, many years, Barcomb's death was credited to the Hillside Strangler team of Angelo Buono and Kenneth Bianchi. Like the Strangler victims, Jill was found nude, strangled, tortured, sexually assaulted, bound and posed on a hillside. And her death occurred amidst a string of Strangler killings—Judith Miller on October 31, Lissa Kastin on November 6, Barcomb on November 10, Kathleen Robinson on November 18, and Kristina Weckler, Delores Cepeda, and Sonja Johnson all found dead on November 20. In addition, Barcomb knew Strangler victim Miller. Nev-

ertheless, the murder would eventually be credited to Alcala, but not for nearly forty years.

According to the official version of events then, Judith Miller, chosen at random, was killed on Halloween by a pair of serial killers. And then a mere ten days later, in an officially unrelated event, her friend Jill Barcomb, also chosen at random, was killed by a different serial killer who, despite being unconnected to the other two serial killers, nevertheless killed and posed Barcomb in a manner remarkably similar to the way Miller was killed and posed. One has to wonder what the odds of that actually happening would be.

In any event, Jill Barcomb, found not far from where Marina Habe had been found nearly a decade earlier, is yet another tragic addition to the Laurel Canyon Death List. As is, I suppose, Ellen Jane Hover. Tali Shapiro narrowly avoided making the list.

At the request of the FBI, Alcala was brought down to the LAPD's Parker Center in December 1977 for questioning concerning the still-missing Ellen Hover. He admitted knowing Hover and even acknowledged being with her on the day she vanished, but he claimed to know nothing about her disappearance. That same month, twenty-eight-year-old nurse Georgia Wixted was found brutally murdered in her Malibu, California, bedroom. For nearly thirty years, there would be absolutely nothing linking Rodney Alcala to the crime or the crime scene.

In early 1978, Alcala was questioned by the Hillside Strangler Task Force, which was composed of members of the LAPD, the LA Sheriff's Department and the Glendale Police Department. He was arrested at that time, though only for the benign offense of being in the possession of marijuana, for which he served a brief jail sentence. For a time though, he was considered a "person of interest" to the task force. On June 23, 1978, just after Alcala's release from that brief jail stint, the savaged body of thirty-two-year-old legal secretary Charlotte Lamb was discovered on the floor of an apartment laundry room in El Segundo, California. Once again, there was no evidence linking Alcala to either the crime, the victim, or the crime scene, and he would not be named as a suspect for some twenty-five years.

On September 13 of that same year, Alcala infamously appeared as Bachelor #1 on television's *The Dating Game*. Despite his criminal history and sex offender status, which surely would have been discov-

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ered during the show's screening process, he was presented to women across the country as one of the nation's most eligible and desirable bachelors. The guy doing that presenting was *Dating Game* producer Chuck Barris, who has stated publicly that he was a CIA asset at the time the show was in production and that the show itself was essentially an elaborate CIA front designed to provide cover for Barris' own travels and activities. Mr. Barris was also, according to some reports, a onetime resident of everyone's favorite canyon.

On February 13 of the following year, Alcalá picked up a fifteen-year-old hitchhiker by the name of Monique Hoyt, who voluntarily spent that night at Alcalá's home. The next day, Valentine's Day, thirty-four-year-old Rodney Alcalá took fifteen-year-old Monique Hoyt into the woods to shoot nude photos. At some point the situation turned violent and nonconsensual, resulting in yet another arrest for Alcalá. Though facing very serious felony charges, including kidnapping, rape, and the production of child pornography, his bail was set at a paltry \$10,000. At the end of April, Alcalá gave his two-week notice to his superiors at the *LA Times*. How he had managed to keep his job through his jail sentence for marijuana possession and his arrest for kidnapping a young girl is anyone's guess. The *Times* apparently used the same screening service as *The Dating Game*.

On June 14, another young woman, twenty-one-year-old Jill Parentau, turned up dead in her Burbank, California, apartment. Once again, there was no evidence linking Rodney Alcalá to the crime and Parentau's murder would remain unsolved for two-and-a-half decades. Six days after her murder, on the eve of the summer solstice, twelve-year-old Robin Samsoe of Huntington Beach, California, went missing after spending time at the beach with her best friend. Officially, her remains were discovered twelve days later in a heavily wooded area allegedly chosen by Rodney Alcalá. But the reality appears to be that it is unknown what became of Samsoe. What is known is that from the time of her disappearance, authorities took a much different approach to dealing with Alcalá than they had in the past. Before a month had passed, he was back in prison and would never walk free again.

As the story is generally told, Samsoe was strolling the beach with her friend when they were approached by Alcalá with a request to take their photos, ostensibly for a student photo contest. A neighbor who



happened to be passing by approached the trio, at which time Alcalá lowered his head and quickly shuffled off. The girls went about their business without giving the incident much thought and Samsoe soon said goodbye to her friend. Borrowing the friend's bike, she headed off to a ballet class that she never made it to.

On the afternoon of July 2, a worker with the US Forestry Service discovered human skeletal remains in a heavily wooded section of the Angeles National Forest. The area was littered with discarded beer bottles and cigarette butts. The remains appeared to be those of an adult, and investigators, according to a June 1989 article in *Orange Coast Magazine*, believed the death to be "drug-related." The crime scene, according to the same report, "was given only a cursory examination by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department." Five days later an LA County coroner decided that the remains were actually those of a child. And not just any child, but the missing Robin Samsoe. Unexplained was how the remains of a child could have been mistaken for those of an adult. Also unexplained was how the child could have been reduced to skeletal remains, completely stripped of flesh and hair, in an absurdly short amount of time.

The only thing that would ever tie Rodney Alcalá to those scattered remains would be the testimony of one Dana Crappa, a twenty-year-old seasonal firefighter with the Forestry Service. And it is here, with the introduction of Dana Crappa, that this story grows very murky. As *Orange Coast Magazine* noted, "The exact bit of information that first tied Crappa to the disappearance of Robin Samsoe is not known." Indeed, there doesn't appear to be *anything* that initially tied Crappa to Samsoe. But with considerable molding by police, Crappa would emerge as the star witness for the prosecution.

For reasons that have never been adequately explained, Huntington Beach Police called Crappa in for questioning on August 2, 1979, exactly one month after the discovery of the remains. At that time, Crappa was shown photos of Alcalá and Samsoe as well as of Alcalá's car. She told investigators that she had never seen the man or the girl before, but that the car might resemble one she had seen parked near Mile Marker 11 (near where the remains were discovered) on either June 7 or June 14 at around 9:30–10:00 PM. Seeing as how the dates provided by Crappa were well before Samsoe's disappearance, this information was of no use to police. The time of day was entirely wrong as well.

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Pressed by police to state whether it might have been June 20 or June 21 when she saw the vehicle, Crappa responded that it “definitely could not have been.”

On August 7, Crappa was again questioned by police. Miraculously, on this occasion she recalled that she had seen the vehicle similar to Alcalá’s on June 21, and had done so between 8:00 and 8:30 PM! She added that, prior to her discovery of the remains on July 2, she had no awareness of the crime scene. But at preliminary trial proceedings not long after that meeting, Crappa told a different version of her story; she again said that she had seen the car on June 21, but she now claimed that it had been between 10:00–10:30 PM. She added that she had not seen anyone near the parked car. She also added that she had first seen the corpse on June 29, several days earlier than she had previously claimed. And she added that the corpse was already skeletal at that time.

On February 7, 1980, Crappa met with Huntington Beach Police detective Art Droz and a police psychologist named Larry Blum. She had, however, previously stated that she wanted no further interaction with the police so she was deliberately not told that the men she was speaking to were police personnel. Although authorities heatedly deny it, it is painfully obvious that Ms. Crappa was subjected to hypnotic interrogation techniques during that meeting and at future meetings. According to police, at the February 7 meeting she claimed that she had seen the vehicle on June 21 and that she had in fact seen a man by the car after all! She also said that when she had returned on June 29 she had found clothes strewn about the area, a crusty knife, and six .22-caliber bullet casings. For reasons never explained, she also claimed that she had picked up the bullet casings and thrown them away!

By that time, Crappa’s testimony was so ridiculously riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies that it should have had no value to prosecutors in any kind of real trial. Police and prosecutors though weren’t quite done with her.

On February 11, she once again unknowingly spoke to police investigators. On February 15, she met with a detective and one of the prosecutors on the case. By then she was claiming to have seen the car on June 20 and to have seen a man guiding a young girl away from the car and into the woods! On the day that meeting was held, the presiding judge ruled that Alcalá’s prior offenses would be allowed into evidence,

including the fact that Alcala was suspected of involvement in Hover's death, a crime he had never even been charged with, let alone convicted of. As Sands noted, "The ruling was a momentous victory for the prosecution. Because there was little direct evidence linking Alcala to the Samsoe crime, the prior attacks would lend credence to their case." It was becoming perfectly obvious that Rodney Alcala was not going to get anything resembling a fair trial.

On February 26, Crappa once again met with detectives and prosecutors. Somewhere around that time she reportedly suffered a nervous breakdown and allegedly became suicidal, leading to her being involuntarily institutionalized. That, needless to say, must have greatly facilitated the process of programming the witness. A defense psychiatrist by the name of Albert J. Rosenstein would later describe Crappa in open court as "a Manchurian candidate at a minor level."

As Alcala's trial got underway on March 6, 1980, the defendant was paraded into the courtroom in cuffs and leg shackles in a deliberate attempt to prejudice the jury. But the real "linchpin of the trial," as Sands wrote, "would be the testimony of one Dana Crappa, twenty-one." On the stand, Crappa's demeanor was odd, to say the least. She frequently took long, awkward pauses—when she wasn't staring blankly into space. According to *Orange Coast Magazine*, her demeanor was so bizarre that the trial judge considered ending her testimony prematurely. She did though tell the story prosecutors wanted her to tell—a story that bore no resemblance whatsoever to the story she told when first mysteriously contacted by police.

In court, Crappa claimed that she had seen the suspect's vehicle on June 20. She also said that she had seen a man resembling Alcala guide a young girl who resembled Samsoe into the woods. Although she had found what she allegedly observed disturbing, she acknowledged that she had told no one of the incident. When her curiosity got the best of her, she said, she had returned to the area on June 25 to have a look around. At that time, she had allegedly seen Samsoe's body, decapitated and with part of her face gone. She had, of course, returned by herself and told no one of her supposed discovery. Crappa further told the jury that she had returned a second time on June 29, again alone. On that visit, she claimed, she had observed that Samsoe's body had been reduced to a pile of bones. In just four days! Following that extremely

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unlikely second visit, she again, of course, told no one. We are apparently to believe then that she was brave enough to return to a remote murder scene alone on two occasions, but not brave enough to report her discoveries, even anonymously.

Crappa's testimony had no credibility whatsoever, and she was not the only seriously dubious witness trotted out by the prosecution. There were also Robert J. Dove and Michael Herrera, a pair of Orange County jail inmates, both of whom testified that Alcalá had given them jail-house confessions. A third OC inmate, however, testified that he, Dove and Herrera had fabricated the confessions to gain favor with authorities. What the jury didn't hear was that all three inmates just happened to be clients of Alcalá's first court-appointed attorney. Of the thousands of inmates in the OC jail, Alcalá had supposedly chosen to confess his crime only to three guys who happened to be represented by the guy who was supposed to be defending him.

Despite their best efforts, prosecutors were unable to present any physical evidence at all tying Alcalá to the murder of Robin Samsoe; there was no fingerprint evidence, no fiber or hair evidence, no blood evidence, and no DNA evidence. There also don't appear to have been many witnesses who weren't delivering brazenly perjured testimony.

After a half-hearted defense that included alibi testimony from Alcalá's girlfriend and two of his sisters, followed by closing arguments and jury instructions, deliberations began on April 29, 1980. Jurors returned the next day with a guilty verdict on the charge of first-degree murder. The date was, of course, April 30—because that's just the way these things always seem to work. The penalty phase of the trial was a perfunctory affair with just two witnesses appearing for the prosecution, both of them parole officers to whom Alcalá had previously reported. He was quickly sentenced to death.

At Alcalá's first appeal hearing, inmate Joseph Drake took the stand to repeat his claim that he, Dove and Herrera had fabricated Alcalá's confessions in order to strike an "informer's bargain" with authorities. He was joined by Dove, who freely admitted on the stand that his previous testimony had been perjured. The inmate testimony had been crucial to the prosecution's goal of adding the special circumstance of kidnapping, which was necessary for the imposition of the death penalty. On May 28, 1981, the presiding judge issued an extraordinary ruling

stating that there had been no “perjured evidence introduced during the trial, *and that even had there been*, that was not a substantial consideration regarding Alcala’s guilt.” (emphasis added)

The special circumstance of kidnapping, therefore, would stand and Alcala was returned to Death Row. On August 23, 1984, however, the California Supreme Court ruled that the lower court had erred in allowing into evidence Alcala’s prior offenses. Rodney Alcala would be getting a new trial after all. The available literature invariably expresses outrage over this reversal, claiming that the allegedly criminal-coddling ‘liberal’ courts let him off on “a technicality,” though that is far removed from the truth.

In April of 1986, Alcala’s second trial for the murder of Robin Samsoe got underway. There was a problem though: Dana Crappa, whose testimony was the only hope the state had of getting a conviction, privately informed the judge that she would not be able to testify because she remembered nothing about the incident. She also told him that she did not remember previously testifying, which isn’t surprising considering that she delivered that testimony in an obviously induced mental state. Signaling that this trial was going to be just as much of a sham as the first trial, the judge ruled that he would allow Crappa’s previous testimony to be read into the record without Crappa being present. That, of course, deprived the jury of the ability to judge Crappa’s demeanor and body language and all the other non-verbal clues that jurors use to gauge someone’s honesty and credibility. It also denied the defense the opportunity to cross-examine the witness and confront her with her wildly varying accounts of the incident.

The remainder of the trial largely followed the pattern of Alcala’s first trial, with a number of women—including Alcala’s mother, two sisters, and a female coworker at the *Times*—providing testimony for the defense. The jury once again returned with a guilty verdict and he was once again sentenced to death, but only after blasting his attorneys in court for being “unprepared and unwilling” to mount a real defense. Some six years later, on December 31, 1992, the California Supreme Court affirmed Alcala’s second conviction. And that, for the next decade or so, would be the end of the Rodney Alcala saga.

That all changed on March 30, 2001, when a federal district court set aside Alcala’s second conviction based on the wildly improper introduc-

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tion of Crappa's prior testimony. The court also opined that the defense had been improperly prohibited from introducing evidence that Crappa's testimony had been induced. On June 27, 2003, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the decision of the federal court and vacated Alcalá's conviction, additionally citing the failure by police to secure and properly investigate the crime scene.

The stage was now set for Alcalá to stand trial for the *third time* for the murder of Robin Samsoe. The state though was facing quite a dilemma: for whatever reason, there was still a very strong desire to have Alcalá take the fall for Samsoe's disappearance, but there was no semblance of a case left. There would be no perjured inmate testimony. There would be no induced testimony from Dana Crappa. There would be no inflammatory admission of prior uncharged crimes. There would be no parading of Alcalá in handcuffs and leg shackles. And there still was not a shred of physical evidence tying Alcalá to the crime or the alleged crime scene.

On October 17, 2003, Alcalá filed a motion to act as his own attorney in the coming trial. This was cast by the media as a misguided, narcissistic attempt by Alcalá to put himself in the spotlight. In truth, he was undoubtedly aware that he had been sold out twice before and likely would be again. Indeed, in June 2003, the very month that Alcalá's conviction had been vacated, DNA evidence had supposedly identified him as the killer of Georgia Wixted. The state was going to be taking a novel approach to railroading Alcalá this time.

Alcalá would soon allegedly be linked by DNA evidence to the Lamb, Parentau and Barcomb murders as well. Like Wixted, they were all killed in Los Angeles County, which is under a different court jurisdiction than Orange County, where Alcalá had previously stood trial for Samsoe's murder. All five cases were handed off to a grand jury, which, as California grand juries do, met secretly to render a decision. According to Sands, "After hearing all the evidence against Alcalá, the grand jury came down with an indictment. Although Lamb, Parenteau, Barcomb, and Wixted had all been murdered in Los Angeles County, the grand jury held open the possibility that prosecutors could consolidate all *five* cases—including that of Robin Samsoe—and try Alcalá in Orange County."

After numerous delays, the consolidated trial began in Orange County in early 2010. It was the first time, and to date the last time, that

such a cross-county consolidation had been allowed. The state was now going to try to convict Alcala for the Samsoe murder by presenting it as one of a string of murders, with the other four allegedly being open-and-shut, scientifically unimpeachable cases. It appeared that judicial malfeasance had now reached such a level that the state had dusted off four very old murder cases and manufactured evidence linking Alcala to them as a way of garnering a conviction for a fifth murder that was otherwise not prosecutable.

Alcala was by then being widely identified by police and the media as a prolific serial killer who was likely responsible for other, undiscovered murders. Some of the most over-the-top media coverage came from the UK, where a February 2010 headline in the *Telegraph* declared that “US serial killer Rodney Alcala could be ‘new Ted Bundy.’” An April 2010 headline in the London *Daily Mail* was even more histrionic: “The ‘most prolific’ serial killer in US history is sentenced to death as police fear he could be behind 130 murders.”

At Alcala’s third trial, a fingerprint technician testified that a palm print recovered from the scene of Georgia Wixted’s murder thirty-three years earlier was a match for Rodney Alcala. Another technician testified that blood evidence recovered from another of the murder scenes also was a match. Nobody though bothered to explain why Alcala was just then being identified as the perpetrator of these crimes if the evidence linking a known violent sex offender and ‘person of interest’ to the murders had supposedly been in existence for more than thirty years!

Craig Robison, one of the lead detectives on the Samsoe case, testified that he had arrested Alcala on July 24, 1979, and taken him down to the station while other Huntington Beach officers executed a search warrant on the home. It was at that time, according to Robison, that a Sergeant Jenkins had allegedly discovered a receipt for a Seattle storage locker. Rather than seize the receipt, however, he purportedly left it there and copied down the information on it. The actual receipt was never produced at trial and there is no way of verifying that it ever existed. Following that seriously dubious lead, detectives had discovered a storage unit purportedly filled with photographs and other evidence Alcala had stashed there. Immediately after the discovery of Samsoe’s alleged remains, Alcala is said to have driven to Seattle and deposited the items in the unit, after which he stayed overnight and then drove



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back home. He had, of course, told no one of this alleged trip and no witnesses could place him in Seattle. And there was no explanation for why he would have driven all the way there, to a city he had no known connection to and was not known to have ever visited, to stash the items. Police would later try to connect Alcala to murders previously attributed to Seattle's so-called Green River killer.

Alcala was, needless to say, convicted a third time for the murder of Robin Samsoe, as well as for the murders of Lamb, Wixted, Parentau and Barcomb. On March 2, 2010, the penalty phase of the trial began. A week later, on March 9, the jury returned once again with a recommendation that Alcala be executed. Three weeks later, the presiding judge formally sentenced him to die by lethal injection.

Six months after that third conviction, the television show *48 Hours Mystery* aired *The Killing Game*, a look at the Rodney Alcala case that had been produced by longtime correspondent Harold Dow. The episode was aired posthumously; Dow had died suddenly and unexpectedly a month earlier, on August 21, 2010, just before completing work on the project. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that Dow had discovered something about the Alcala case that those with vested interests did not want aired on national television.

Whether or not Alcala's third conviction in California will stand remains to be seen. Probably as a fallback option in case the convictions are once again overturned, as they certainly should be, Alcala was indicted in 2011 and subsequently convicted in New York for the murders of Crilley and Hover, though it is unclear what evidence those convictions were based on. Over the last several years, authorities have circulated scores of Alcala's photographs in an attempt to link him to additional crimes. To date, not one of those photos has been linked to any known murders or missing persons cases.

So what, at the end of the day, are we to make of Alcala's curious connections to the Laurel Canyon 'peace, love and understanding' scene? If his official bio is to be believed, his first victim, the daughter of a record executive, was snatched from the mouth of the canyon. One of his last victims was left posed at the northern end. And all along the way, such names as Jim Morrison, Roman Polanski, Marlon Brando and Steve Hodel, and such iconic places as Ciro's and the Chateau Marmont, unexpectedly pop up in the storyline.

## WEIRD SCENES INSIDE THE CANYON

Rodney Alcala's story is a strange one even by serial killer standards. But it is far from being the only serial killer story that the mainstream media got wrong. Interested readers can find a wealth of such stories in my previous book, *Programmed to Kill*.

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